

1 Corinthians

Quality Life

Series Overview

Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth is a case-study in what makes an unhealthy church. In this series, we'll explore what made that church so unhealthy as a guide to becoming the healthy church God has called us to be.

Sermon Introduction

Have you ever bought something that looked good, but turned out to be poor quality? Quality is determined by two things: the manufacturer's skill and the quality of the materials they use. In this passage, the Apostle Paul challenges his readers that their spiritual foundation—Jesus himself—warrants only their best skill and the choicest materials for building their lives both individually and corporately.

Passage: 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 (NIV)

1Cor. 3:10 By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds.

1Cor. 3:11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1Cor. 3:12 If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw,

1Cor. 3:13 his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work.

1Cor. 3:14 If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward.

1Cor. 3:15 If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions

1. Read the passage. What stood out to you? Was there anything that you found surprising or confusing?
2. Paul says that the foundation he's laid for the church, both individually and corporately, is Jesus himself (vv. 10-11). What does it mean for Jesus to be the foundation of your life? What do you think it means for him to be the foundation of the life of the church?

collectively?

3. If you're a believer, what was your life's foundation before Jesus? If you're not a believer, what are you building your life on today?
4. If you're a Jesus' follower, he is your true foundation, *but* you can build your life with materials that aren't worthy of him—"wood, hay, or straw" (v. 12). What do you think Paul would consider materials that are unworthy of Jesus? How about quality materials—"gold, silver, and costly stones"?
5. In vv. 13-15, Paul says that any person's work that isn't worthy of the foundation they have in Jesus will be burned up—lost without any reward. Why is it important that a person's salvation isn't at stake when their works are judged (v. 15)?
6. Paul's dire warning for believers is that it's possible to live your whole life and in the end have nothing to show for it. What do you think it would look like to build the kind of life that will survive "the fire" (v. 13) and echo in eternity?
7. How are you contributing—or how could you contribute—to building up the church in a way that will have an eternal impact?
8. If today you're not very skilled at building your life or in choosing the best materials, what's one decision you could make that would redirect your life?

Prayer

Often a position of submission helps us physically connect with the spiritual reality of meeting God. A posture of kneeling with open hands can demonstrate our willingness to submit to God's power.

- Praise God that Jesus is the one true foundation that we need for life.
- Confess any ways that you're trying to either build on a different foundation or use materials that are unworthy of Jesus to create the life you want.
- Thank him that your ultimate future—eternity with God—is not dependent on how well you build your life, but is wholly based on truth in what Jesus has already done for you.
- Ask God to give you the skill to build your life on Jesus with only the choicest materials so that the impact of your life echoes into eternity.