

1 Corinthians 4:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.

Analysis

But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment. The phrase eis elachiston (εἰς ἐλάχιστον, "into smallest thing") indicates utter insignificance. Paul treats human verdict—anthropines hemeras (ἀνθρωπίνης ἡμέρας, literally "man's day")—as trivial compared to divine assessment. The legal terminology continues: anakrino (ἀνακρίνω, "examine/judge") was used for preliminary hearings before a trial.

Yea, I judge not mine own self. Paul refuses even self-examination as the final court. This isn't license for carelessness but recognition that human perspective—even one's own conscience—lacks ultimate authority. The conscience can be misinformed or seared (1 Tim 4:2). Only God's omniscient scrutiny reveals true motives and the full measure of faithfulness. Paul's liberation from human opinion (including his own self-assessment) frees him for radical obedience.

Historical Context

The forensic language reflects Corinthian obsession with evaluating and ranking teachers. As a sophisticated Greek city with Roman legal infrastructure, Corinth valued rhetorical contests and public judgments. Paul's indifference to such tribunals was countercultural. He faces his accusers' verdict with equanimity because he answers to a higher court—the bema (judgment seat) of Christ (2 Cor 5:10).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How much emotional energy do you expend worrying about others' opinions of your ministry or spiritual life?
2. What would change in your decision-making if you truly believed that only God's evaluation ultimately matters?
3. How can you distinguish between healthy accountability to spiritual leaders and unhealthy bondage to human approval?

Interlinear Text

ἐμοὶ	δὲ	εἰς	ἐλάχιστον	ἐστιν	ἴνα	ὑπὸ	ὑμῶν
with me	But	a very small thing					
G1698	G1161	G1519	G1646	G2076	G2443	G5259	G5216
ἀνακρίνω	ἢ	ὑπὸ	ἀνθρωπίνης	ἡμέρας·	ἀλλ'	οὐδὲ	
I judge	or	of	man's	judgment	yea	not	
G350	G2228	G5259	G442	G2250	G235	G3761	
ἐμαυτὸν	ἀνακρίνω						
mine own self	I judge						
G1683	G350						

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 2:15 (Judgment): But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

John 7:24 (Judgment): Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

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