



## “Apostles Sign up Here”

1Corinthians 4:9 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. 10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honorable, but we are despised. 11 Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; 12 And labor, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: 13 Being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

Last, spectacle, fools, weak, despised, hungry, thirsty, naked, buffeted, no home, laboring, reviled, persecuted, suffering, defamed, filth, offscouring.

Whew...where does one sign up for such a ministry???

One almost has to chuckle at such a litany of negativity, otherwise the pain is almost too much to embrace...especially if you are one of these folks.

Are you an Apostle? Not sure? I have a very simple test for you to determine if you might be.

**Appointed to death:** In case you were wondering what it takes to be an apostle, and you thought it was a seminary education, knowing Greek and Hebrew, and being given the title “Reverend so and so...” Paul’s words pretty much clarify it. You are called to die, and...in the case of this death, it is not just one swift “swoosh...you’re dead” sort of thing, it is a slow, repetitive dying, in one area after another of your not yet fully redeemed personhood. So, are you regularly experiencing fresh new applications of the cross in your life, and wonder, after soooo many years of dying, why God doesn’t seem to let up on you? You just might be an apostle.

**Last:** Ask yourself, does anyone treat you like you are the last one to be considered when encouragement is being given out, appreciation is being shown, money is being given for support, or value in ministry is being placed? You just might be an apostle.

**Spectacle:** Are you so resisted by others that your firm stand for the things you see in God causes you to be considered so out of step with the ideas of others that you are more of a spectacle than a respected minister? You just might be an apostle.

**Fool:** Are the things you see in God, as regards the needs of the Church worldwide considered foolish by those who are satisfied with the status quo? Do you express concern over things that others think are just plain stupid to be so concerned about? Do you spend time trying to help people whom others think you are an idiot for wasting your time on? You just might be an apostle.

**Weak:** Even though you move in the prophetic, heal the sick, have words of knowledge and wisdom, regularly receive revelation and insights from God, are you considered weak because you struggle financially, or you don't come off as somebody cool, self impressed, obsessively self confident? You just might be an apostle.

**Despised:** When it comes time to be honored for your ministry are you more despised than honored? When you speak what you "know" God has called you to speak, and you do so out of love and concern, do the recipients still consider you to be harsh, insensitive, lacking in grace, and out of the Spirit? Do people find it somewhat easy to just "tell you off?" You just might be an apostle.

**Hungry:** Are your finances frequently a challenge because you just have no taste for making it big in secular success, wealth building, and investment strategies...in fact, has just about every one of your forays into those areas lost you more money than you've made, because you thought that was how God might want to fund your ministry and it turned out He didn't? You just might be an apostle.

**Buffeted:** Do you receive more rebuffs for the forerunning insights you have, than awe and respect for your ability to see in God what it is He is doing in the earth while few others see it? Do you find that people don't line up to receive your insight because it isn't what they want to hear, so instead they pass you off as a crack pot? You just might be an apostle.

**Homeless:** Are you either renting some little unit, or struggling to make your house payment, or worse yet, living out of your car because you just won't make making money a priority over your call to minister to the Church, even in areas where the Church doesn't want to be ministered to? And, if you do have a home or an apartment does it just not feel like "Home" to you, such that whether you are in a hotel in some 3<sup>rd</sup> world country or your own bed it all feels about the same to you? Does it feel like "Home" is wherever you and the Lord are? You just might be an apostle.

**Labored:** Instead of being treated like a dedicated servant of Christ, do you find yourself doing boring jobs to cover your living expenses and put some aside for ministry endeavors, that are way below your intellectual and skill level, but you do them anyway because to do otherwise would entangle you in business affairs when you need to be available to minister, and then people think you're lazy, or crazy, or a misfit, or a sad excuse for a provider? Do you have to work long hours in secular labors because very few, if any, value your ministry enough to support you financially, but God keeps telling you you are who He says you are, and He says you're an apostle even though others see very little value in you, and evidence that by a their tight pocketbook. You just might

be an apostle.

**Reviled:** Have you found that people take their liberty at saying things to you and about you that aren't even close to the truth, but because you see things they don't they think you're crazy and give themselves permission to speak negatively about you? You just might be an apostle.

**Persecuted:** Do you feel like the devil uses you to practice his sword throwing skills while other humans who would normally be nice to folks somehow find you uniquely worthy of bad treatment, though they aren't really sure why. They just unload on you? You just might be an apostle.

**Suffering:** Have you experienced what you simply know is more than your fair share of life sufferings. Are you almost shocked at how many painful experiences such a loving God has allowed you to pass through, and you still have several years of living left and wonder what more of this kind of thing lies ahead for you? You just might be an apostle.

**Defamed:** Are there times when people spread email lies, phone call lies, letter writing lies, and face to face lies, about you, skew what you meant in what you said and leave a false impression with others? You just might be an apostle.

**Filth:** When you evaluate the general impression you think others have of you do such words as filth, garbage, junk, etc., come to mind? You just might be an apostle.

**Offscouring:** And finally, when you sum up your life, and you wonder how everything you've done stacks up, in terms of it truly building God's kingdom, and people's estimation of how you've done it, rather than being stacked up like steak, or pancakes, or things valued, you feel like people just shove you to the side and treat you like you are more like pond scum, bacon fat, or mold? You just might be an apostle.

If this unbelievable set of descriptive words wasn't as sad as it is it would almost be funny. Somehow, when Paul penned these words to the Corinthians I don't get the impression he was chuckling or even smiling. I think he felt their treatment of him dishonored Christ and evidenced their misplaced priorities, lack of true spirituality, and serious blindness. He was concerned that their attitudes reflected on their attitude toward Christ and hindered their ability to receive from Him through His apostles.

If you think you've been called to be an apostle, and ever had the notion you would be given special respect because of it, or that life would be easier for you, or that you'd have an array of executive privileges because of it, you might as well discard that notion now. It ain't so...

Each of Paul's letters reveal the unique challenge an apostle will face. It is a lonely path, often misunderstood, and frequently rejected, but if it is God's path for you then you will never find genuine peace pursuing anything else.

Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He was despised and rejected of men. How could we think it would be any different with us?

Listen to the apostle describe how he endured the hardships he faced:

Hebrews 4:15 For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

When Paul felt he couldn't take much more we all know what Jesus spoke to him:

2Corinthians 12:9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.