

Subject: When Christians Remain Babies. Reflections from Sunday's Message

Hello all,

I just love God's word, even when it confronts us. Paul's words to the Corinthians certainly have a way of cutting through our comfortable assumptions about where we stand in our faith. For related discipleship materials, please click [\[HERE\]](#).

Summary: The sermon explored 1 Corinthians 3:1-4, where Paul confronts the Corinthian church for remaining spiritually immature long after they should have grown. Though they were genuinely saved, they were living as "babes in Christ" — still on the milk of elementary faith while an entire banquet of spiritual depth sat untouched before them. Their immaturity showed itself in envy, strife, and division, and Paul held up a mirror so they could see that the problem was not his gospel but their own hearts. The implications for us are sobering: spiritual stagnation is not merely a personal inconvenience — it robs us of God's power, undermines our testimony, and leaves us functioning no differently than the world around us.

Takeaways:

1. Salvation is the beginning of the journey, not the destination. The milk of the gospel is a precious and essential gift, but God saves us to grow into the fullness of His Word and His promises. Settling for a saving faith when Jesus is offering so much more is a tragedy we must take seriously.
2. The fruits of spiritual immaturity — envy, strife, and division — are not personality quirks or cultural tendencies. They are evidence of carnality, of a life where Jesus may be Lord of salvation but holds no real authority over daily living. The question we must each answer honestly is whether we are asking "How can I honor Jesus?" or simply "How do I get my way?"
3. Spiritual maturity is a work of God, but we are not passive in the process. Walking in the Spirit, putting on the armor of God, rooting our identity in Christ, pursuing unity, serving others, and surrendering to God's will in hardship are not optional extras for the especially devoted — they are the normal Christian life to which every believer is called.

I want to close with the same challenge Paul lays before us: God knows where each of us truly stands, and He is both calling and empowering us to grow. We can fool others and even ourselves, but we cannot fool Him. My prayer is that none of us would remain forty-two years old in the faith with a bib around our necks — and that each of us would take seriously our role in helping remove that bib from others.

In Christ, Pastor Jim

1 Corinthians 3:1-4

When Christians Remain Babies

I. Introduction: New in Christ

- The gospel creates a NEW people, a NEW allegiance, a NEW community, a NEW way of living, and a NEW hope

II. 1 Corinthians 3:1-4: When Spiritual Growth Stalls

- To be a babe in Christ means having received salvation and other elementary Biblical precepts (the milk), they never proceeded to live according to His righteousness in the deeper things of the gospel (the solid food).

Additional Scripture References: 1 Peter 2:1-3; Mt 5:6; Ro 12:1; Eph 4:14-15

III. Growing in Spiritual Maturity

- Three big ideas on growing in spiritual maturity.

IV. Closing: Spiritual Formation

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When Christians Remain Babies

1 Corinthians 3:1-4

V. Introduction: Transformed in Christ

1. Picture this: dinner at a friend's house. Real meal on the table — roast, potatoes, the works. And sitting next to you is their son. Forty-two years old. Job. Car. Mortgage. And Mom walks over, ties a bib around his neck, and hands him a bottle.

You lean over: "Does he... know how to use a fork?"

"Oh, he knows how. He's just never tried."

That's Corinth. Paul says, "I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready" — and then the kicker — "**even now** you are not ready" (1 Cor. 3:2). This wasn't a young church. They'd sat under Apollos. Under Paul. They had access to the meat. And yet they were still in the high chair — bibs on, bottles up, throwing food at each other over whose teacher they liked best (v. 4).

So here's the question: **How many of us are five, ten, twenty-five or more years old in the faith — and are still on the bottle?**

Not because we can't chew. Because we've never weaned off the bottle. Because we have never weaned others off the bottle.

2. In our study last time, we contrasted the natural man with the spiritual man. *Today, in what may at first shock some, Paul brings in the carnal man — the person saved, but stuck in the diaper stage of spirituality.* We will come back to this in a few minutes, but for now, one way to consider the differences is hearing the questions each asks:

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Natural Man	What do I want?
Carnal Christian	How do I get my way?
Spiritual Christian	How can I honor Jesus?

