



Examined



1 Corinthians 4:1-5

“Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy. But to me it is an insignificant matter that I would be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. For I am not aware of anything against myself; however I am not vindicated by this, but the one who examines me is the Lord. Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of human hearts; and then praise will come to each person from God.”

Servants & Stewards



- These terms have interesting backgrounds. According to McGuiggan, the term “servant” originally was used of an “under-rower” on a ship. A lowly position, to be sure. It came to refer to other servants, but maintained the sense of inferior status. The “steward” was a slave who was given charge of other slaves. Essentially a foreman or superintendent of others – nevertheless, still regarded as a slave.
- This willingness – even, *insistence* – to be thought of as a servant by others is a key feature of Christian discipleship (Matthew 20:20-28, Mark 10:45, Philippians 2:3-7, 2 Corinthians 4:5).

Trustworthy



- “Stewards of the mysteries of God” (Ephesians 3:1-10). What have you been stewarding? Paul took it very seriously that he had the mystery, and used it well (unlike another steward who buried his master’s treasure [Matt. 25:24ff]).
- If you’re going to use someone else’s things, take good care of them. If you’re put in charge of the Master’s treasure, treat it like it’s your own. In whatever you do, do it with all your might, as if for the Lord (Col. 3:23). Serve, teach, exhort, give, and lead (Rom. 12:6-8).
- Stewards represent their master. We either bring honor to His name, or He is blasphemed because of us (Romans 2:21-24, Titus 2:5, 1 Peter 2:11-17).

*A very **small** thing*

A magnifying glass with a black handle and a silver rim is positioned over the word "small" in the phrase "A very small thing". The lens of the magnifying glass is centered on the word, making it appear significantly larger and bolder than the other words. The background is a solid blue color with a subtle, repeating geometric pattern of interlocking lines.



But wait...

- “I do not even examine myself” is an odd phrase considering Paul’s encouragement in the second letter to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 13:5). Which is it? Examine or don’t examine?
- Clearly Paul does not mean to dismiss scrutiny wholesale. After all, plenty of verses show that criticism and correction are usually good things (Prov. 12:1, 15:35, 2 Tim. 3:16, Gal. 6:1, James 5:19-20, 3 John 10, Rev. 3:19, Matt. 18:15-17). We should welcome examination...
- ...If it is by God’s standard of measure, not man’s. The issue in this passage is that the Corinthians were holding Paul to a hypocritical standard. He had no regard for that kind of examination! See 1 Corinthians 9:1-18 & 2 Corinthians 10:12.

Not Acquitted

- Even if Paul could make excuses for himself, get off on technicalities, or plead ignorance to his failures and sins, none of that works with God. Ultimately, it is only God's examination that matters!
- Jesus addressed this throughout His ministry, attacking the self-righteous tedium of the Pharisees. They had a whole system of technicalities worked out to subvert the very Law they claimed to promote (Matthew 15:3-9).
- In comparison to God's appraisal and judgment, the examination of any human (including self-examination) matters very little. Who are you trying to impress? Who are you trying to convince? Are you right because you think you're right or because God has judged you to be right? There is only One Lawgiver and Judge (James 4:11-12) and only One Advocate whose voice makes acquittal possible (1 John 2:1ff).



But wait... again...

- “Do not go on passing judgment...” So are we not supposed to judge anybody? Doesn't actually say Christians are judges of “matters in this life” in 1 Corinthians 6:3?
- So which is it? “Judge not” (Matt. 7:1) or “judge with right judgment” (John 7:24)? There isn't really a conflict, because Jesus also qualified His statement in Matthew 7:2-5.
- Paul is putting human judgment into perspective by reminding us that it is only God's final judgment that determines whether or not we are pleasing in His sight. He isn't saying we can't examine, determine, scrutinize, etc. – he is simply saying that, in the end, we have only one Being whose assessment matters.

Motive is **huge**

A magnifying glass with a black handle and a silver rim is positioned over the word 'huge' in the text 'Motive is huge'. The lens of the magnifying glass is centered on the word 'huge', making it appear significantly larger and more prominent than the rest of the text. The background is a solid blue color with a subtle, repeating geometric pattern of interlocking lines.

Hebrews 4:12-16

"To know a person is to know more than that they sinned. It means to know how hard they tried not to. To know a person is to know more than that they fell to temptation. It means knowing how strong that temptation is from the sinner's perspective, not yours. To know a person is to know more than that they collapsed. It's to know how many times they resisted before they buckled. To know a person is to know more than that they failed. It's knowing why they failed. I'm not talking about whitewashing wrong or denying the sinfulness of sin! I'm talking about Matthew 7!

Paul claims he doesn't judge himself. This doesn't mean he hasn't any view of himself. He defends himself and insists again and again that he is doing his job faithfully. He simply means that his own judgment on himself means as little, in the final analysis, as theirs. People don't even know themselves very well. (Haven't you ever been amazed at something you did, said, or thought? Something you didn't think you could or would say, think, or do?) The assessment that counts is not ours to make."

-Jim McGuiggan, *1 Corinthians*, pp. 55-56



1 Corinthians 2:15-16

“But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged by no man. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.”