

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. **Enjoy discovering more about Him!**

"HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?" | 1 COR 3 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

When you think of famous buildings, what comes to mind first?

"Maturing" (1 Cor 3:1-4)

Paul rebukes the people for not maturing and still acting from the "flesh". **What does it mean to live in the "flesh" How can believers have a more mature faith?**

"Harvesting" (1 Cor 3:5-9)

Paul tells them that arguing over church leaders is silly because they are just servants and God is the one who gives growth. **Why do some believers get so attached to certain leaders? How can they keep their true loyalty to God?**

"Building" (1 Cor 3:10-15)

Paul explains that what we do may be remembered forever or may burn up at judgment. It all depends on if it was guided by Jesus. **What does this show about Jesus? What does that mean for His followers?**

"Indwelling" (1 Cor 3: 16-23)

Paul encourages the people by sharing God's glory dwells in them like it did in the temple because they are in Christ. **What is your reaction to hearing God's glory is inside believers?**

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Paul wants the people to stop the jealousy and arguing over human leaders and to trust God as He is guiding and building His people because they are His dwelling place. **Have you struggled with jealousy and petty arguments lately? Have you been looking to God to build you up instead of other sources? Ask God to build you and use you so that His glory may live in you.**

1 Corinthians 3

11-05-23

How does Your Garden Grow?

I. Announce:

A. Slide 1-4 BoF: Jen

B. Slide 5 IDOP: *Welcome to those **Online** and in our Additional Seating in the Fellowship Hall.*

1. The number of Christians facing **high to extreme levels** of persecution worldwide has doubled over those years. **However**, Christians who have been **actually killed** for their faith, has decreased.
2. **1 in 7 Christians are persecuted worldwide**. North Korea remains the **most dangerous country** in the world for Christians.
3. Just like in the book of Acts, persecution is **expanding** the Church, with **the fastest growth** in **Nigeria, China, and Iran** – all heavily persecuted.
4. **Our church** is blessed to be connected w/workers in **Asian countries** who minister under governments that have made Christian work largely illegal.
5. Heb. 13:3 *tells us to remember our imprisoned brothers and sisters as though we were in prison with them*. What can you do? (2 things:)
 - a) *Persecuted Church Prayer* meets here at CM, Sat's 7:30a-8:30a in LC2.
 - b) **7 Days for 7 Countries**. Check social media daily for a new country to pray for each day this week. - It will profile of **the top 7** most dangerous countries for Christians. With ways to pray, the plight of a specific believer, & websites to get more info, or to write a letter to an imprisoned believer or foreign gov.

C. Slide 6 Prayer:

II. Slide 7a Intro: How does Your Garden Grow?

A. Are you a **carnal** Christian? Are you a **spiritual** Christian? What's the difference?

1. Do you think you can **fluctuate** between both? When you fall into **carnal** Christian mode, what can you hold onto for hope? When you are in **spiritual** Christian mode, what can become its demise?

B. We can divide up the humans into 2 groups: Christians **and** non-Christians (2:14,15)

1. But in ch.3 we see 2 classes of Christian people: *spiritual & fleshly*.
 - a) Paul already discussed *the natural person* (2:14). They are lost/unsaved.
 - (1) *For now at least*, as Chuck Swindoll said, *They have pulled in the welcome mat from the door of their hearts, locked the dead bolt, and turned a deaf ear to Jesus' knocking.*
 2. *As of the 2 class of believers*: Both are believers, both are babes/infants in Christ, both are born in the spirit (2:12), yet one is *fleshly* and one is *Spiritual*.
- C. *Slide7b Outline: Maturing. Harvesting. Building. Indwelling.*

III. Slide8a **MATURING** (1-4) *Read*

- A. This has to do with *pigpen-christianity* or *craby-christians*.
- B. When we see a *carnal Christian* we often **judge** them as ... *never knowing the Lord. They never had a relationship. They believed in their heads but not in their hearts.* **But** praise God that's not how He sees them.
 1. I calls these *pigpen Christians*. So Brian its ok to stay that way? **No**, Paul *pleads here* that these carnal *Corinthian* or carnal *Murrieta'n* Christians, should be challenged to *come out of the pigpen of their lives*. [God doesn't run & yank you out of the pigpen. **But** as soon as you *repent & start heading home*, He'll run so fast to meet you] **i.e.** prodigal son story.
- C. (2) *Even now you're not ready* - Paul is not upset that they **began** as *babes/infants*, **but** that they *haven't grown out of it*.
 1. I still love a cold glass of milk, **but** it isn't the only thing in my diet (**I've added cookies** :) - **But** Paul warns against a steady diet of "*milk only*"!
 2. **On one hand**, we never outgrow the nourishing milk of God's Word. **Like** when we get **awestruck** w/a basic concept in God's word again.
- D. (3,4) **What kind of solid food?** - How about Jesus' meal plan of the clean eating *Mediterranean, anti-inflammatory, heart-healthy diet* of *love, peace, and humility*? **And** detoxing the carb's of *jealousy and strife, self-confidence and self-exaltation*.

