

Family Resemblances

1 Corinthians 4.1-21

1. Who has been a memorable model or example to you in the past? What have you learnt from them?

2. How does Paul view himself in verse 1? According to verse 2, what implication does this identity bring for Paul?

3. How do verses 3-5 instill within us both a spiritual confidence and a healthy apprehension?

4. How healthy are the motives of your own heart (v5)? How do we prepare for when the Lord comes? See 1 Thess 5:9 and also 1 Cor 3.12-15.

5. Read verses 6-7. What 'things' has Paul applied to himself? Why has he done so? Why might the Corinthians benefit from learning about the humility of their leaders? Hint: think about the main issue that Paul is addressing in these chapters – see 1:10-12.

6. Read verses 8-13. How does Paul's approach to ministry and the Christian life differ to that of the Corinthians? Does your own approach lean to one side or the other?

7. Read verse 12 again. Do you bless when cursed? How about answering kindly when slandered? How do these instructions fit with the teaching of Jesus? Why are these appropriate Christian responses? Hint: See Matthew 5:38-48.

8. Read verses 14-17. In what two ways has Paul sought to influence the Corinthians? See esp second half of v17.

9. What have you seen in others recently that's worthy of imitation? To what extent is *your* life worthy of imitation? What's the value of being a good model?

10. Read verses 18-21. How does Paul summarize the Corinthians' problem?

11. What does he mean by "The Kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power" (v 20)? What kind of 'power' would Paul be looking for when he visits? What kind of Kingdom are you working towards: one of arrogant talk or of foolish power?

12. Pray God will provide us with faithful examples to follow. Pray God will help us be faithful models to others. Confess to God those areas of life where you are not providing a great example and seek God's forgiveness.

Questions for the whole family

1. Is there anyone you really want to be like? Are there any *Christians* that you really want to be like?

2. What kind of example is Paul providing for the Corinthians? (vs 10-13). Does this sound like a person you would want to imitate? Who else in the Bible does it sound like?

3. What kind of example do you provide for others? If others were to copy you, would they become more like Jesus or less like Jesus?