

## As Unto Spiritual

### 1 Corinthians Chapter Three



~ In our previous report, we asked God to clarify and correct our human worldly wisdom. If you haven't read that report, you may want to go back and do so now. Paul presented two classes of mankind: the natural man and the spiritual man; the lost and the saved; the son of Adam and the son of God! Only two types of people exist: those who trust Christ as their Savior — and those who don't. When we talk about the natural man, we're talking about doing evil; because that's all the natural man can do on his own. We came into this world as sinners separated from God, having no capacity whatsoever for God, and being enemies alienated from Him because of our rebellion. Even the best intentions of the dearest saint always has mixed motives attached. I think we should constantly be searching our hearts — and asking God to search it, also — to see if we have any hidden agenda's or mixed motives. That applies all the way down to performing what we think is the Lord's work in our lives. See, the natural man will not receive the spiritual things of God because they are foolishness unto him.

The political leadership of mankind cannot solve the problems of the world because our problems are spiritual. The natural man cannot understand those spiritual things because sin reigns in their hearts. That's why we have war ad nausea. As a result, man is not interested in spiritually based solutions to our problems. Of course, we cannot even solve the simplest of societal problems, and man has demonstrated again and again that he cannot achieve a lawful state; but he yet continues to deny God. Man's problems are only going to ever be solved spiritually; and, since man has no spiritual capacity — that's a dead-end problem. Gladstone said, *"the mark of a great statesman is a man who knows the direction God is going for the next fifty years!"* We don't have a single politician who knows the direction God is going today — let alone in fifty years.

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The modern politician may be sincere in his philosophy, but everything he does is connected to re-election to a particular position, post or office. It's all selfy. So, it won't edify anyone. Perhaps we ought not be too critical or expect too much from the natural man, because he is doing the best he knows how. Almost all of them will admit they are "doing the best they know how." Unfortunately, that's about the only true statement they ever make. There is a certain state of narcissism associated with the desire to hold a public office; and it has led to a world of present-day gross immorality on every level. It's actually enough to break the hearts of those who love this nation and who would love to see it prosper again – under God. We're very, very far from the place near God today. I hope you have prayed for wisdom, judgment and discernment as we read on here....

***<sup>1</sup> And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.***

***<sup>2</sup> I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.***

~ Any truly spiritual man is going to be totally and completely misunderstood by the world. Of course, the world is baffled by what they hear from the saved man; and the lost cannot discern what a child of God is saying. Well, the spiritual level of a man is only designated by his relationship to the Word of God. The spiritual man recognizes the importance of the Bible, and he also discerns the Word of God - and *does* it. A correct conception of God is the only thing in the world that can clarify our Christian service. A correct conception of God can only be found in the Word of God.

Here, we have some carnal and baby Christians. These are believers who have never grown up. They have ability, but no desire. They totally lack spiritual discernment; not because they lack the Holy Spirit but because they never grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ! The

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relationship of the believer to the Word of God tells all about an individual's love, sincerity and usefulness in service to God, friends. Don't kid yourselves. These people didn't want to grow, so Paul couldn't talk to them about spiritual matters. So, Paul is going to talk about carnality; and this is precisely the low plane where the average church is functioning today....

***<sup>3</sup> For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?***

***<sup>4</sup> For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?***

***<sup>5</sup> Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?***

***<sup>6</sup> I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.***

~ A carnal Christian is anyone who depends on the weak arm of flesh. The baby Christian always attempts to use carnal methods to obtain spiritual goals. The word for "carnal" here means "fleshly." "Carnal" comes from a word in Latin and French meaning "sensual." It's something that appeals to the senses – not the spirit. There's a whole lot of things in the church today that appeal to our emotion and sensuality but is completely dead spiritually. I see many so-called Bible programs that gather quite a crowd, but they aren't doing anything for Christ. They sure aren't going any place with the message; but they are having a carnival. A 'carnival' was something they had right before Lent, too, by the way. They called it a carnival because, during Lent, it would be "farewell to the flesh!" They wanted to get it all in now. Their God was their belly. They were doing what came naturally.

