

“BRINGING CARNALITY INTO SHARP FOCUS”
1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-9
NOVEMBER 19, 2006

INTRO

MESSAGE Carnality is the root cause of disunity in the Church and it is a deadly enemy of every believer.

- ♦ How does a believer become carnal? (1)
 - ➔ You quench the Holy Spirit’s ministry. – 1 Thes. 5:19-20
 - ➔ You grieve the Holy Spirit. – Eph. 4:29-30
- ♦ What happens when a believer becomes carnal? (2)
 - ➔ Your relationship with the Holy Spirit changes – John 14:15-17a, 26; Gal. 5:16-18
 - ➔ Your relationship with the Word of God changes. – Heb. 5:11-14
- ♦ Why do believers continue in a pattern of carnality? (3-4)
 - ➔ You love the pleasures of the flesh. – John 3:19-20; Gal. 5:19-21
 - ➔ You pooh-pooh the consequences. – Ps. 32:107; Ps. 51:1-13
- ♦ Why is exalting spiritual leaders a carnal way of thinking? (5-9)
 - ➔ Because...they are merely servants. (5)
 - ➔ Because...they are completely dependent on the Lord for fruit in their ministries. (6-7)
 - ➔ Because...they serve in complementary ministries. (8-9)

APPLICATIONS

1. Salvation is a radical change. It is not merely adding Christ to our life; it is not just “inviting Christ into our life.” Salvation is the change from death to life, from darkness to light. Salvation is accompanied by repentance, the turning away from all that we once depended upon for eternal life, from all that we once held precious as non-believers. Salvation turns one’s life, one’s values and one’s thinking upside-down and inside-out. Certain instant changes do occur at conversion, but many of the changes take place in the life-long process of sanctification, that process by which we are being transformed into the image and likeness of Christ. The “carnal Christian” resists this change. While he or she is more than adequately endowed with all that is necessary for growth in godliness, they fail to appropriate these resources and, in doing so, become carnal. Over time, they lose not only their appetite for the **“milk of the Word,”** but they begin to seek their spiritual nourishment from the well of “worldly wisdom,” which is no wonder since this wisdom is amiable to the flesh. The cross of Christ requires the mortification, not the indulging, of the flesh.

2. Two of the Christian's greatest resources are the Word of God and the Spirit of God, as Paul emphasized in chapter 2. We must saturate our minds with the Word of God, so that our thinking is transformed (Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:17-24). We must also apply the truth of God's Word so that our senses are, by application of the truth, trained to discern between good and evil (Hebrews 5:12). To comprehend the Word of God, and then apply it, we must rely upon the enablement of the Holy Spirit. We are to "**walk in the Spirit**," to avoid succumbing to the magnetic pull of the flesh (Galatians 5:13-24). We are to "sow to the Spirit" so that we shall "**from the Spirit reap eternal life.**" Spiritual growth is possible only by the grace of God, but this does not mean we must be passive in the process, or—worse yet—we should seek to pervert God's grace into an excuse for sin (Romans 5:20-6:2, 15-23; Jude 4).

* "If there is any "key" to the spiritual life, surely it is summed up in terms of the Word of God and the Spirit of God. How great is our need to grow up as Christians and to become increasingly dependent upon God's Word and His Spirit." Bob Deffinbaugh