

## **“Spiritual Parenting”**

### **I Corinthians 4**

**A Scolding (vss. 1-8)...** Paul called himself the spiritual father of the Corinthians in 4:15 because he had given birth to them through the gospel which he had been the first to preach to them. As the parent of these arrogant Corinthian Christians, Paul sought to bring them down a few notches through some tough words. He pointed out that they had an arrogant and inflated view of themselves, which was leading them to falsely judge Paul, to forget that all that they had and were was a gift from God, and to think that they were much further along in their spiritual lives than was actually the case.

**An Example (vss. 9-17)...** Paul contrasted the wrong way that the Corinthian Christians were living with the right way that he and the other apostles were living. Paul and the apostles were living lives of sacrifice, suffering, and shame, following the example of Jesus, while the Corinthian Believers were selfishly living to please their own inflated egos. Paul called on them to stop sinning and instead to follow his example as their spiritual father.

**A Threat (vss. 19-21)...** Paul hoped that his sending of the letter and of Timothy would be enough to ensure the repentance of those who were arrogant, but he warned that he would eventually come to them and pull out his metaphorical rod of discipline if necessary.

#### **Questions for Discussion:**

1. What stands out most to you in this passage?
2. What practical steps can you take to remind yourself that everything you have and are is a gift from God?
3. What does it look like for you to follow in the path of sacrifice, suffering, and shame that Jesus and the apostles walked on?
4. What do you think Paul meant when he threatened to use a “rod” in verse 21?