



Working it Out wk4: Imitate & Repeat

Introduction: We have developed a distrust of authority in our culture. That distrust is an understandable reaction to the repeated failures of leadership that we have seen in government, media, and unfortunately the church. Ultimately the answer isn't abandoning leadership, but leading well. We will see that Paul models a leadership not based on charisma but character that is anchored in Christ.

Discussion Questions

1. Why are failures in leadership, especially in the church, so destructive? How should we manage the tension between being submissive to leadership and needing leaders to be accountable?
2. Read **1 Corinthians 4:1** Paul gives two images that we should view him (and Apollos) as: servants and stewards. Those are similar ideas. What is he trying to say here? What are the "mysteries" that he is referring to?
3. Have you or anyone you know well ever been the executor of a will? What's that process like? How does that compare with what Paul is saying about his duty in sharing the Gospel and where the ultimate allegiance lies?
4. Read **1 Corinthians 4:2-4** What is Paul's answer to those who criticize him? Who do leaders ultimately answer to? Does that mean that leaders should not listen to others or accept criticism? When Paul says his conscience is clear but that isn't what vindicates him; what should we learn from that?
5. Read **1 Corinthians 4:8-14** Paul mentions that he and other apostles are suffering and on display. What does Paul say is the proper response to suffering and mistreatment? How does that conflict with the Christianity that decries persecution and suffering? When we whine and complain about things like a "war on Christmas," what does that say about our faith and security?
6. What would it look like to model our leadership according to Paul's description?

Shaping Your Mind – *I urge you to imitate me. 1 Corinthians 4:16*

Moving Forward – *Christian leadership is servant leadership. That's the model of Jesus. Repeat it.*