See, verse three makes it clear that carnality is all about the state of the heart. Wherever we have strife and division, we have a carnival going on. The gossip, cliques and strife in our best fundamental churches with their

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hatred and contempt - which is usually openly demonstrated - are just more displays of the flesh. There is a huge difference between being frank and being mean – most people are just mean. A church organization – even a prayer meeting – can easily be turned into a carnival. This also goes for many Christians who don't watch television or go to certain places – and they do certain things at exactly the right time – their time – but yet they are just as carnal as any man of the world. It's strong language God uses....

***<sup>7</sup> So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.***

~ There are many people railing against false teachers and bad preachers today — but that's misguided; it isn't our message. The question is: is God using them? All the praise and glory is for God anyways in the life of a genuine preacher or teacher. There are many other workmen God is using besides you, my friends; some of them are likely doing things a little bit differently than you are. Frankly, I don't really like the method that other men use if they don't use my method; but, that's my problem because God is using them. Thank God there are a lot of people He is using today. It's a tremendous joint enterprise we all share in....

***<sup>8</sup> Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.***

***<sup>9</sup> For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.***

***<sup>10</sup> According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.***

***<sup>11</sup> For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.***

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~ The most important aspect of any ministry is getting out the Word of God to the entire world properly, correctly and completely. The Gospel message is the only message that can save men. Once that foundation is established, there are many different kinds of buildings that can be constructed on said foundation. The death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is an all-purpose foundation on which anything can be built for His glory and honor. None of us are in the foundation business, friends; all we can do is point to our foundation and tell others how they can get their own foundation. Are you building on Him today – or not? This is where good works come into play, by the way. When we first come to Christ we have *NO* works whatsoever. We bring nothing and receive everything. We are then set upon the rock to build, and that rock is the foundation of Christ that Paul is talking about....

***12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;***

***13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.***

~ The first three elements Paul mentions are not harmed by fire; in fact, gold and silver are refined by fire. The last three elements cannot survive fire — or even intense heat. We can build on the foundation of Christ with anything we want to build with; but, if those elements don't survive the coming fire, we will have no reward in Heaven. Some people have wooden barns storing haystacks so high you'll see them burning from distant galaxies. It's all going to be tested by fire one day; and there won't be any haystacks left. The barn won't even remain. I know everyone wants to think about Heaven as great and wonderful – and it is – but verse fifteen tells us some people are going to suffer loss, friends. You can argue with me, but you cannot argue with the Bible. These people will be saved, but let's ask the more proper question: what are you building today? What materials are you using? Some people in Heaven are going to smell like they were

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bought at a fire sale. It's going to take a whole lot of changing them to make them acceptable. Everything they ever did is going to blow up in their faces and they will have no rewards. We're talking about our eternal service to God and our eternal reward in Heaven, my beloved – you may want to think this all through very carefully....

***14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.***

***15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.***

***16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?***

***17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.***

***18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.***

~ Any man who is not rightly related to the Lord Jesus Christ through the Word of God cannot expect to have any rewards in Heaven, friends. You can just write that down. The carnal Christian is one who is never rightly related to the Word of God. There are three easy ways to discern who's who: the natural man says the Gospel is foolishness; and the carnal Christian wants a banquet instead of Bible study. Others attempt to replace the teaching of the Word of God with music or art. There's nothing wrong with music, there's nothing wrong with art or having a great dinner with friends – as long as the Word of God comes *FIRST* in the temple of the child of God.

The genuine child of God is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, modern seminaries are only trying to produce intellectual type superstar

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preachers. Preachers are not celebrities, friends – we’re servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. Very few people are truly intellectual, by the way - you may be sure of that. The important thing is getting out the entire Word of God to the entire world. If I could only stress that point properly to some of these smart-mouthed intellectuals, I would feel much better about myself....

***<sup>19</sup> For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.***

***<sup>20</sup> And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.***

***<sup>21</sup> Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours;***

***<sup>22</sup> Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours;***

***<sup>23</sup> And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.***

~ Instead of being narrow and confined in our minds, let’s make a sincere attempt at learning doctrine properly, correctly and completely. Keyword: *completely*. Believers should be able to fellowship with anyone who belongs to God. We should be able to meet around beautiful buildings all built on the foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ. The only way to know if we’re building with wood, hay or stubble is through the systematic study of Scripture. I hope that somehow this Spiritual Safari motivates you to do just that ~

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