

Activating Our Position in Christ

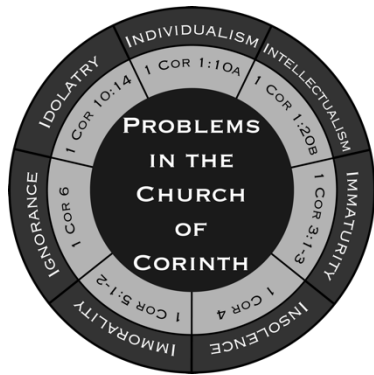
1 Corinthians 3:1-4

The Growing Pains of Spiritual Maturity

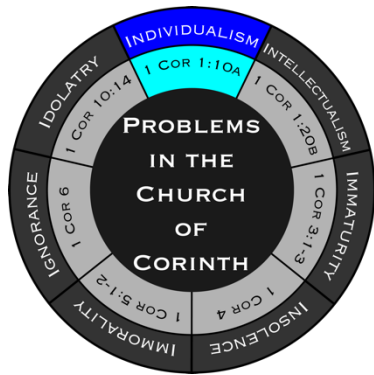
We began our study of First Corinthians by looking at the overall focus of the Letter...

We saw where there were several problems in the church that were causing serious issues...

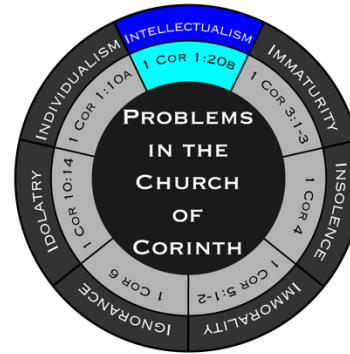
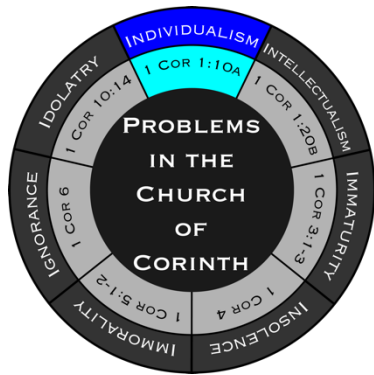
→ Pic 1 – Problems



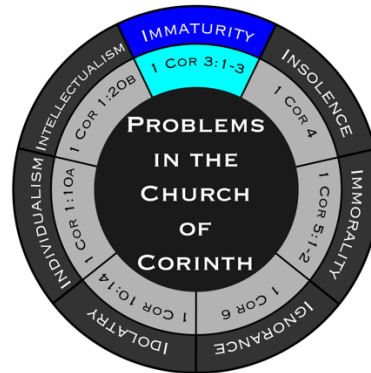
→ Pic 2 – Individualism



→ Pic 3 – Intellectualism



→ Pic 4 – Immaturity



1 Corinthians 3:1–4 (ESV) — But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, 3 for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? 4 For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not being merely human?

1. The DESTINATION is Spiritual Maturity

1 Corinthians 3:1 (ESV) — But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ.

There are THREE KEY WORDS here we need to look at closer...

“brothers”, “spiritual”, and “flesh”...

The Bible divides people into TWO MAJOR CATEGORIES...

Lost & Saved ...

Paul earlier refers to them as...

Spiritual & Unspiritual...

The Spiritual person & Natural person...

1 Corinthians 2:14–15 (ESV) — The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one.

- **Our POSITION in Christ is DETERMINED at CONVERSION**

When a person gives their life to Jesus, they are born again...

They become a new creation!

2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV) — Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Within the major category of “Spiritual Person” referring to our POSITION in Christ as saved, there are TWO MAJOR DIVISIONS...

1 Corinthians 3:1 (ESV) — But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ.

- **Our PRACTICE in Christ is DEVELOPED through SANCTIFICATION**

When a person is born again they are adopted into God’s family...

The Father begins the process of nurturing and developing His child!

