

“Age Is No Guarantee Of Spiritual Maturity” **1 Corinthians 3:1-9**

Paul teaches us that there are three categories of men. In the previous chapter, he taught that there is the natural man and the spiritual man.

1 Corinthians 2:14

Paul is speaking of the natural man, allowing us to understand that there is clearly a difference between the Christian, the believer, and the non-believer.

The Natural Man: The unconverted who is in the world and satisfied, he is at home with his condition. He is happy there. He is alive but spiritually dead.

The Spiritual Man: The man who is saved and is controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Carnal Man” This type of man is saved, yet he continues to live in the flesh, he continues to please his flesh. He is an immature Christian; he has not grown up spiritually.

- The Natural Man does not accept the things of God.
- The Carnal Man does not abide in the Holy Spirit, they do not depend on the spiritual, but in the flesh.
- The Spiritual Man is one who hangs on to the Word of God, allows himself to be instructed, disciplined by the Holy Spirit, and abides in Him.

1. Fleshly Christians, “Carnality”	verse 1
2. Not yet able, “Capacity”	verse 2
3. You are still fleshly, “Conduct”	verses 3-4
4. God’s servants, “workers”	verses 5-9

1. Fleshly Christians, “Carnality” verse 1

Verse 1

And I, brethren, “brothers and sisters,” ~ We see that this letter was written for the believers in Corinth. We can also say it is for us, brothers and sisters.

could not speak to you as spiritual men, ~ Paul could not speak to them as spiritual men, people.

~ Paul is talking about their “maturity,” or their “lack of maturity.”

I cannot speak to you as spiritual people, people who have matured in the faith, but rather carnal, **but as to men of flesh, “but only as fleshly,”** that is, people, men and women who live for their flesh.

as to infants in Christ. ~ babes in Christ, immature as little children, little children have desires and yet don’t know how to control themselves.

What are the marks of maturity?

They are infants/babies, immature, they cannot eat solid food of the Word of God.

What is solid food? They are the deepest truths that exist in the Bible.

Hebrews 5:11-14

2. Not yet able, "Capacity" verse 2

Verse 2

I gave you milk to drink, ~ At this point in life, it is what is best for you so that they can begin to grow and mature spiritually.

Hebrews 5:11-14 New Living Translation

Hebrews 6:1-3 New Living Translation

Jesus died for my sins; this is milk.

But to teach and understand that I have died with Christ, that I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me, this is solid food.

*** The Word of God, "The Bible" is our spiritual food.

Milk ~ 1 Peter 2:2

Bread ~ Matthew 4:4

Solid Food "meat and potatoes" ~ Hebrews 5:11-14

Honey ~ Psalms 119:103 How sweet are Your words to my taste!

Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

This is important for us to know if someone is mature or immature in the Lord.

1 Corinthian 2:6-7

*** When you can actually apply God's Word to your life, that is wisdom.

3. You are still fleshly, "Conduct" verses 3-4

Verse 3

They argued like children, they divided themselves into groups by following people or particular men.

Why did they behave in this manner? **for you are still fleshly.**

1 Corinthians 3:3 New Living Translation

³ for you are still controlled by your sinful nature. You are jealous of one another and quarrel with each other. Doesn't that prove you are

controlled by your sinful nature? Aren't you living like people of the world?

We see that their conduct, their behavior is on display in their carnality. So, their immaturity was demonstrated in their conduct.

~ The mature Christian practices love and seeks a way to get along, to live in peace with everyone.

Verse 4

Christians are not to compare pastors, evangelists, and/or Bible teachers as the world does with their so-called heroes. Comparing them as athletes or teams.

We have to understand that we are "Co-workers" working for the kingdom of God.

Ministry is; loving, feeding, and discipling those in the family of God, so by helping them, they can grow and mature in the faith. That is grow to be more like Jesus, not like you or me.

4. God's servants, "workers" verses 5-9

Verse 5

These men were servants of the Lord. They were instruments that God used for His glory.

Servant: Same word for "deacon," which simply means servant, a table waiter.

Servants through whom you believed, ~ It is the worldly, the fleshly, and immature babes who elevate the servants of God.

even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. ~ We need to recognize that it is God who uses us, that gives opportunities to each one.

*** In being a servant, God wants to use you and me to advance His Kingdom.

Verse 6

I planted, ~ It is God who gave Paul the opportunity to share His Word, to preach the Gospel. Each one of us has this opportunity as well.

Apollos watered, ~ Apollos reinforced "watered" the seed that had been planted.

~ We don't know if we are planting or watering seeds, but the two functions work together.

but God was causing the growth. ~ One may plant, and the other may water, but it is only God who causes the growth.

Verse 7

The one who plants and the one who waters are only instruments that God uses, they/we are servants.

Verse 8

Jesus expressed the same idea in; **John 4:34-38**

*** Every born-again believer is a servant.

~ Are you being faithful as a servant?

God doesn't need us, but He wants to use us. To be a blessing to others, especially to those of the household of the Faith.

The servants in each ministry **will receive his own reward according to his own labor.**

*** Don't lose your blessings and reward for a failure to serve. Be found to be faithful.

Verse 9

Once again, we see that we are all "Co-laborers" - fellow workers with God.

you are God's field, God's building. ~ I would like to think that it is our desire to be a field that produces fruit. A field that grows and matures to bear much fruit.

~ Being God's building, His church, we should desire to be fruitful.

Application:

- 1.** What do you cleave to? Do you walk in the flesh or the Spirit?
- 2.** Are you growing? Maturing? Are you understanding the deeper truths of God?
- 3.** What is your diet? Milk? Solid food?
- 4.** Our conduct says a lot about us, and it has to do with what you're eating. Are you partaking in God's Word? Conduct demonstrates to others if one is mature or still a child or a baby.
- 5.** We have to mature and consider the ministry, our role, our calling. What gifts and talents has God given me? Am I using them to be a blessing to the body, the church?
- 6.** We are all responsible in planting or watering, we are simply servants that God uses and it is He whom gives the increase. But am I being faithful in service?