3. We often talk about being diligent in studying the Bible in context...of not shoe-horning passages into a meaning that best fits our desired narrative. Instead, we are to let the Bible speak for itself and seek to apply its truth into our lives. If we are diligent in exegeting our passage today, I think it likely to convict some and offend more than a few.

A. While having vestiges of Godly power, the church in Corinth has imported an unbiblical worldview robbing it of both Godly power and a Godly testimony. That is, everyone knows this church claims to follow the revolutionary God-man Jesus even as they undermine their own faith by seeking and living out some polluted version of the gospel the apostle Paul shared which led to their salvation.

B. Folks, the gospel of Jesus Christ doesn't merely incrementally improve our broken lives by making bad people better. Rather, the gospel creates a NEW people, a NEW allegiance, a NEW community, a NEW way of living, and a NEW hope. The gospel does this by overthrowing worldly assumptions about God, identity, relationships, power, freedom, status, morality, wealth, purpose, priorities, victory, suffering, and eternity. What's more, the gospel does this NOT through some temporary change in how we look, speak, and act, but through an inward transformation.

C. Finally, the gospel continually calls us out of sin AND up into biblical manhood or womanhood.

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VI. 1 Corinthians 3:1-4: When Spiritual Growth Stalls

1. To me, this is very much an 'ouch' moment. Paul has pulled the sledge hammer out of his tool bag and is making good use of it here. At least some in the Corinthian church are looking for a

different, what they think is deeper, gospel. They have concluded that Paul is the problem and Paul is holding up a mirror for them to see the source of the problem is their own hearts.

2. While not meant to soften the hard words he was about to deliver, Paul opens with calling them 'brethren' in making sure they know that he is for them and that he believes they are saved.
3. He then got to the heart of the matter. The issue was NOT his presentation of the gospel nor its truth. The issue was that the gospel, in all of its fullness, can only be understood in the spirit – with great implications for how we relate with one another and unbelievers. In grace, Jesus had open the door to elementary Christian principles, including salvation (together, the milk)...a door those in the Corinthian church stepped through.

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Yet, the gospel of grace also opens the 'solid food' door to forgiveness, contentment, peace with God, righteousness, Christian victory, freedom, and many other of what Paul refers to here in 1 Corinthians as the 'deep things of God'. And yet the Corinthians never darkened this 'solid food' doorway with their presence.

- A. Now, to be clear, Paul is not intimating that the milk is not a wonderful, essential, and joyful nutrient. Salvation and all the elementary truth they had received was and is a miracle! Yet, God saved us to live in the abundance of all of His word and it is in living we experience more of His power and promises as another miracle; the miracle of sanctification takes root in our hearts and minds.
- B. What Paul is saying is the gospel he shared with them is rich with spiritual meaning that had escaped them because they remained 40 year olds sitting in the diaper stage of spirituality. They were in Christ, but they were just babes in Christ. As I read this, I wondered if they said ouch or if Paul's accusation even registered with them.

- i. To be a babe in Christ means having received salvation and other elementary Biblical precepts (the milk), they never proceeded to live according to His righteousness. Instead, their thoughts and actions aligned with the world and their own self-righteousness. In a macro sense, Jesus is their Lord (at least for salvation purposes), but He has no authority in their daily living. Paul does not try to diagnose the cause of their stalled faith, he simply states it and as to why he knows it's stalled.
- ii. To be a babe in Christ, to have received His gift of salvation and other elementary Christian precepts (the milk), is a beautiful and precious gift (see **1 Peter 2:1-3**)! Yet the following picture painted by one commentator is a powerful reminder that we are born again NOT to remain babes, but to grow into God-fearing, God-loving, God-obeying disciples of Christ¹:

“Babes are attractive enough so long as they grow up, but a babe who remains a babe for twenty years is a tragedy. Babes are self-centered. They are dependent on others for all their needs. They have short attention spans. They go for things that glitter, and they have no sense of values. They are illiterate and ignorant of much they need to know. Their own wants are predominant. They are ruled by their appetites and move fitfully from one thing to another. They are unable to feed themselves, or to protect themselves, or to defend themselves. They cannot see beyond their own little world. They enjoy being the center of attention and soon learn how to get their share of it. They have no thought for the needs and concerns of others. They are demanding. They get themselves in the most frightful messes and seem blissfully unaware of it. They demand a great deal of care.

