

Exegetical Notes – 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

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Introduction: In 1 Corinthians 2:1-16, Paul says tell us we have the mind of Christ and that we should learn to think like Christ. In 1 Corinthians 3:1-9, Paul applies what he has said in 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:16 to the problem of divisions in the Corinthian Church. Their problem is that their spiritual understanding is stunted. They think like the world and not with the mind of Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Verse 1

Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ.

- What a horrible condemnation this is of the Christians in Corinth. They were not people who thought and acted as Christians should because they thought and acted like the people of the world; like those who did not even know Christ. They were not spiritually mature but were babies in Christ who understood nothing.

Verses 2-4

² I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. ³ You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? ⁴ For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere human beings?

- Worse than having been worldly at the beginning of their walk with Christ is that they are STILL that way years into their walk with Christ. They are still only Christians on the surface. They have not followed the deeper teachings of God. They still think and act like the world.
- The proof of the charge is found in their division. They are arguing and fighting among themselves and not pulling together for the cause of Christ. They are acting out of human understanding and their own feelings (see 1

Corinthians 1:10-13). Their divisions prove that they are thinking with the “wisdom” of the world and not the mind of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:16).

Verses 5-9

⁵ What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. ⁶ I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. ⁷ So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. ⁸ The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. ⁹ For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building.

- The Corinthians were arguing with each other about which of their pastors was best. Some liked one pastor better than the others. They failed to understand that each pastor had a place to play in the plan of God. As each pastor faithfully fulfilled his assigned task the church prospered and grew according to the plan of God. The pastors and the entire congregation were a team put together for the glory of God.
- Those who did not understand this concept did not think with the mind of God.

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