

September 20

Scriptures: Read 1 Corinthians 4

Key Verse: “My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent.”
(1 Corinthians 4:4a NIV)

Overview

Paul appears a touch arrogant here. “I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court,” he says. Not only does he have little regard for what people think of him, he doesn’t really care what he himself thinks of himself, “I do not even judges myself” (4:3). He refuses to succumb to false guilt.

Psychology tells us there are two kinds of guilt: false guilt and true guilt. False guilt occurs when you accept the blame for not meeting the expectation of others, or yourself. True guilt occurs when you transgress moral law; one is subjective in its orientation, the other objective.

In the final analysis, there’s only one Judge who should concern us. It’s this Judge that Paul fears—“It is the Lord who judges me.” (v.4b NIV).

But here’s the sticky part. Why be subject to judgment at all? Why not eat, drink, be merry, and die—blissfully extinct and obliged to no one?

Well, for the Christian, that’s not how it works. The Lord is coming. That truth is our hope and our discipline. We’re going to be called to account. We’ll be facing the ultimate court with no chance of further appeal.

Thank God we’ve got a good lawyer—Jesus Christ Himself, ever living “to make intercession” for us (Hebrews 7:25). He knows what it’s like to be human and He pleads a good case.

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for Jesus who gives us access to eternal life and intercedes for us before You, our ultimate judge. Help us to discipline our lives, knowing our accountability to You.