¹ John Phillips, *Exploring 1 Corinthians: An Expository Commentary*, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), 1 Co 1:10–4:21.

4. The trouble in view in our passage is the Corinthians did NOT grow up. *And so they did NOT receive the gospel.* Instead they were looking for something to satiate their carnal understanding and whims rather than living their lives for Jesus. *Just as we too often do, they brought in worldly wisdom to explain spiritual truths.* They were robbing themselves of the very blessings Jesus promises as we read in Matthew 5:6: *'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.'*
5. The Corinthians had settled for delicious milk when Jesus, through Paul, had laid out an entire banquet. *Yet, Paul could not force feed what they did NOT want.* The Corinthians were settling for a saving faith, when Jesus was offering far more. [*Am I? Are you?*]
6. You see, the Lord of their salvation was Jesus, but the lord of their lives was their carnality. *They had come to the altar, but were refusing to worship...Romans 12:1*, NASB says: *'Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.'*
7. The Greek word for carnal is sarkikos, meaning being characterized by the flesh (our passions, sensuality, and minds) and not the spirit. *The carnal man is in constant need of spiritual instruction since it never takes root and blooms.* They are often aware of Christ's requirements while refusing to live them out as they move from one excuse to another while never advancing their faith.

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Perhaps you have heard some of the excuses...*busyness*, I already know this stuff, *my friends, family, and co-workers tell me to keep my faith to myself*, I am church-hurt, *I am doing alright, especially when I look at _____*, I just want to love people, *I will get to that later*, I'm just not a spiritual person, *I go to church*, I listen to Christian podcasts all the time, *God knows my heart*, or I don't want to become legalistic, are a few of the many excuses.

8. Paul moves on to list four fruits of their babe-hood, including immaturity, envy, strife, and division.
- A. The first is their immaturity...their spiritual growth had stalled out. They were looking to add to or replace the gospel of Jesus Christ with some form of worldly gospel.
 - B. The final three are relational in nature and speak of man clamoring over man for position, power, and advancement regarding the things of man rather than tending to the spiritual things of Christ. At the end of v3, we note Paul's words of them "behaving like mere men?". And there it is, the Christian's testimony is to look and be NOTHING like the world!
 - C. Rather than tearing one another down they (and we) are to be functioning in the supernatural unity of the Holy Spirit in bringing Jesus glory. Rather than envy in man, they were to bring forward goodwill and kindness toward their brothers and sisters in Christ. Rather than strife and discord, they were to foster Godly peace. Rather than divisions (which are evidence of an unhealthy relationship with Jesus), they were to set aside their preferences and desires in favor of building one another to receive and live God's will in making disciple-making disciples (the Great Commission).

Paul wrote beautifully on this same topic in [Ephesians 4:14-15](#), NLT:

Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. ¹⁵ Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.

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VII. Growing in Spiritual Maturity

1. Some thoughts on how we grow in spiritual maturity OR being increasingly Christ-like are in order as we move toward our close today.
 - A. First, while we can be obstructionist, spiritual maturity is a work of God (Ro 12:1-2; 2 Cor 3:18). This means we must walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:16-25; Ro 8:5-14; Eph 5:18, Mt 5) that God may rule rather than our carnality;
 - B. Second, carnality opens the door for our depraved hearts and the evil machinations of Satan to take root. We must remember that while often times manifesting in the flesh, this is a war in the spiritual realm so we must strap on the armor of God (Eph 6:10-18) and use spiritual weapons (2 Cor 10).
 - C. Third, become purposeful, dedicated disciples of Christ with hearts to make more disciples as He commands each of us to do. While this category can become quite expansive, I will just point us to a handful of items:
 - i. Move from consuming God's word to living His word;
 - ii. Purpose to root your identity in Christ and not in the things or people of this world;
 - iii. Pursue unity in the Spirit as a maturing saint and not out of fear of conflict or just being nice;
 - iv. Be an active part in building His church and fulfilling the great commission;
 - v. Living and giving God's grace, forgiveness, compassion, and love while having a heart to serve Him and others;
 - vi. Let God use the hardships and corrections of life to sanctify you rather than you avoiding or resisting them;
 - vii. Live in absolute surrender to God's will.