Philippians 1:6 (ESV) — And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

- 1. The DESTINATION is Spiritual Maturity**

2. The DIET for Spiritual Maturity

1 Corinthians 3:2 (ESV) — I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready

Paul was with the Corinthians for 18 months... (Acts 18:11)

He was followed by Apollos...

The focused diet was primarily milk...

So, first question...

What is our food?

➤ **Our food is God's WORD and God's WILL!**

→ **Milk**

1 Peter 2:2 (ESV) — Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation

→ **Bread**

Matthew 4:4 (ESV) — But he answered, “It is written, “ ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ ”

→ **Meat**

Hebrews 5:12b–13 (ESV) — ... You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child.

→ **Honey**

Psalms 119:103 (ESV) — How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

→ **Our food is also doing God's will!**

John 4:31–34 (ESV) — Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” So the disciples said to

one another, “Has anyone brought him something to eat?” Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.

→ **Feasting on God's Word – Pic 1**

FEASTING ON GOD'S WORD

GOD'S MEAT	GOD'S MILK
JESUS' HEAVENLY WORK	JESUS' EARTHLY WORK

→ **Feasting on God's Word – Pic 2**

FEASTING ON GOD'S WORD

GOD'S MEAT	GOD'S MILK
JESUS' HEAVENLY WORK (HEBREWS 5:9-10)	JESUS' EARTHLY WORK (HEBREWS 5:7-8)

Hebrews 5:7–8 (ESV) — In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.

Hebrews 5:9–10 (ESV) — And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,

being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

→ Feasting on God's Word – Pic 3

FEASTING ON GOD'S WORD

GOD'S MEAT	GOD'S MILK
JESUS' HEAVENLY WORK (HEBREWS 5:9-10) HIS PRIESTLY INTERCESSION	JESUS' EARTHLY WORK (HEBREWS 5:7-8) HIS PRIESTLY INTERVENTION

→ Feasting on God's Word – Pic 4

FEASTING ON GOD'S WORD

GOD'S MEAT	GOD'S MILK
JESUS' HEAVENLY WORK (HEBREWS 5:9-10) HIS PRIESTLY INTERCESSION THE LION OF JUDAH	JESUS' EARTHLY WORK (HEBREWS 5:7-8) HIS PRIESTLY INTERVENTION THE SACRIFICIAL LAMB

→ Feasting on God's Word – Pic 5

FEASTING ON GOD'S WORD

GOD'S MEAT	GOD'S MILK
JESUS' HEAVENLY WORK (HEBREWS 5:9-10) HIS PRIESTLY INTERCESSION THE LION OF JUDAH THE REIGNING KING	JESUS' EARTHLY WORK (HEBREWS 5:7-8) HIS PRIESTLY INTERVENTION THE SACRIFICIAL LAMB THE SUFFERING SERVANT

→ Feasting on God's Word – Pic 6

FEASTING ON GOD'S WORD

GOD'S MEAT	GOD'S MILK
JESUS' HEAVENLY WORK (HEBREWS 5:9-10) HIS PRIESTLY INTERCESSION THE LION OF JUDAH THE REIGNING KING HIS POWERFUL RULE	JESUS' EARTHLY WORK (HEBREWS 5:7-8) HIS PRIESTLY INTERVENTION THE SACRIFICIAL LAMB THE SUFFERING SERVANT HIS PROMISED RETURN

→ Feasting on God's Word – Pic 7

FEASTING ON GOD'S WORD

GOD'S MEAT	GOD'S MILK
JESUS' HEAVENLY WORK (HEBREWS 5:9-10) HIS PRIESTLY INTERCESSION THE LION OF JUDAH THE REIGNING KING HIS POWERFUL RULE	JESUS' EARTHLY WORK (HEBREWS 5:7-8) HIS PRIESTLY INTERVENTION THE SACRIFICIAL LAMB THE SUFFERING SERVANT HIS PROMISED RETURN
FEEDING ON THE MEAT (HEBREWS 5:11-14)	FEEDING ON THE MILK (HEBREWS 6:1-2)

Hebrews 5:11–14 (ESV) — About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of

hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

Hebrews 6:1–2 (ESV) — Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

1. The DESTINATION is Spiritual Maturity

2. The DIET for Spiritual Maturity

3. The DIFFICULTY of Spiritual Maturity

1 Corinthians 3:3–4 (ESV) — for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not being merely human?

- **The things of this world are the LURES Satan will use to arouse our fleshly LONGINGS**

1 John 2:15–16 (ESV) — Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires

of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.

