

GROW
Who Am I Talking To Today?
1 Corinthians 3:1-23

Do you see yourself as a growing Christian? Do you feel that you are EQUIPPED to not only develop your OWN spiritual life, but also to help to develop the faith of others? Your answer is extremely important, and NO ONE ELSE can determine your answer for you. You have been given EVERYTHING YOU NEED for a rich, satisfying, and productive spiritual life! Let's read what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3.

1 Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly--mere infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. 3 You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? 4 For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere human beings? 5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe--as the Lord has assigned to each his task. 6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 8 The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. 9 For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building. 10 By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13 their 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 person's work. 14 If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. 15 If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved--even though only as one escaping through the flames. 16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple. 18 Do not deceive yourselves. If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age, you should become "fools" so that you may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness"; 20 and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile." 21 So then, no more boasting about human leaders! **All things are yours, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future--all are yours, 23 and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.**

What does it mean to be SPIRITUAL?

Spiritual people experience intimate FELLOWSHIP with God. [2:10-12]

10 these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. 11 For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.

Spiritual [Pneumatikos] (Vs. 1) – One who is filled with and governed by the Spirit of God. Spirit-minded. One whose thoughts, precepts, and opinions are ascribable to the Holy Spirit working in the soul, **one exposed to the wind!**

*Spiritual people recognize and embrace the Spirit's indwelling presence. **[Vs. 16]**
16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?

- This is a PERMANENT reality for those who truly belong to Christ!
- This is also a RELATIONSHIP that can WAX and WANE with effort or lack!
- *NO spiritual level is ever permanently achieved this side of heaven.

Spiritual people live as humble SERVANTS and BUILDERS. [Vs. 5-7]

5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe--as the Lord has **assigned** to each his task. 6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but **God has been making it grow**. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

- They are focused on accomplishing GOD'S PURPOSES on this earth.
 - They see themselves as SERVANTS rather than CELEBRITIES! **[We should too!]**
 - They have a BALANCE between building up their faith and the faith of others.
- Jude **CONTRASTED** spiritual people with unsaved people in his N.T. letter.

Jude 1:17-21 NASB

17 But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, 18 that they were saying to you, "In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts." 19 These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit. 20 But you, beloved, **building yourselves up** on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.

Sadly, Paul COULD NOT speak to the people of Corinth as to spiritual people! He had to address them like BABIES, as if they were still LOST people! **(Vs. 1)**

What does it mean to be WORLDLY?

***First, this is NOT an assertion that these people are unsaved!**

- He equates the appearance of ongoing immaturity with worldliness.
- Yet, the FOUNDATION is always secure! **1 Corinthians 3:11-13, 14-15 NIV**

11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13 their 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 person's work. 14 If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. 15 If it is burned up, the builder will **suffer loss** but yet will be saved--even though only as one escaping through the flames.

-Paul's terms: **Old Man vs. the New Man [Romans 6]**

*Those who are not properly coming to terms with their NEW nature.

**"SUFFERING LOSS" will be a very painful and costly experience!

Worldly Christians APPEAR to be ROOTED in the FLESH.

-Their physical appetites drive them. [Worldly=NATURAL/Carnal/Fleshly]
Fleshly [Sarkikos] (Vs. 3) – Carnal, Having the nature of the flesh – i.e. – under the control of the animal appetites; sensual, worldly.

Trench (Syn. lxxi, lxxii) says that *sarkikos* describes the lusts which have their source in man's corrupt and fallen nature, and the man is *sarkikos* who allows to the flesh a place which does not belong to it of right.

-They put confidence in HUMAN strengths rather than GODLY wisdom

*The Corinthians lived on RIVALRY over their respective spiritual leaders

*They do not maintain an ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE in life [Vs. 21-23]

21 So then, no more boasting about human leaders! **All things are yours**, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future--all are yours, 23 and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.

Worldly Christians IGNORE or NEGLECT their NEW spiritual nature.

-They FAIL TO FEED THEMSELVES on the Word of God. [Vs. 2]

2 I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.

1 PETER 1:23 - 2:2 NIV

23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For, "All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, 25 but the word of the Lord endures forever." And this is the word that was preached to you. 1 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. 2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.

*This means that they constantly need OTHERS to feed them!

-If you ignore hunger for the Word, you will start seeking JUNK FOOD!

*This is also WHY they were rife with RIVALRY over their leaders! [Vs. 3a]

3 You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly?

-They continue to LOOK and ACT like the world **[Vs. 3b-4]**

3b Are you not acting like mere humans? 4 For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere human beings?

*The greatest threat to effective evangelism is NOMINAL CHRISTIANITY.

**It is natural for the NATURAL man to act NATURAL,
And it is natural for the SPIRITUAL man to act SPIRITUAL,
But it is UNNATURAL for the SPIRITUAL man to act NATURAL!**

Worldly people REMAIN spiritually IMMATURE [Long-term Babies!]

-They are obsessed their own needs and desires.

-They remain enslaved to besetting sins. **[Vs. 3 - Jealousy and quarreling]**

*As long as you stay given over to your sins you will remain limited to spiritual immaturity.

-They are IN DANGER of falling to false teaching. **Ephesians 4:14 NIV**

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.

-They cannot (or WILL not!) grasp the HARD TRUTHS of a spiritual life.

Hebrews 5:12-14 NIV

12 In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! 13 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who by **constant use** have **trained** themselves to distinguish good from evil.

*Living for the glory and purpose of God rather than self

-This involves purity, self-denial, and OBEDIENCE.

-They fail to BUILD ON or BUILD UP their faith and the faith of others. **(Vs. 12-13)**

12 If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, **13 their 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 person's work.

Every one of us BEGIN as babies, but NONE of us has to KEEP ON being a baby!

IT IS YOUR CHOICE!

Let's pray.