

THERE IS MORE TO MINISTRY THAN MEETS THE EYE:
GET USED TO THINGS NOT WORKING PERFECTLY FOR YOU

Context: The Corinthians are somewhat offended by the fact that Paul has corrected and challenged them, and they have become impressed by pseudo-apostles who are not really interested in building the Corinthians spiritually. In the face of this, Paul defends his ministry in the only kind of terms the Corinthians seem to accept -- spiritual boasts and claims of special spirituality.

For Paul, such talk is meaningless. However he uses it to try to convince the Corinthians what meaningful spirituality is all about.

- (1) There is a tremendous difference between your private experiences with God in the spiritual dimension *and* your public expressions of the life of God in the physical dimension.
- (2) When it comes to measuring people's spirituality, we should only credit them with as much maturity as can be seen in their daily lives.
- (3) The most significant spiritual experience we can ever have will still not change the fact that we are clay pots -- subject to blindness, cavities, hardships and every manner of problem.
- (4) Neither the strength of our inner spiritual experiences, nor the weakness of our outer situational experiences determine the dynamic of our ministry effectiveness. Ministry is always, only an expression of God's grace working through us now.
- (5) The very people who have been most benefited from your spiritual nurturing will often be the ones who fault you for what you have not done for them.