

“God’s Fellow Workers”

1 Corinthians Chapter 3

Paul in the first chapter moved the dividing line between the saved and unsaved.

In the 2nd chapter Paul shows us another dividing line between the Wisdom of God and Wisdom of man.

This chapter Paul will show us an unfortunate division in the church of Carnal vs. Mature Christians.

1Cr 3:1 1) Still Babes in Christ vs 1-4

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ.

- When Paul established the church in Corinth, he had stayed there a year and a half. Here he tells them he spoke to them as “*infants in Christ*”.
- He is speaking to the BRETHEN. An “*infant in Christ*” is not an unbeliever. It is a natural beginning of someone who has repented and turned to walk in the Lordship of Christ.
- Paul acknowledges that the progression is to grow to be “*spiritual men*”.
- “Infant in Christ” + “Toddler in Christ” -
 - A Time of learning. Birth, turning over on own, crawling, standing, walking, talking.
 - This is the time of the most rapid sense of growth.
 - But much of the growth is imitation.
- “Adolescent in Christ” -
 - A Time of Reason and Relationships
 - Strength and agility are fine tuned in this age.
 - Abstract reasoning and complex problem solving is developed.
 - Less reliance of an imitation of guardians but a search for identity and acceptance from peers.
 - Independence from authority and a strengthened “I Can Do It Myself” attitude that that lead to rebellion from authority.
 - Peer Relationships are more important than Family Relationships.
- “Mature in Christ” -
 - Appropriate Response to conflict and difficulties
 - Balance In Understanding and Reasoning
 - Humility and an Active Consciousness of Others
- The Corinthians, while Paul was with them, were still babes in Christ. Paul uses the term, “*men of flesh*”. They were still learning to not indulge in the cravings of the flesh.
 - “flesh” = Gk “*sarkikos*” = carnal

Example of maturing.

When they do something wrong.

Child - Not Me

Adolescent - They did it first.

Mature - I was wrong.

1Cr 3:2 I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able,

1Cr 3:3 for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?

- It has been 3-4 years since Paul established the church in Corinth. 4 years later he is writing a letter where he tells them that HE EXPECTED THEM TO MATURE.
- Paul understood a different diet for babes than that of the mature.
 - Hebrews 5:11-14 “Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.”
- Paul can confidently state that they were still carnal / babes in Christ because of the evidence in their behavior. JEALOUSY, STRIFE.
- “Like mere men” They were not unbelievers / natural men. They were only acting like them.

1Cr 3:4 For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” are you not mere men?

- This division was the example that proved they were immature. (*mere men* = KJV carnal)

1Cr 3:5

2) Leaders are God's Fellow Workers vs 5-9

What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave *opportunity* to each one.

1Cr 3:6

I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.

1Cr 3:7

So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.

- "What Then Is Paul? ...Apollos?" They are not saviors. The Corinthians only believed "through" them, not "in" them. Those who are visible leaders / teachers in the church are only the Lord's servants.
- Paul had a task. Apollos had a task. Growth comes from the Lord.
- If you are not growing / maturing there is something wrong with your relationship with God. It isn't the teachers. This church wasn't growing and they had Paul and Apollos as the teachers.
- The planter or waterer isn't anything.
 - "Some people are frustrated because they want to water when God has called them to plant, or they want to plant when God has called them to water. Others are frustrated because they want to make the increase happen, when only God can do that. Real fruitfulness in ministry happens when we are peacefully content with what God has called us to do." (Guzik)

1Cr 3:8

Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

- Combating the division Paul says the planter and the waterer are one. What good is planting if you don't water. What good is watering if you don't plant.
- Which one are you? If you have an opportunity to plant! PLANT! If you have an opportunity to water! WATER!

1Cr 3:9

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

- We Are God's Fellow Workers - To realize the incredible privilege to work with God.
- Mark 16:20 "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
- Paul switches metaphors from and agriculture picture to an architectural picture.
(God's field) (God's Building)

1Cr 3:10

3) You are God's Building vs 10-17

According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it.

1Cr 3:11

For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1Cr 3:12

Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

1Cr 3:13

each man's **work** will become evident; for the day will show it because it is *to be* revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's **work**.

1Cr 3:14

If any man's **work** which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward.

1Cr 3:15

If any man's **work** is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

- How to Build Mature Church.
 - Verse 10 Allow a Master Builder lay a great foundation-Built "According to Grace"
 - Verse 10 Each Man builds. He must take great care in how he builds.
 - Verse 11 The Great Foundation is Jesus Christ.
 - Verse 12 As you build know that **your materials** will be tested.
 - Verse 13 +14 If remains - A Reward Awaits; If Burned up - loss but not loss of salvation.

- There are listed 3 building materials that get better with fire. Gold, Silver and Precious Stones.
- There are listed 3 building materials that get worse with fire. Wood, Hay and Straw
- The good materials are valuable even in little quantities. The bad materials require large quantities for them to be valuable.
- What is tested by fire is not the quantity but the quality. (verse 13)
- 2 Corinthians 5:10 "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."

1Cr 3:16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?

1Cr 3:17 If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.

- The context is the Church. All the "you" words here are plural meaning the Church.
- The Church is the **temple of God** because the Spirit of God dwells in the Church.
- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says that our individual bodies are the **temple of the Holy Spirit**.
- If a man tries to destroy (defile or corrupt) the Church God will be against them. God will destroy them.

1Cr 3:18 **4) Let Boasting then Glorify God** vs 18-23

Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, he must become foolish, so that he may become wise.

1Cr 3:19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, "*He is THE ONE WHO CATCHES THE WISE IN THEIR CRAFTINESS*";

1Cr 3:20 and again, "*THE LORD KNOWS THE REASONINGS of the wise, THAT THEY ARE USELESS.*"

- The problem in Corinth was that people thought they were wise. Because they evaluated their teachers and choose who they could identify with they placed themselves more wise than their neighbor.
- Paul says to them "You only think you are wise. To become wise you need to become a fool" They need to renounce worldly wisdom. If this makes no sense to you, you may be in danger of being deceived.
- This is from the perspective of the wise of this age. The truth is that we are foolish and we need to wise up. Wise up to the Lord's Wisdom.
- God considers the wisdom of this world FOOLISH, CRAFTINESS, and USELESS

1Cr 3:21 So then let no one boast in men. For all things belong to you,

1Cr 3:22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all things belong to you,

1Cr 3:23 and you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God.

- If we no longer have the wisdom of this world what do we have? ALL THINGS!
- "LET NO ONE BOAST IN MEN" - It is too narrow to think "I am of Paul or I am of Apollos." Both belong to the Church.
- We belong to Christ.

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