

1 Corinthians Part One

Lesson #11, Chapter 3:16-23

This portion of Scripture closely follows all Paul has written in the previous verses. Please take the time to read through chapter 3 before you begin this lesson. If you have time review the chapter from the beginning of the book through the end of chapter 3. Take note of the ribbon of thought Paul weaves through these chapters. Ask the Lord to guide you into a greater understanding of His Word. And may God bless you according to your faithfulness!

1. Describe Paul's ministry of wise master builder from verses 10-15. Who did he minister to and what did he endeavor to do?
2. Paul is speaking to the collective group of believers when he addresses them in verses 16-17. And though everything he says pertains to the individual as well, the context of these verses and the use of plural pronouns reveal that he is addressing these believers as a group—as the church. How are we all as believers described in verse 16? Ephesians 2:19-22 explains this truth in much the same way. How does Eph. 2:19-22 give you insight into what Paul means in 1 Cor. 3:16?
3. Who lives in the dwelling according to verse 16?
4. What do you learn from the following verses about the Holy Spirit, believers, and His indwelling? See Ezek. 36:27; Jn. 14:23; Rom. 8:9, 11; 1 Jn. 4:15-16.

5. What do you learn could happen if a man isn't wise in how he builds upon Christ's foundation? See verse 17.

6. How could a man destroy this kind of temple? See 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 4:1-5; 6:20-21; Titus 1:10-12; 2 Pet. 2:1-3, 17.

7. What kinds of people would do this? See Gal.1:6-8; 2 Tim. 3:1-9; Jude 4, 16-19.

8. What are the consequences of this very unwise kind of building (verse 17)?

9. What can you conclude about the spiritual state of someone who would destroy the faith of others through false teaching or by leading them into sin? See 1 Cor. 3:17; 2 Cor. 11:15; Jude 10-13.

10. Paul transitions to a new paragraph and opens it with the admonition: Let no man deceive himself. What are we not to be deceived about according to verse 18?

11. What issues has Paul been addressing in this chapter that make his counsel in verse 18 vitally important?

12. Why would this godly admonition from verse 18 be significant for church leaders to hear and apply to their hearts and lives?

13. What do verses 18-23 teach us about one of the ways the world's foolish wisdom shows up in the church?

14. What does every believer need to remember according to the first part of verse 21?

15. What do other Scriptures have to say about this and why it's a bad idea? See Ps. 20:7; Jer. 9:23-24; 17:5-8; Gal. 5:25-26.

16. Why aren't we to boast in or put our trust in men according to verse 21-23?

17. What kinds of things belong to every believer? See verse 22.

19. By verse 23 Paul leaves us perched on the pinnacle of wonder and spiritual blessings, yet what precipitated this off-road excursion into the heavens? In other words, how did 1 Cor. 3:1 lead us to verse 23?
 - a. How did chapter 2 lead us into 1 Cor. 3:1?
 - b. How did chapter 1 lead us into 1 Cor. 2:1?
20. How would you summarize in a sentence or two this lengthy discussion found so far in 1 Corinthians?
21. What kinds of wrong thinking plagued the church at Corinth that needed correcting?
22. How can we fall prey to similar kinds of thinking? What truths do we need to remember so we won't be tempted toward divisions and partiality?
23. What attitudes are necessary for us to have if we are going to help our leaders maintain a biblical perspective on their part in God's kingdom church?

In any building there is a purpose, a meaning in it; or there ought to be. I suppose there are buildings that have no purpose. But the general idea is if a building is put up, it is for some purpose. That is what was in the apostle's mind. The Corinthians had not only been misunderstanding the function of Christian ministry, they had not only misunderstood the function of Christian ministers, they had also been forgetting the real meaning of the Church, and her true function. ~ G. Campbell Morgan¹

Do you not know that you are the temple of God, His dwelling place? Let us listen to those three words, "Know ye not?" Are you ignorant of the fact, or have you forgotten it, or failed to respond to it, so that it has no living power with you? Do you not know? There could have been no divisions in that church at Corinth, or there can be none anywhere if that truth had been, and is known, or remembered. The lost sense of the marvel of the Church as the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit is what has alienated us, and caused our divisions, and paralyzed our powers. It has caused divisions and disputings. "Know ye not?" Oh, for a practical rediscovery of this fact that the Church is the sanctuary of the living God! ~ G. Campbell Morgan²

¹ G. Campbell Morgan, *The Corinthian Letters of Paul*, Fleming H. Revell Company. London and Edinburgh, 1946. Pg. 63.

² Ibid. Pg. 67.