

Summit Woods Baptist Church
First Corinthians Sermon Study Equipping Class
1 Corinthians 3:1-9

❖ Day 1

Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-9.

Results of Fleshly Behavior (v. 1-4)

-Not ready for spiritual wisdom at first visit (1-2a)

-Still not ready now (2b)

-Behaving like the lost (3-4)

Toward Spirituality:

Realigning to Truth (v. 5-9)

-The 'heroes' are servants (5a)

-We plant and water. The Lord assigns faith(5b) and gives growth (6)

-So only God matters (7)

-The planter and waterer are unified (8)
(so you also be unified?)

-We servants work together with God on you. (9)

3:1 But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people,
but as people of the flesh,
as infants in Christ.

2 I fed you with milk, not solid food,
for you were not ready for it.

And even now you are not yet ready,

3 for you are still of the flesh.

For while there is jealousy and strife among you,
are you not of the flesh
and behaving only in a human way?

4 For when one says, "I follow Paul,"
and another, "I follow Apollos,"
are you not being merely human?

5 What then is Apollos?

What is Paul?

Servants through whom you believed,
as the Lord assigned to each.

6 I planted,
Apollos watered,
but God gave the growth.

**7 So neither he who plants
nor he who waters is anything,
but only God who gives the growth.**

8 He who plants
and he who waters are one,
and each will receive his wages according to his labor.

9 For we are God's fellow workers.

You are God's field,
God's building.

A

B

C

B

A

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1. In verse 1, Paul says that he “could not address [them] as spiritual people.” What word in 2:6 corresponds to the word ‘spiritual’ in 3:1?
 - a. Based on the word from 2:6, how else might we describe the Corinthians?

2. What word picture does Paul use in verses 1-2 to describe the Corinthians?
 - a. How does this word picture illustrate immaturity?

3. What behaviors does Paul list to demonstrate their immaturity? (see verses 3-4)

4. Should we expect new Christians to instantaneously be mature in Christ? Why or why not?
 - a. Why is it a problem for a Christian to remain an “infant” for a long period of time?

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5. Think back on chapters 1-2. What was the “milk” that Paul initially fed to them?

6. What do you think it looks like for a Christian to be feeding on “solid food” rather than just “milk”?

7. Is Paul questioning their salvation? Why or why not? (Be sure to list what in this passage guides your answer.)

8. What is the opposite of “behaving only in a human way?”

9. Why should Paul be able to expect them NOT to “behav[e] only in a human way?” (Think back on last week’s lesson. Who do they have that the natural “only human” person does not have?)

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❖ Day 2

Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-9 again.

10. Where in this letter did Paul start addressing divisions in the Corinthian church?
11. According to verse 5, how does Paul say the Corinthians should view him and Apollos?
12. What is the most repeated word in verses 5-9?
13. A 'chiasm' is a symmetrical literary structure where key words build to a central point and then the same (or similar) key words are repeated in reverse order after the central point to highlight the central point, which is not repeated in the sequence. A chiasm is often depicted as ABCBA (like in the paragraph flow on page 1). What is Paul's main point in verses 5-9?
14. Paul uses the Greek word 'hen' for 'one' in verse 8. This word speaks specifically of unity, rather than just being numeric. How does this fit with what Paul has already been saying in 1 Corinthians?
15. What effect does Paul want this passage to have on the Corinthians?

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❖ Day 3

➤ Making Connections:

Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-9 again.

Now read Romans 13:12-14, Galatians 5:16-26, and James 3:13-18.

16. What words and ideas do you see in these passages that connect to 1 Corinthians?

17. How do these passages magnify the importance of the battle for unity in the church?

18. How do these passages, together with 1 Corinthians, impact you? (Your thoughts? Your feelings? Your actions?)

Note: Throughout chapter 3, Paul uses word pictures to describe the church and the Christian life. As we look at these various word pictures over the next few weeks, be thinking about how they all impact your own thoughts about the church and the Christian life.

In preparation for Sunday, thank God for those whom He used to “plant and water” the seeds of the gospel in your life. Pray for our congregation, that God would give abundant growth in our spiritual maturity and that we would all serve in unity as God’s workers.