

Studies in 1 Corinthians

► LESSON IX: THE CHURCH KILLERS

Text: 1 Corinthians 3:1-11 (NLT)

1 Dear brothers and sisters,^[a] when I was with you I couldn't talk to you as I would to spiritual people.^[b] I had to talk as though you belonged to this world or as though you were infants in the Christian life.^[c] **2** I had to feed you with milk, not with solid food, because you weren't ready for anything stronger. And you still aren't ready, **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? **4** When one of you says, "I am a follower of Paul," and another says, "I follow Apollos," aren't you acting just like people of the world?

5 After all, who is Apollos? Who is Paul? We are only God's servants through whom you believed the Good News. Each of us did the work the Lord gave us. **6** I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow. **7** It's not important who does the planting, or who does the watering. What's important is that God makes the seed grow. **8** The one who plants and the one who waters work together with the same purpose. And both will be rewarded for their own hard work. **9** For we are both God's workers. And you are God's field. You are God's building.

10 Because of God's grace to me, I have laid the foundation like an expert builder. Now others are building on it. But whoever is building on this foundation must be very careful. **11** For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ.

Footnotes:

- a. 1 Corinthians 3:1 Greek *Brothers*.
- b. 1 Corinthians 3:1 Or *to people who have the Spirit*.
- c. 1 Corinthians 3:1 Greek *in Christ*.

Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. What could “milk” and “solid food” be referring to in verse 2?
 - a. Why were the Corinthians not ready for “solid food”? (vs. 3)
 - b. What do such problems tell us about Corinthian “eating habits”?

2. According to verses 3 and 4, what behaviors betray that we are “acting just like the people of the world?”
 - a. Why do you think Christians are sometimes drawn towards the works of the flesh (“...hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, and envy...” Gal 5:20)?

3. Can “God’s seed” (vs 5) grow in **this church** if ungodly attitudes are harbored?
 - a. What other attitudes and behaviors are “church killers”?
 - b. Why don’t Christians take them more seriously?
 - c. Read James 1:22-25. Do you think self-deception may have been a factor in the Corinthian situation? Is it a risk in congregations still?

4. What vital lessons do verses 5-9 teach us about sharing in God’s work? Do we all have the same role? Dare we underestimate the role of a fellow believer and her potential to be used by the Lord?

5. Look at verses 10-11 again. What’s at stake if we **don’t** do spiritual war against religious pride and division? What’s the **prize** if we do?

6. Now, let’s get practical and talk about what we can do to **inoculate** ourselves against worldly attitudes, ungodly behavior, and self-deception.
 - a. Since Jesus is our foundation (vs. 11), it’s fair to ask, “What would Jesus do?”