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VIII. Closing: Spiritual Formation

1. If you have never received the milk of the gospel, even now Jesus is inviting you to come and dine with Him.

2. If you have confessed your faith in Christ, I pray that Paul has gripped your heart as he gripped mine in studying this passage. *Is the church so different in our culture today?* Like the Corinthians, we have false teachers and many who are stalled in their faith along with envy, strife, and division. *We are real-time witnesses of immaturity breeding disobedience while building a decidedly un-Christlike testimony.*
3. So church, Paul is calling us to also work out our faith in fear and trembling. *He is calling us to lay down our lives and live in the deep things of Christ as His bride.* We can fool others and even ourselves as babes in Christ, but make no mistake God knows and He is calling and empowering us into ever deeper spiritual formation.

[Prayer]

5-Day Devotional

1 Corinthians 3:1-4

When Christians Remain Babies

Day 1: The Milk Is a Gift, But the Banquet Awaits

Reading: 1 Pe 2:1-3

Devotional: Peter urges believers to crave the pure spiritual nourishment that leads to growth, just as a newborn craves milk, so that through it they may grow up into salvation. Devotional: Salvation is a miracle. The moment you crossed from death into life, heaven celebrated. The milk of the gospel — forgiveness, justification, the promise of eternal life — is not a lesser thing. It is a glorious thing. But God never intended it to be your permanent diet. He saved you to grow. He opened the door to the banquet and extended an invitation to come further in. The tragedy is not receiving the milk. The tragedy is refusing to move beyond it. Today, give thanks for the gift of salvation, and then ask God honestly: have I grown since the day I first believed?

When did you last learn something new from God's Word that genuinely changed the way you lived? Identify one area of your faith where you have remained stationary. Write it down. Bring it before God in prayer and ask Him to stir in you a hunger for more.

Day 2: The Carnal Christian and the Mirror

Reading: Ro 8:5-14

Devotional: Paul contrasts the mindset of the flesh, which leads to death, with the mindset of the Spirit, which leads to life and peace, urging believers to put to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit. Devotional: The carnal Christian is not a lost person. He is a saved person who has handed the keys of daily life back to his flesh. He knows the requirements of Christ and finds creative reasons not to meet them. The excuses are familiar because many of us have spoken them: I am too busy, I already know this, God knows my heart. Paul does not offer sympathy for these excuses. He holds up a mirror. The reflection is not what we want to see — a forty-year-old in a high chair. But the mirror is an act of love. You cannot fix what you refuse to see.

Which excuses have you used most often to justify spiritual stagnation in your own life? Choose one excuse you have leaned on and deliberately dismantle it this week through a specific act of obedience — attending a Bible study, serving someone, or opening your Bible when you would normally scroll.

Day 3: Envy, Strife, and Division — The Fruit of a Stalled Faith
Reading: Eph 4:14-15

Devotional: Paul describes the goal of spiritual maturity as no longer being tossed about by false teaching or deception, but instead speaking truth in love and growing in every way into Christ, who is the head of the church. Devotional: The Corinthians were

not fighting over trivial preferences. They were fighting over teachers, status, and position — and in doing so they were behaving like people who had never met Jesus. Paul's indictment is sobering: their relational chaos was evidence of spiritual immaturity. The church is not a competition. It is a body. When one part fights against another, the whole body suffers. Envy, strife, and division are not personality conflicts. They are spiritual symptoms. They reveal who is actually sitting on the throne of your life. A maturing believer does not ask how to get their way. They ask how to honor Jesus.

Is there a relationship in your church community marked by tension, envy, or unresolved conflict? What does that reveal about your current spiritual condition? Take one step toward reconciliation or unity this week. That step may be a conversation, a prayer, or simply choosing to speak well of someone you have spoken poorly of.

