



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Sermon Series: Welcome to Corinth, Part 4

Sermon Title: Better Together

Speaker/ Date: Armin Sommer/ October 7, 2018

1 Corinthians 3

Paul points out several truths as we do a “fly-over” of 1 Corinthians 3.

Truth #1: Spiritual competition marks us as immature.

1 Corinthians 3:1–4

“You folks are acting like big spiritual babies.”

Truth #2: God determines growth.

1 Corinthians 3:5–9

In this age of idolizing numbers and formulas for growth, we forget that God determines growth.

Truth #3: God assesses success

1 Corinthians 3:10–15

The ultimate question for all our work is, “*What remains?*”

Truth #4: Competition vandalizes God’s work

1 Corinthians 3:16

Paul is addressing the Corinthians collectively. “*You people together make up God’s temple.*”

1 Corinthians 3:17

God doesn’t merely nod and brush it off when someone damages His work. He says, “*You do that, and there are going to be terrible consequences.*”

Big Idea: We are to tenaciously guard our unity with fellow believers.

Ephesians 4:2–3

We are to take great pains to be zealous to guard our unity. God calls us to put up with one another when the other person doesn’t deserve it.

Why so important? Two Key reasons.

1. Our Unity Supports Our Witness

It's what Jesus himself prayed the night of his arrest.

John 17:20, 23

One of the reasons why people reject Jesus is not because of Jesus, but because of his followers. When we bash and slander other believers or other churches, it confirms to unbelievers that we really are hypocrites. We ought to bless any church that faithfully stands for the gospel.

2. Our Unity Guards the Glory of God.

God is going to hold us accountable. **1 Corinthians 3:17**

There are two different words the NT uses for the Temple. One word was *hieron*, referred to the whole temple complex, with its various walled courts. The other word was *naos* spoke of the dwelling place of God's glory within the Temple, in the most sacred room known as the Holy of Holies, where God's visible glory hovered over the ark of the covenant.

Now, when a person violates the unity of the Body of Christ, it's like going into the Holy of Holies – that most sacred place in God's Temple, and spray painting graffiti onto the ark of the covenant, the place where God's glory hovered.

There are some dumb things which people allow to cause division

Our favorite leaders.

1 Corinthians 1:10–13 - Unity is more precious than loyalty to any leader.

Issues of preference and taste.

Most church splits don't occur over essential doctrines. They are result of preference and taste. Our preferences in regard to corporate worship style have nothing to do with spiritual maturity. We must not treat our brothers and sisters as if we have different eternal destinies.

Ministry target

The early church had two distinct targets. Peter's calling was to minister primarily to Jews (**Galatians 2:7-10**). Paul's target was the Gentiles (**Acts 15:5-11**). To criticize a church for a difference in its calling is foolish.

Peripheral theological differences.

Most of our divisions are over things like

The timing of the Lord's return; whether all the gifts of the Holy Spirit are for today; the sovereign choice of God *versus* free-will.

In each case, there are multiple interpretations. Godly Christ-followers have disagreed on each of these for centuries.

God is blessing a variety of Christian movements. Lets not fight over our favorite leaders, taste and preference, non-core theological issues, differences in ministry emphases, or simple blind spots of which we're not aware. No one has it all exactly right. Above all, remember we're on the same side.

Discussion Questions:

- What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?
- 1 Corinthians 3:10–15 tells us that one day, Jesus will evaluate how Christians lived their lives. We will be rewarded for the actions we performed that had eternal value. If our actions were only focused on the temporary concerns of this world, we will not be rewarded for those things. What are some things that you do which have eternal value? What are some things in your life that have temporary earthly value?
- What are important issues and topics in the church that are of eternal value? What are things/issues that take place in church which are of earthly value? Are there any that are earthly and eternally valuable?
- Describe a time when you chose to avoid being caught up in a dividing matter. What was the result?
- Have you ever been caught up in a movement that caused division in the church? Did it leave any lasting impacts on your spiritual life?
- Is there any issue that is acceptable for Christians to be divided over? Explain