

1 Corinthians 3:18 – 4:7

New American Standard Version

1 ¹⁸ Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks
2 that he is wise in this age, he must become foolish, so that
3 he may become wise. ¹⁹ For the wisdom of this world is
4 foolishness before God. For it is written, “*He is THE ONE*
5 *WHO CATCHES THE WISE IN THEIR CRAFTINESS*”; ²⁰ and again,
6 “*THE LORD KNOWS THE REASONINGS of the wise, THAT THEY*
7 *ARE USELESS.*” ²¹ So then let no one boast in men. For all
8 things belong to you, ²² whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas
9 or the world or life or death or things present or things to
10 come; all things belong to you, ²³ and you belong to Christ;
11 and Christ belongs to God. ^{4:1} Let a man regard us in this
12 manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries
13 of God. ² In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards
14 that one be found trustworthy. ³ But to me it is a very small
15 thing that I may be examined by you, or by *any* human
16 court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. ⁴ For I am
17 conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this
18 acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord.
19 ⁵ Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time,
20 *but wait* until the Lord comes who will both bring to light
21 the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of
22 *men’s* hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him
23 from God. ⁶ Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively
24 applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us
25 you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one
26 of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the
27 other. ⁷ For who regards you as superior? What do you have
28 that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do
29 you boast as if you had not received it?

*Use the suggestions on the back page as a starting point for your own **Observation, Interpretation, and Application.***

Observation (What does it say?):

Underline what Paul wants them to do (or not do) as a result of this part of his letter.

Circle what he says about judging or evaluating.

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

What is the boasting in men that Paul warns against? (line 7)

What does “belong” mean (lines 7-11)?

ESV and NIV have “All things are yours”, etc. In v. 23 NIV has “You are of Christ, Christ is of God.” What was Paul’s point? How does it relate to wisdom and boasting in men?

What kind of judgment or examination is Paul describing? Why does he consider it a “very small thing” (l. 14-15)? Shouldn’t we listen to others speaking into our lives?

Application (What does it mean for me?):

What might “boasting in men” look like today? Where would it be a potential problem in your life?

How do you react when others judge or examine your life or your actions? When should you listen, and when should you consider it a “very small thing”?

Inductive Bible Study

(A few general ideas)

Observation (What does it say?)

What facts do you **observe** about the passage that help bring out the writer's thought process?

- Who are the people involved?
- What action takes place?
- What type of literature is it (poetry, history, didactic, etc.)?
- What details are included or left out?
- Are any unusual words used?
- Is there symbolic language?
- What is the grammar of the passage (pronouns, prepositions, verb tenses)?
- Are words or ideas repeated?
- Any comparisons or contrasts?
- Any cause and effect?
- Are there indications of purpose ("in order that...")?
- Are there conclusions ("Therefore...")?
- Are there explanations?
- Does the passage logically break into sections?
- How would you summarize the passage?
- What would be a good "headline" for the passage?

Interpretation (What does it mean?)

What questions come to mind about the facts that would help you **interpret** the meaning?

- How would the original readers have understood the passage?
- What is the main emphasis?
- Why does the writer use repetition, or contrast, or unusual words?
- What does the grammar or structure of the passage reveal about the writer's thought pattern?
- Is there a logical sequence in the passage?
- How are different ideas in the passage connected?
- Are there any new ideas or concepts presented?
- Are there difficulties in the passage?

Application (What does it mean for me?)

What is the impact on your life? What **application** does the Holy Spirit want to show you?

- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a promise to be thankful for?
- Is there an attribute of God to worship?
- Is there an example to follow?

Read nothing into the Scriptures, but draw everything from them, and suffer nothing to remain hidden that is really in them. – J.A. Bengel (1687-1752)