Day 4: The Living Sacrifice and the Surrendered Life Reading: Ro 12:1-2

Devotional: Paul urges believers, in response to God's mercy, to offer their entire lives as a living sacrifice — holy and pleasing to God — and to be transformed by the renewing of their minds rather than being conformed to the pattern of this world. **Devotional:** Spiritual maturity is not self-improvement. It is surrender. Paul makes clear that transformation is a work of God, but it requires our cooperation. We present ourselves. God does the renewing. The carnal Christian has come to the altar for salvation but refuses to remain there for sanctification. He wants Jesus as Savior but not as Lord of Monday through Saturday. The surrendered life is not a burden. It is the very thing we were made for. The person who lays down their life for Christ does not lose it. They finally find it. The bib comes off the moment we stop insisting on feeding ourselves.

In what areas of your daily life have you withheld surrender from God? What are you afraid will happen if you give Him full control? Spend fifteen minutes in prayer today presenting a specific area of your life — your finances, your relationships, your ambitions — to God as an act of worship and surrender.

Day 5: Growing Up Into Christ — The Call to Make Disciples Reading: Mt 28:18-20

Devotional: Jesus commissions His followers with all authority behind the command to go, make disciples of all nations, baptize them, and teach them to obey everything He commanded, with the promise that He is with them always. **Devotional:** Spiritual maturity is never merely personal. The Great Commission is the clearest evidence that God intends for His people to grow up and then turn around to help others do the same. The church in Corinth was so consumed with its own preferences and divisions that it had no capacity to make disciples. A babe in Christ cannot reproduce spiritual maturity in others. But a growing believer — one who is moving from the milk to the meat, from carnality to surrender — becomes a conduit of grace for the people around them. The

goal is not simply your own growth. The goal is the glory of Christ through a church that is becoming more and more like Him.

Who in your life is watching you to see what following Jesus actually looks like? What are they seeing? Identify one person in your sphere of influence who is either far from Christ or stalled in their faith. Commit to praying for them daily this week and look for one intentional opportunity to speak truth in love into their life.

Small Group Study Guide

1 Corinthians 3:1-4

When Christians Remain Babies

Opening Prayer: Pray that the Lord would open your eyes to see and understand His word as you discuss the sermon.

Key Takeaways: Query the group for takeaways first...you may stay with one or more of those.

1. Spiritual immaturity is a choice, not just a condition. Paul's indictment of the Corinthians was not that they lacked access to solid spiritual food. They had sat under Paul and Apollos. The problem was that they had never tried to chew. Remaining a spiritual baby, for the believer with access to God's Word and the Holy Spirit, is ultimately a matter of the will.
2. The gospel is far richer than the entry point of salvation. Salvation is a miracle and a precious gift. But the gospel also opens the door to forgiveness, contentment, peace with God, righteousness, Christian victory, and freedom — what Paul calls the deep things of God. Many believers receive the milk and never pursue the banquet God has set before them.
3. Carnality reveals itself in relationships. The fruits of spiritual immaturity Paul identifies — envy, strife, and division — are relational. When believers are ruled by their flesh rather than the Spirit, it shows most clearly in how they treat one another. A carnal church looks indistinguishable from the world.
4. The gospel creates a new people, not just improved people. The gospel does not incrementally make bad people slightly better. It overthrows worldly assumptions about identity, power, status, relationships, and purpose through inward transformation. A stalled faith is one that has accepted the entry of the gospel while resisting its ongoing revolution.
5. Spiritual maturity is God's work, but we are not passive. Growth is a work of God, but carnality obstructs it. Believers are called to walk in the Spirit, put on the armor of God, root their identity in Christ, pursue unity, and live in surrender to God's will — not as a means of earning favor, but as the natural posture of a disciple who is genuinely growing.

Discussion Questions: Did the Holy Spirit prompt any questions with you? Start with those.

