

1 Corinthians Part One

Lesson #10, Chapter 3:1-15

Ask the Lord to help you glean the most spiritual benefit from today's lesson. Ask Him to help you apply it to your life in some specific ways this week.

1. Briefly summarize what Paul was talking about at the end of chapter 2 in verses 14-16.
2. What was Paul unable to do with the Corinthians according to 3:1?
3. Instead, how did he have to deal with them according to verse 1?
4. What do we know about those who are *spiritual* from the following verses: 1 Cor. 2:15; 3:1; Gal. 5:16-25; 6:1?
5. How does Paul describe the Corinthians' spiritual state in verses 1 and 2?
6. What kind of teaching is *milk* teaching compared with *solid food* teaching from these verses? See also Heb. 5:12-13; 1 Pet. 2:2.

7. Why aren't the Corinthians able to receive solid spiritual food (verse 3)?

8. What example does Paul give to show their spiritual immaturity in verse 4? See also 1 Cor. 1:10-13.

9. Paul counters their fleshly mindset with a biblical one. How should they really be thinking about Paul and Apollos according to verse 5?

“Elsewhere Paul will stress the dignity of the servant (4:1), but here in order to adjust the thinking of the Corinthians, he stresses they were but servants of the Lord. Imagine quarreling and dividing over servants, when they were only doing the job assigned to them!” ~ Jack Hunter¹

10. In verses 6-9 Paul uses a gardening metaphor to describe the spiritual work conducted among the Corinthians. What do you learn about those who plant and water in these verses? What is God's role in this process (verses 6-9)?

11. How can that information protect you from a critical spirit as you consider those who minister to you each week?

¹ Jack Hunter, *1 Corinthians: What the Bible Teaches*, Ritchie New Testament Commentaries. Scotland, John Ritchie Ltd., 1986. Pg. 34.

12. How can you apply verses 5-9 in regard to your own service at church?

13. Paul now switches word pictures from gardener to builder. List at least 5 observations about verse 10.

14. What do you learn about the foundation that all wise master builders build upon in verse 11?

15. How can that be true? See Jn. 14:6 and Acts 4:12.

16. Verse 10 ends with the wise counsel that *each man be careful how he builds upon it [the foundation]*. In verses 12-13 Paul explains why that care is necessary—what do you learn?

17. What materials will last and what ones will be burned up from the list in verse 12? Explain what those would look like spiritually speaking. See 1 Cor. 4:5; Col. 2:6-8; 1 Tim. 4:6-8; Titus 1:9-11.

18. What *day* is Paul referring to in verse 13? See Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:16; 2 Tim. 4:8.

19. And what things will take place on *that day* that spiritual builders need to always remember according to verses 13-15? See also 2 Cor. 5:9-10.

20. What kind of judgment will believers be subject to on that day? See Rom. 5:1; 8:1, 33-34; 1 Cor. 4:5; 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Jn. 4:17.

21. Paul was keenly aware that there would come a day when the Lord would test the quality of his work and it pervades his writing in his epistles. How was that future judgment for rewards a motivation to him to remain faithful? See 2 Cor. 6:1-3; Phil. 2:16; 1 Thess. 3:5 for a few examples.

22. What kinds of “materials” will stand the test of God's judging of our service to Him?

23. What are some specific ways *you* can build in God's kingdom so that it will stand the test of fire?

“A great deal that is called Christian work may be only the energy of the flesh. It is not done for the glory of God at all. What motives actuate us? How do we feel if others are preferred before us? This is a good way to test ourselves as to whether what we are doing is for the Lord. Only that which is done for Christ will be rewarded in that day.”
~ H. A. Ironside²

“Here is a good searching question for a man to ask himself as he reviews his past life: Has there been anything immortal in it, which will survive the speedy wreck of all sublunary things? The boys inscribe their names in capitals in the snow, and in the morning's thaw the writing disappears. Will it be so with my work, or will the characters that I have carved outlast the brazen tablets of history? Have I written in the snow?” ~ Charles Spurgeon³

² H. A. Ironside, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Loizeaux Brothers: Neptune, New Jersey, 1938. Pg. 129.

³ Charles Spurgeon, *The Quotable Spurgeon*. Harold Shaw Publishers: Wheaton, Illinois, 1990. Pg. 192.