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14 I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you.

15 For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

16 Therefore I urge you, imitate me.

17 For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.

1 Corinthians 4:14-17

A REPRIMAND FROM THE APOSTLE PAUL

1. The sufferings of Paul were shared candidly
 - a) The Corinthians remained "beloved children" to Paul
 - b) He still cared about them deeply
2. Intentions of Paul revealed:
 - a) Not intended to shame
 - b) But as a warning

INSTRUCTORS IN THE FAITH

1. Intended exaggeration
"Ten thousand instructors in Christ"
 - a) There were many instructors
 - b) These may have been itinerant preachers

- c) They may have stayed for a while in Corinth
2. Not many fathers
- a) Teachers are not necessarily "fathers"
 - b) "Fathers" play a more significant role
3. Paul as a spiritual father to the Corinthian Church
- a) He was the founder of the Church
 - b) He led many to faith in the Lord Jesus
 - c) He taught many deep lessons concerning
 - i) The Lord
 - ii) The Christian faith
 - iii) The Christian lifestyle

A PLEA FROM A FATHER

"Therefore I urge you, imitate me" 1 Corinthians 4:16

- 1. This was an earnest plea from an anguished spiritual father
- 2. He saw how his children were turning out
 - a) They were conceited
 - b) They were arrogant
 - c) They were opinionated
 - d) They were worldly-wise
 - e) They were carnal
- 3. They were what Paul was not!
 - a) Hence the plea made

- b) To imitate (follow closely) the lifestyle of the Apostle Paul

AN EXAMPLE OF A GOOD SPIRITUAL SON

1. Timothy was presented well

- a) As a beloved son
- b) As a faithful son in the Lord

2. Timothy's task

- a) He will remind the Corinthians of Paul's lifestyle
- b) Paul lived as he taught, everywhere the Lord sent him

OUR CHALLENGE

¹⁰ But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, ¹¹ persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. ¹² Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. ¹³ But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. ¹⁴ But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, ¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 3:10-15

1. To follow Biblical examples

As Timothy followed the Apostle Paul

2. To beware of becoming "evil men and impostors"

3. The danger of deception and evil are very real