

Paul's First Letter to
the Corinthians

FELLOWSHIP SUNDAY SCHOOL COMMUNITY

*For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's
field, God's building.*

- 1 Corinthians 3:9

Class Time

- Prayer Requests
- Scripture Reading and Summary – 1 Corinthians 3:1-9
- Class Discussion:
 1. 1 Cor. 3:1 begins with a strong contrasting statement which the ESV translates as “But.” Why?
 2. How do our text and the background passages supplied in email characterize Paul’s ministry.
 3. What does it mean to be “still of the flesh” in v3.
- Outline and Lesson

3 But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. **2** I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, **3** for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? **4** For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not being merely human?

5 What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. **6** I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. **7** So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. **8** He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. **9** For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

Summary Statement

Paul indicates that at first the Corinthians were unspiritual and infants in Christ and not ready for deep teaching, and they still are not since there is strife and division among them, purely human behavior. While they who ministered to the Corinthians were merely servants working with God to do the job He assigned to them and therefore of equal status as laborers, it was God who actually accomplished His purpose of building the church in Corinth.

**Discussion
Question #1**

1 Cor. 3:1 begins with a strong contrasting statement which the ESV translates as “But.” Why?

**Discussion
Question #2**

How do our text and the background passages supplied in email characterize Paul's ministry, including his relationship to God and to the people to whom he ministered? Give examples.

**Discussion
Question #2**

*References for
background*

Romans 7:14, 1 Corinthians 2:14, Hebrews 5:13, Hebrews 5:12, 1 Peter 2:2, John 16:12, Galatians 5:19, Galatians 5:20, 1 Corinthians 1:11, 1 Corinthians 11:18, Romans 13:13, Ephesians 3:7, Colossians 1:25, 2 Corinthians 3:3, 1 Corinthians 4:15, 1 Corinthians 9:1, 1 Corinthians 15:1, Acts 18:4–11, 2 Corinthians 10:14, 2 Corinthians 10:15, Acts 18:27, 1 Corinthians 15:10, Colossians 1:18, Galatians 6:3, 1 Corinthians 15:58, Ephesians 2:20–22, Psalm 127:1

**Discussion
Question #3**

What does it mean to be “still of the flesh” in v3. You may find these verses helpful:

Galatians 5:19, Galatians 5:20, 1 Corinthians 1:11, 1
Corinthians 11:18, Romans 13:13

Galatians 5:19–21 (ESV)

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality,

20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions,

21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:22–26 (ESV)

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

I. The state of the Corinthians vv1-4

A. Then they were “fleshy” vv1-2a

1. They were not spiritual people v1
2. They were infants v2a

B. Now they are “fleshy” v2b -4

1. Jealousy and strife v3
2. Personalities and factions v4

II. The status of the ministers vv 5-9

A. God is everything vv5-7

1. They are servants v5
2. God is the doer v6
3. They are nothing v7

B. They are but laborers vv8-9

1. Different tasks, but equal laborers v8 (illustration: Ciclids)
2. Fellow workers with God v9a
3. God is the one growing and building Corinthians v 9b

African Cichlid

Raising offspring

*Different tasks,
equal laborers*



1 Corinthians
1:27-31

27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; **28** God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, **29** so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, **31** so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."