1. The sermon opens with an illustration of a forty-two-year-old still drinking from a bottle at the dinner table. What was your honest gut reaction to that image when you first heard it applied to the Christian life?
2. Paul distinguishes three kinds of people with three defining questions: the natural man asks "What do I want?", the carnal Christian asks "How do I get my way?", and the spiritual Christian asks "How can I honor Jesus?" Without putting anyone on the spot, which of those questions most honestly describes the posture of your heart in the past month?
3. The sermon makes the point that the Corinthians had access to the meat — they had sat under Paul and Apollos — and still chose the bottle. What are some of the most common reasons believers today have access to solid biblical teaching and still remain spiritually stalled? Which of those reasons feel closest to home for you personally?
4. The sermon lists a number of common excuses for remaining spiritually immature: busyness, church hurt, "I already know this stuff," "God knows my heart," fear of legalism, and others. Which of those excuses have you heard most often — or perhaps used yourself? What makes those excuses so easy to believe?
5. Paul identifies four fruits of spiritual immaturity in the Corinthian church: immaturity itself, envy, strife, and division. He then asks if they are behaving like "mere men." In what ways do you see these same fruits showing up in the broader church today? In your own local church context?
6. The sermon draws a sharp contrast: "The lord of their salvation was Jesus, but the lord of their lives was their carnality." What is the practical difference between Jesus being Lord of your salvation and Jesus being Lord of your daily life? Can you point to a specific area where that gap exists in your own walk?
7. John Phillips describes a twenty-year-old spiritual baby as "a tragedy." He lists characteristics: self-centered, dependent on others, ruled by appetites, demanding attention, unaware of the messes they create. Which of those characteristics do you think is most commonly overlooked or normalized in church culture today?
8. The sermon says the gospel "continually calls us out of sin AND up into biblical manhood or womanhood." What does that upward call look like in a practical, daily sense? What would it look like in your own life this week?
9. The sermon offers several marks of growing toward spiritual maturity: moving from consuming God's Word to living it, rooting identity in Christ rather than the

world, pursuing Spirit-led unity, serving others, and living in surrender to God's will. Which of these is the area of greatest growth for you right now? Which is the area of greatest resistance?

10. The sermon closes with this challenge directed at the whole church: "We can fool others and even ourselves as babes in Christ, but make no mistake God knows and He is calling and empowering us to grow in spiritual maturity." What would it look like for your small group specifically to hold one another accountable to that growth — not in a legalistic way, but in the way that genuine community is supposed to function?

Practical Applications: Query the group for applications first...you may explore one or more of those.

1. Identify one area of your life where you know what God's Word requires and have consistently chosen not to obey it. Bring that area before God in honest prayer this week and ask Him to reveal the root of your resistance.
2. Audit your relationship with Scripture. Are you primarily a consumer of Bible content — sermons, podcasts, devotionals — or are you regularly sitting with the text itself, studying it, and allowing it to shape your decisions? Make one concrete change to move from consumption toward application.
3. Ask someone who knows you well and will tell you the truth: "Where do you see spiritual immaturity most clearly in my life?" Then listen without defending yourself.
4. Revisit the three questions from the sermon — "What do I want?", "How do I get my way?", "How can I honor Jesus?" — at the start of your next two or three group meetings as a brief check-in. Let those questions serve as a spiritual temperature gauge for the group.
5. Identify one way your group can actively participate in the Great Commission together — whether through a service opportunity, an outreach effort, or intentionally inviting someone into your group who needs community and the gospel.
6. Pray together specifically against the relational sins Paul names: envy, strife, and division. Ask God to make your group a living demonstration of Spirit-led unity in contrast to the pattern of the world.

Closing Prayer Points:

- Thank God for the miracle of salvation — the milk He has freely given.

- Confess honestly, as a group, the ways you have settled for the bottle when God has prepared a banquet.
- Ask God to do His sanctifying work in each person present, and to make your group a community that spurs one another toward genuine maturity.
- Pray for your church — that it would be marked not by envy, strife, and division, but by the supernatural unity of the Holy Spirit.

