

GOSPEL-SHAPED SELF-IMAGE

1 CORINTHIANS 3:21-4:7 (ESV)

21 So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, 23 and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. 4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. 5 Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God. 6 I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another. 7 For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

1. THE NATURAL STATE OF THE HUMAN EGO

A. **EMPTY**

"this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself" – Blaise Pascal

B. **DISCONTENT**, UNSETTLED, INSATIABLE

"Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. We say that people are proud of being rich, or clever, or good-looking, but they are not. They are proud of being richer, or cleverer, or better looking than others. If everyone else became equally rich, or clever, or good-looking there would be nothing to be proud about. It is the comparison that makes you proud, the pleasure of being above the rest." – C.S. Lewis

C. **FRAGILE**

An ego that is puffed-up is constantly in danger of **BEING DEFLATED**

2. THE GOSPEL-TRANSFORMED SENSE OF SELF

But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. (1 Corinthians 4:3-4)

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. (Romans 12:3)

Gospel-humility is not thinking more of myself or thinking less of myself, it is thinking of **MYSELF LESS**.

Gospel-humility is not **PUFFED-UP**, but **FILLED-UP**.

3. HOW DO WE GET A GOSPEL-TRANSFORMED VIEW OF OURSELVES?

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1)

By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. (1 John 3:16)



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS – GOSPEL-SHAPED SELF-IMAGE

1. How would a gospel-shaped self-image affect the way we respond to praise? To criticism?
2. "If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?" – What can we apply this question to in our lives?
3. Could you explain to someone else how the gospel can (and should) transform our sense of identity?
4. How much do you experience that transformed sense of identity?