The things of this world are temporal and not eternal!

2 Corinthians 4:17–18 (ESV) — For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

- **The flesh is not simply the ACCUMULATION of SINFUL habits, but the ORIENTATION toward SELFISH living!**

Genesis 3:5 (ESV) — For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

This is where the flesh was duped into a fatal belief!

“I can make my life work without God”

I want to show you something else...

Genesis 3:5 (ESV) — For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

The selfish flesh thinks it knows good and evil...

However, ONLY the spiritually mature believers are able to begin knowing that!

Hebrews 5:14 (ESV) — But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

I've always said that the greatest difficulty of the Christian life is that it is SO DAILY!

Living in Spiritual Maturity is NOT EASY!

If it was easy everyone would do it!

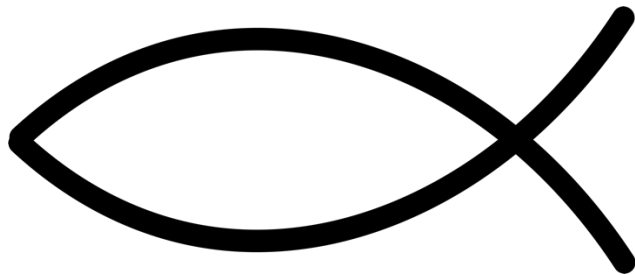
→ ILLUSTRATION – Salmon

In the New Testament times there was a symbol that became associated with Christianity...

It was not the cross...

It was the fish...

→ Pic – Fish Symbol



This symbol was an acrostic for the Greek word for fish

Jesus Christ God's Son Salvation...

I say all this to point out that there is a particular type of fish that reminds me a lot of the difficulty it is in Believers developing into Spiritually Mature followers of Jesus...

It has very little to do with intellect...

John 16:12–13a (ESV) — I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth ...

The fish that reminds me of what it is like to be growing in Spiritual Maturity is the SALMON...

➤ **MATURING believers are constantly traveling UPSTREAM against cultural CURRENTS with evil PREDATORS seeking them as PREY!**

**Activating Our Position in Christ
1 Corinthians 3:1-4
The Growing Pains of Spiritual Maturity**

1. The _____ is Spiritual Maturity

➤ Our _____ in Christ is _____ at

_____.

➤ Our _____ in Christ is _____ through

_____.

2. The _____ for Spiritual Maturity

➤ Our food is God's _____ and God's _____!

3. The _____ of Spiritual Maturity

➤ The things of this world are the _____ Satan will use to
arouse our fleshly _____.

➤ The flesh is not simply the _____ of
_____ habits, but the _____ toward
_____ living!

➤ _____ believers are constantly traveling _____
against cultural _____ with evil _____
seeking them as _____!

FEASTING ON GOD'S WORD

GOD'S MEAT	GOD'S MILK
JESUS' HEAVENLY WORK (HEBREWS 5:9-10) HIS PRIESTLY INTERCESSION THE LION OF JUDAH THE REIGNING KING HIS POWERFUL RULE	JESUS' EARTHLY WORK (HEBREWS 5:7-8) HIS PRIESTLY INTERVENTION THE SACRIFICIAL LAMB THE SUFFERING SERVANT HIS PROMISED RETURN
FEEDING ON THE MEAT (HEBREWS 5:11-14)	FEEDING ON THE MILK (HEBREWS 6:1-2)