

1 Corinthians 4:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.

Analysis

And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes. The verb meteschēmatisa (μετεσχημάτισα, "I have transformed/applied figuratively") suggests Paul used himself and Apollos as case studies to teach broader principles without naming specific Corinthian offenders. The phrase to mē hyper ha gepraptai (τὸ μὴ ὑπὲρ ἀ γέγραπται, "not beyond what is written") likely refers to Scripture's authority—don't elevate human teachers above biblical boundaries.

That no one of you be puffed up for one against another. The verb physioō (φυσιόω, "to inflate/puff up") appears seven times in 1 Corinthians (4:6, 18, 19; 5:2; 8:1; 13:4), always negatively. It captures the Corinthians' arrogant factionalism. Their partisan boasting (hyper tou henos kata tou heterou, "for one against another") violated the unity Christ purchased. Paul's restraint in using himself and Apollos as examples—men who had no actual rivalry—gently reproves their divisiveness without publicly shaming specific individuals.

Historical Context

The Corinthian factions (1:12) likely reflected socio-economic and educational divisions. Wealthy, educated members may have preferred Apollos's eloquence

(Acts 18:24), while others championed Paul's founding role or claimed superior spirituality through a direct "Christ party." Paul's diplomatic use of himself and Apollos as non-competitive examples models ministerial humility and confronts their celebrity-culture approach to teachers.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What Christian leaders or traditions are you tempted to champion in ways that divide rather than unify the body of Christ?
2. How do you balance appreciation for gifted teachers with the warning not to elevate them "beyond what is written" in Scripture?
3. In what areas might you be "puffed up"—proud of your theological camp, spiritual experiences, or preferred ministry style in ways that foster division?

Interlinear Text

Ταῦτα	δέ	ἀδελφοί	μετεσχημάτισα	εἰς	ἐμαυτὸν			
these things	And	brethren	I have in a figure transferred	to	myself			
G5023	G1161	G80	G3345	G1519	G1683			
καὶ	Ἀπολλῶ	δι'	ὑμᾶς	ἴνα	ἐν	ἡμῖν	μάθητε	τὸ
and	to Apollos	for	your sakes	that	in	us	ye might learn	
G2532	G625	G1223	G5209	G2443	G1722	G2254	G3129	G3588
μὴ	ὑπὲρ	δὲ	γέγραπται	φρονεῖν,	ἴνα	μὴ	ἐνὸς	ὑπὲρ
not	for	which	is written	to think	that	not	one	for
G3361	G5228	G3739	G1125	G5426	G2443	G3361	G1520	G5228
τοῦ	ἐνὸς	φυσιοῦσθε	κατὰ	τοῦ	ἐτέρου			
G3588	one	of you be puffed up	against	G3588	another			
G1520		G5448	G2596		G2087			

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 11:4 (Parallel theme): For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

2 Corinthians 12:6 (Parallel theme): For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.

2 Corinthians 12:19 (Parallel theme): Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.

Colossians 2:18 (Parallel theme): Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

Romans 12:3 (Parallel theme): For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

1 Thessalonians 1:5 (Parallel theme): For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

1 Corinthians 8:1 (Parallel theme): Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.

1 Corinthians 3:19 (Parallel theme): For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

1 Corinthians 5:6 (Parallel theme): Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

2 Corinthians 4:15 (Parallel theme): For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

