

1 Corinthians Chapter Three: Wrong Thinking Divides the Church

Opening Question: Discuss Paul's analogies for the church in this chapter.

Key Takeaways:

1. "You" in Paul's letter to the Corinthians is always plural (you all).
2. The temple (v16) is the church and not the individual believer.
3. The temple (v16) is where the Spirit of God dwells.
4. Paul and Apollos were mere men, servants of God through whom the Corinthians had believed the gospel.
5. Paul desired the Corinthians to focus on the message and not on the messengers' delivery or status.
6. Jealousy and strife among the Corinthians revealed their incorrect thinking and motives.
7. Boasting and arrogance, which means to reject God as God, were at the core of the divisions in the Corinthian church.

Discussion Questions:

1. Read aloud together 1 Corinthians chapters 1-3. Remember to track the pronouns and keep the distinction between the **we** group and the **you all** group. **Substitute "you all" each time you come to the word "you."** Continue this practice throughout the letter. Recognize that everything Paul wrote beginning in 1:1 is important to Paul's message. Connect Paul's introduction in 1:1-10 to chapter 3. What problem is Paul addressing?
2. Read Ephesians 1:22-2:22, Ephesians 4:1-16, and 1 Corinthians 12. Discuss Paul's teaching in these passages concerning the "building" or "temple" and tie this to what he said in 1 Corinthians 3:1-15, and 16.
3. Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-30. How does 1 Corinthians 3:16 relate to this passage?

Practical Application:

1. Read 1 Corinthians chapters 1-4. What is Paul saying in 1 Corinthians 3:21? How do these words relate to 3:21-4:21?
2. Consider boasting and arrogance as rejecting God as God. What is there to boast about as you compare yourself to God? Why is it that the boast of the believer to be in the LORD alone? In what areas of life does this idea challenge your thinking?
3. Paul's sole focus was building up the body of Christ. Consider the seriousness of tearing down the temple of God (the body of Christ) that Paul explained in 1 Corinthians 3:17. How will a growing understanding of this important truth impact your beliefs and actions?

Closing Prayer:

Father, Thank You for Your love for Christ and His body where Your Spirit dwells. May Paul's message to the Corinthians serve as a sober reminder to us to remain humble in our evaluation of ourselves, to preserve the unity of the body, and to boast in Christ alone. Amen.