Discussion Questions

1 Corinthians 3:1-4

When Christians Remain Babies

1. Paul describes the Corinthians as spiritual babes not because they lacked access to deeper truth but because they never pursued it — in what areas of your faith have you settled for milk when a full meal has been available to you?
2. The sermon draws a sharp distinction between the natural man, the carnal Christian, and the spiritual man, with each defined by the questions they ask — which question most honestly reflects the driving motivation behind your daily decisions right now?
3. Paul identifies envy, strife, and division as fruits of spiritual immaturity in the Corinthian church — how might those same fruits be quietly present in your own church community, and what is your personal responsibility in addressing them?
4. The sermon argues that the gospel does not merely make bad people better but creates an entirely new people with a new allegiance and a new way of living — in what specific ways does your daily life reflect that radical newness rather than a slightly improved version of your old self?
5. John Phillips describes a spiritual babe as self-centered, demanding, and blissfully unaware of the mess they are in — which of those characteristics do you find most convicting when you honestly examine your own spiritual life?
6. The Corinthians had made Jesus Lord of their salvation but not Lord of their daily living — where in your life is there a gap between what you confess Jesus to be and the authority you actually give Him over your choices?
7. Romans 12:1 calls believers to present themselves as living sacrifices as their spiritual act of worship — what does it look like practically for you to come to the altar and actually stay there in worship rather than walking away unchanged?
8. The sermon warns that carnality opens the door for both our depraved hearts and the schemes of Satan to take root — how seriously do you treat the spiritual nature of the battle against immaturity, and are you actively using the spiritual weapons available to you?
9. Paul could not force-feed solid food to people who did not want it, and the sermon asks directly whether you have settled for a saving faith when Jesus is offering far more — what would it cost you personally to hunger and thirst for righteousness as described in Matthew 5:6?

10. The sermon closes by stating that we can fool others and even ourselves as spiritual babes, but God knows — what would it look like for you to stop performing spiritual maturity and instead surrender to the process of genuine sanctification that God both initiates and empowers?

Dinner Conversation Starters

1 Corinthians 3:1-4

When Christians Remain Babies

1. “Milk or Solid Food?”

Paul says the Corinthians were still needing “milk” instead of “solid food” spiritually.

Question: What is one area where you feel God is inviting you to grow deeper in your faith right now?

2. Signs of Spiritual Immaturity

The sermon mentioned envy, strife, and division as signs that the Corinthians were acting more like the world than like Christ.

Question: Where do we see these attitudes show up today—in our home, school, work, church, or friendships—and how can we respond differently?

3. From Knowing to Living

It’s possible to know Bible truths but not actually live them out.

Question: What is one Bible truth we already know that we need to practice more consistently as a family?

4. Who Is Really in Charge?

The sermon challenged us to ask whether Jesus is only “Lord for salvation” or truly Lord of our daily lives.

Question: What is one daily decision where we need to let Jesus have more authority?

5. Helping Each Other Grow Up

The sermon said we should not only remove our own “bib,” but also help others grow in faith.

Question: How can we encourage each other this week to become more spiritually mature without being harsh or judgmental?

Family Conversation Guide for Children & Early Teens

1 Corinthians 3:1-4

When Christians Remain Babies

AGES 5-7: SIMPLIFYING THE MESSAGE APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Choose Kindness Instead of “Me First”**: Spiritual babies often focus only on what they want. Growing in Jesus means learning to love others.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) When you don't get your way, what do you usually feel like doing?
- (b) What would it look like to honor Jesus when a friend chooses something different than you?
- (c) How can we practice saying, “That’s okay,” or “You can go first”?

2. **Don't Join the “Team Against Someone”**: Paul warned against division. Christians should not create groups that leave people out or tear people down.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) Have you ever seen someone get left out? How did it make you feel?
- (b) What could you do if your friends are being mean to someone?
- (c) How did Jesus treat people who were left out?

3. **Use Screens in a Jesus-Honoring Way**: Growing spiritually means letting Jesus be Lord over everyday choices, including entertainment.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) How can we tell if a game or video is helping our heart or hurting our heart?
- (b) What should we do if screen time makes us angry or unkind?
- (c) How can we use technology in a way that pleases Jesus?

AGES 8-12: BUILDING UNDERSTANDING APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Root Your Identity in Christ, Not Popularity**: Carnal Christians live like “mere men,” chasing approval, status, and comparison. Spiritual maturity means knowing who we are in Christ.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) Where do kids your age feel pressure to “fit in”?
- (b) How can wanting to be popular lead us to act in ways that don't honor Jesus?
- (c) What does God say is true about you, even when others don't notice you?

2. **Stop Envy Before It Becomes Strife**: Paul named envy and strife as signs of spiritual immaturity.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) Why is it hard to be happy when someone else gets something we wanted?
- (b) What is the difference between feeling disappointed and becoming jealous?
- (c) How can we celebrate someone else's blessing this week?