1. It's craby-christianity. Charles L. Allen in, *The Miracle of Love*, writes of a fisherman friend who told him that **one never needs a top for his crab basket**. If one of the crabs starts to climb up the sides of the basket, the other crabs will reach up and pull it back down. craby-christianity :(
- E. It just might be that *the Carnal-Christians* are the greatest threat to Christianity. To Jesus's precious name. To the Corinthian churches name. To our churches name.
1. How? With they're bad example, their bad lifestyle, their lack of holiness.
 2. They just continue to **root around in the pigpens** of their own natures. They **rebel** against the control of the Holy Spirit.
- F. Pause: If you just thought, *I'm glad I'm not a carnal Christian - this is for you!*
1. See Paul was honest to admit he struggled with it. He wrote a whole chapter on *his struggles w/carnality*.
 - a) Slide8b Rom.7:21-25 *So I find it to be a law* (a principle in life) **that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. 22 For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, 23 but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25** (answer) *Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!*
 2. The whole chapter is a portrait of the **Carnal-Conflict**, a **constant conflict**, a **moment by moment battle** between 2 natures.
 - a) Slide9 *The Carnal Christian is a child of God, born again and on his way to heaven, but he is traveling 3rd class.* Alan Redpath
- G. Brian give me some Good News: Jesus gives us the great story of *the Prodigal son, His Father, and his older brother*. Both brothers were a type of *carnal-christians* (1 son who doesn't mask his rebellion w/a false loyalty. The other who masks his rebellious heart w/a false loyalty). The father reaches out to **both** boys. To the repentant 1 *he throws him a party*. To the other *he begs him to come into the party*.

IV. Slide10a **HARVESTING (5-9) Read** How does Your Garden Grow?

- A. Slide10b This has to do with Salvation and *the Christian life* is always about HIM!

1. **We are servants - God alone is Lord.** We have an *important, but subordinate* role in the work of the gospel.
- B. **Servants/workers have different tasks.** Some *prepare the soil*, others *sow seeds*, some *pull weeds*, and still others *reap the harvest*.
1. **But all share in the harvest.** And **all receive wages.**
 2. **The point? How foolish to compare one servant to another.**
 - a) **Slide10c Our motto & motive** should simply be: *We are nothing, but God is everything.* **And, Laboring Together.**
- C. **Examples:**
1. **Paul planted** the church in Corinth, **while Apollo** later came & *watered* it.
 2. **Bob C planted** CM, **I** took over 5 years later and have been *watering* it
 3. **Ron Armstrong planted** Cornerstone, **while Andy Deane** later came & *watered* it. [in all of those churches ... **God has given the increase**]
- D. Here is why we know its true. [if you don't have **sunlight** or **air**, you don't have a plant]
1. **Years ago, I cut down a tree at my house.** That stump has been decomposing for years in the middle of my grass. I finally tackled its removal. Filled the hole with good soil. Planted grass seed. Allowing my sprinkler system to water it. **Look what I did! Nope.** *No sunlight, no air, no life.*
 2. **Planters and waterers are nothing w/o Him.** Only **God** has the power to cause *the seed of the gospel message* to **grow**.
- E. **God's field** - another agricultural lesson: **The church is the field.** God **germinates** the seed, He helps it to **sprout**. **Then** He ultimately helps it to bring forth **fruit**.
1. **If we have ability, it is Christ's ability.** **If we have \$, it is Christ's \$.** It's Christ's **building**. Christ's **lambs**. Christ's **mission**. Christ's **gospel**. *Everything is Christ's.*

V. Slide11a **BUILDING (10-15) Read**

- A. **Slide11b This has to do with the believers works.** **Key:** Importance of the *genuineness* of one's building materials for the work of the kingdom.

