

God Made the Plants Grow -- Not the Farm Hands

1 Corinthians 3

I. Worldly Practices and Parties Are Unattractive in Christians

A. Paul could not take the Corinthians into the deeper doctrines of the faith while they behaved as children. “And I, brethren, **could not speak unto you as unto spiritual**, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ. ***I have fed you with milk, and not with meat***: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able.” (1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-2)

B. Party spirit is the proof a community is immature. “For ye are yet carnal: for whereas ***there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions***, are ye not carnal, and ***walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos***; are ye not carnal?” (1 CORINTHIANS 3:3-4)

C. Bad attitudes will surface and expose themselves. “Now the ***works of the flesh are manifest***, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, ***that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.***” (GALATIANS 5:19-21)

D. Christians display the opposite features in their lives. “But ***grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour*** Jesus Christ. ***To him be glory*** both now and for ever. Amen.” (2 PETER 3:18)

II. Three Principles Can Cure the Problem

A. Church leaders are only servants. “***Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed***, even as the Lord gave to every man?” (1 CORINTHIANS 3:5) In Hebrew a meshereh is one who serves, as distinguished from a master. In Greek diaconos is usually a subordinate officer or assistant.

B. All genuine Christian leaders serve the same function and have the same purpose. “***I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase***. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now ***he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour***. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, ***as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. BUT LET EVERY MAN TAKE HEED HOW HE BUILDETH thereupon.***” (1 CORINTHIANS 3:6-10)

C. There is only one foundation for Christianity and faithfulness to it will be revealed. “For ***other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ***. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; ***Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire***; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. ***If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.***” (1 CORINTHIANS 3:11-15)

D. When Christians get away from these three principles, they endanger themselves and their positive influence. “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the

world is enmity with God? ***whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.***” (JAMES 4:4)

III. Self-Examination and Self-Development Reduce Bad Attitudes and Parties

A. Practice the presence of God; He dwells by His Spirit in you and consequently takes some things personally. “Know ye not that ***ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy;*** for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are.” (1 CORINTHIANS 3:16-17)

1. Clean out the idols to make room for the living God. “And ***what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?*** for ***ye are the temple of the living God;*** as God hath said, ***I will dwell in them,*** and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” (2 CORINTHIANS 6:16)

2. Not just the individual but the entire church is becoming the Temple of God. “In whom all ***the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple*** in the Lord: ***In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.***” (EPHESIANS 2:21-22)

B. Self-deception only compounds problems; it does not fool God. “***Let no man deceive himself.*** If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the ***wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.*** For it is written, ***He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.*** And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. Therefore ***let no man glory in men. For all things are yours;***” (1 CORINTHIANS 3:18-21)

C. People who have learned to see themselves from God’s perspective will not be fooled into party spirit because all Christians rest on the same gospel platform. “***Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.***” (1 CORINTHIANS 3:22-23)

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