3. **Practice Digital Discernment:** Mature believers are not tossed around by false or worldly ideas. They learn to recognize what is true and what is spiritually unhealthy.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) What kinds of online content make people more selfish, angry, jealous, or disrespectful?
- (b) How can we tell if something online is shaping us away from Jesus?
- (c) What should we do if a friend sends something inappropriate or mean?

AGES 11-15: DEEPENING THE CONNECTION APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Refuse Drama, Gossip, and Division:** Envy, strife, and division reveal spiritual immaturity. Mature Christians pursue unity and peace.

Discussion Questions:

What makes drama spread so quickly in middle school or high school?
How can group chats become places of division instead of encouragement?
What would it look like to be a peacemaker without ignoring truth or enabling sin?

2. **Let Jesus Shape Your Relationships:** The gospel creates a new way of living, including how we treat people, handle conflict, and pursue purity.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) How do people your age sometimes compromise their values to keep a relationship?
- (b) What are signs that a friendship or dating relationship is pulling someone away from Jesus?
- (c) What boundaries help relationships become healthier and more God-honoring?

3. **Don't Let Algorithms Disciple You:** Spiritual maturity requires walking in the Spirit, not being shaped by the flesh or worldly wisdom.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) Who or what is discipling you most during the week—God's Word, friends, influencers, entertainment, or something else?
- (b) What messages online sound wise or funny but actually pull people away from Jesus?
- (c) How can you take control of your digital habits instead of letting them control you?

Tips for Parents

- Be patient and listen: Give your child time to think and respond.
- Relate to everyday life: Use real-life examples and stories familiar to your child to make abstract concepts more tangible.
- Encourage questions: Let your son or daughter know it's okay to ask questions, even if things don't make sense right away.
- Share personal insights: Tell a personal story about a time you experienced these themes, adapting as needed for age appropriateness.

Family Conversation Guide for Gen Z

1 Corinthians 3:1-4

When Christians Remain Babies

1. Grow Past “Consumer Christianity”

Bible Reference: 1 Corinthians 3:1-2; Hebrews 5:12-14; James 1:22

Application: Spiritual maturity means moving from simply hearing sermons, attending church, watching Christian content, or knowing the “right answers” to actually obeying Jesus in daily life.

Scenario: You listen to worship music, follow Christian influencers, go to youth group or college ministry, and know Bible verses—but your speech, dating choices, online habits, and friend-group behavior look almost identical to everyone else’s.

Discussion: Where are you tempted to consume Christian content without letting it change how you live?

2. Refuse Friend-Group Division and Drama

Bible Reference: 1 Corinthians 3:3-4; Ephesians 4:1-3; Romans 12:18

Application: Paul says envy, strife, and division are signs of spiritual immaturity. A maturing Christian does not fuel drama, take pride in cliques, or build identity around “my people versus your people.”

Scenario: A group chat starts dividing over who is invited, who is fake, who did what, or who everyone should stop talking to. Screenshots are shared. People are pressured to “pick a side.”

Discussion: How can you pursue peace and truth in a group setting without becoming passive, fake, or part of the drama?

3. Let Jesus Define Your Identity, Not the Group

Bible Reference: Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:1-4; 1 Peter 2:9

Application: The gospel gives you a new identity in Christ. Spiritual immaturity looks to popularity, appearance, relationship status, friend approval, or online validation to feel important.

Scenario: You feel pressure to dress a certain way, post certain pictures, joke about certain things, hide your convictions, or act differently depending on who you are with.

Discussion: Where do you feel the strongest pressure to change yourself in order to be accepted?

4. Don't Let Algorithms Disciple You

Bible Reference: Romans 12:1-2; Colossians 2:8; Psalm 101:3

Application: Spiritual maturity requires being transformed by God's truth instead of being shaped by worldly values. Your feed is forming you—your desires, your humor, your view of beauty, sexuality, success, politics, money, and truth.

Scenario: TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, podcasts, gaming streams, or influencers constantly tell you what is normal, attractive, powerful, funny, or worth chasing.

Discussion: What online voices are shaping your thoughts and desires more than Scripture?

These points aim to empower Gen Z to live out their faith genuinely and courageously in various aspects of their daily lives, reflecting Biblical integrity, compassion, and steadfastness.