

## 1 CORINTHIANS: LESSON 14

### The Error of “Kingdom Now” Theology and Prosperity Preaching

22 September 2017

1 Corinthians 4:1-18 reveals the importance of rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15). The believers in Corinth had made some assumptions based upon their current situation. The Corinthian church may have been prospering, yet this could not be said of all the churches. Therefore, they had a doctrine that would not work anywhere except among the rich and healthy churches. Paul applies the needed correction in this passage. He warns the church (vs. 14) not to equate spirituality with materialism; not to equate the physical with the spiritual; not to equate the seen with the unseen.

**Rule:** if something is not true EVERYWHERE—it is not true ANYWHERE.

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**Vs. 8** The Church at Corinth figured that since they were prosperous and healthy, it was an indication that God was blessing them and that they were reigning in the kingdom. The promises they were claiming belong solely to Israel during the Millennial reign of Christ.

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**Vs. 9** God presents the apostles as spectacles (something you look at) so that believers would have an idea of what to expect as followers of Christ. Observe what the world gave them for serving God. Material benefits are not an indication that you’re right with God. The apostles didn’t have any.

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**Vs. 10** The apostles’ reputations in the world: fools, weak, and despised. Preachers who are honored by the world are certainly compromisers; they’re not following Christ or the apostles.

If you serve the Lord as you ought, you should expect to be counted a fool, accused of being weak, and despised by this world.

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**Vs. 11** The apostles knew what it was to be hungry, thirsty, naked (materially poor), buffeted (beaten), and homeless.

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**Vs. 12** They survived by working (manual labor). When people reviled (hated) them, they blessed in response. When people persecuted them, they permitted it without objection.

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**Vs. 13** They were defamed (insulted and slandered) and in response they continued to plead with people to repent and follow the Lord.

Don’t let insults stop you from reaching out to people. The world regarded the apostles as filth and scum. And yet, they’re the spectacles that we’re supposed to observe—because we’ll be treated the same. The Bible never promises the believer that they’ll prosper in this world.

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**FOLLOW THE LORD:**

**Luke 4:1-2**    **HUNGRY:** Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost...hungered.

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**John 4:7**        **THIRSTY:** Jesus stopped for a drink because he was thirsty. (See also John 19:28, Psalm 69:27).

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**Mark 14:65**    **BUFFETED:** they covered His face and pounded Him and struck Him with their palms. He was insulted and abused in a shameful fashion.

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**Luke 9:58**        **HOMELESS:** the animals had a shelter to sleep in. Jesus didn't.

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**1 Pet. 2:21-23** **SUFFERED:** We're told to follow Christ, who lived a sinless life. If we follow in His steps (avoiding sin, committed to God), it may result in us having to suffer abuse from others.

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Evidently, bad things happening to a person is not proof that a person is lost or not right with God.

Likewise, good things happening to a person is not proof that they're saved or that they ARE right with God.

**John 15:20**    The servant is not greater than his lord. Christ was persecuted. We ought to expect it.

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