1. Adequacy or integrity of any building material depends upon **the test** it will have to meet (fire, earthquake, etc).
 2. **That test** for the Christian's building is **fire** on the day of works/judgment. Showing it for what it is.
- B. **No other foundation** - *no other redemption, no other salvation, no other Savior, no other Christ.*
1. Cement = *water, cement, aggregate*. **The Romans** had figured it out **and** we're still using it for our foundations today. **Slide11c Hadrian's Pantheon in Rome is made of concrete, still stands.** [Pantheon's dome is still the world's largest *unreinforced concrete dome*]
- C. **Some building materials are combustible** (*wood, hay, straw*) and they will be burned up completely. [not **sin**, that's already burned up ... **but** our *works*]
- D. **Others will use noncombustible materials** such as *gold, silver, or precious stones* (granite, marble) and they will find their labor **will stand the test**. **And they will receive a reward** (@ bema seat).
1. Those who build poorly *will suffer loss* of reward, **but** they themselves will be saved as a person who is rescued from a fire.
 2. Picture a man escaping a burning building, he has his life ... **but no possessions.**
 - a) There is **a legend** of a wealthy woman who, when she reached heaven, was shown a very plain mansion. She objected. "*Well,*" she was told, "*that is the house prepared for you.*" "*Whose is that fine mansion across the way?*" she asked. "*It belongs to your gardener.*" "*How is it that he has one so much better than mine?*" - "*The houses here are prepared from the materials that are sent up.* **Slide11d** *We do not choose them, you do that **by your earthly faithfulness.***"
- E. **Examples of Brian's *wood, hay, & straw* type works?**
1. **Wood** - When I became a sound man cc bellflower as a new believer, **to be seen by others** ... **POOF!**

2. **Hay** - myself and a friend sharing the gospel. I was more interested in showing off my *apologetic prowess* than caring for the soul of the individual I was talking to ... **POOF!**
 3. **Straw** - every time I have served the Lord *with a wrong heart* ... **POOF!**
- F. (10) **Take care how he builds upon it** - wasn't that the story of *the 3 little pigs*?
1. That which was made of *shoddy building materials* (straw & wood) blew down, **but** that which was of sturdy material (brick) withstood the fierce winds. [not by the hair of my *chiny, chin, chin*. - Then I'll huff & puff ...]
 2. **Instead of blowing**, Jesus will simply look at it with *His eyes like a flame of fire*, at the judgment seat of Christ. **Take care how you build!** (10)
- G. **What helped Kelly & I**, more than anything, as we laid our 1st course of block?
1. Friends **plugged us in** right away. *We never neglected the gathering together of the brethren* (when they met, we were there). **We got involved in small groups, in serving, in fellowship.** [and been doing it that ever since]

VI. Slide 12a **INDWELLING (16-23)** *Read*

- A. **Slide 12b** This has to do with all believers, anytime and anywhere.
- B. **Key:** Importance, the temple does not refer to *the structure* in which believers meet to worship. **Rather**, Christians themselves are the temple. (or the church)
- C. **We are God's temple:** but **wait**, there are 2 words in Greek for Temple: **ναός** NaOS **and** **ἱερόν** HieRON.
 - a) **Hieron** - means the Temple building itself. **Naos** means *the Sanctuary, the Holy of Holies, where the glory of God dwells* (naos is used here).
 2. **Now, how do you read it?** *We are God's sanctuary - the place of His holy, radical, awesome presence!*
 3. **Slide 13** You are not simply *the structure* in which He lives. **You are the dwelling place of the Shekinah glory of God :)**
- D. **Note:** God's Spirit dwells in you (pl.) - **not** an *influence* of *the Spirit*, **but the 3rd person of the Trinity Himself.**

1. Christian, no matter how *weak, feeble, poor, helpless, or frustrated* you feel; or how *inadequate, incapable, incompetent, or ineffective* you feel ... *The Spirit of God dwells in you.*

2. Why does He dwell in us? That we might develop *character, the fruit of the Spirit, good works,* and reproduce *the character* of Jesus Christ.

E. **Communion:** This is what God chose to celebrate the mystery of God becoming flesh. We struggle to figure everything out. This morning can you enjoy *the mystery of communion*, where **reality** and **mystery** are fused.

1. Just as **ordinary food**, nourishes our **physical bodies**, so **the bread and the wine** of the Lord's Supper, give *spiritual nourishment* and *refreshment* from Christ, to our souls.

2. ***The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?*** 1 Cor.10:16 [participation / koinonia]

F. Keywords: growth, temple,