

“You’re Richer Than You Think”

1 Corinthians 3

The Duke of Windsor, recalling his childhood discipline by George V, then King of England, said that his father used to daily remind him, "Never forget who you are." As the spiritual father of the Corinthians, Paul reminds them in this chapter, "Never forget *whose* you are."

The Corinthians were worldly and quarrelsome because they misunderstood both the message and the messengers of the cross. In chapters one and two, Paul focused on the message—the true wisdom from God. Now he looks at God's messengers. As he does so, Paul reminds the Corinthians and us of our true identity and riches in Christ.

Opening Question(s) – Choose one

- When you were a child, what did you make that you were proud of?
- In your observation, what issues are most likely to cause division within a church?

Study Questions

- 1) **Read 1 Corinthians 3.** What is Paul's evaluation of his readers' maturity? As a result, how has he ministered to them (vv. 1-2)? In what way(s) did the immaturity of the Corinthians show itself?
- 2) What do you think they were jealous and quarrelsome about? How does this same party spirit show itself among Christians today?
- 3) What role had Paul and Apollos played in the lives of these believers (vv. 5-6)? What illustrations does Paul use to show how Christians should cooperate rather than compete in the work of God (vv.6-9, 10-15)?
- 4) Share from your own experience some of the ways God used/uses his servants to “plant” and “water” the seed of faith in your life.
- 5) In the picture of a building under construction (God's temple—v.16), what does Paul say about his own role in this task? On a scale of 1 (straw) to 10 (gold), how sturdy is your spiritual “building”? How does that compare to one year ago? a decade(s) ago?
- 6) In verse 3 Paul accused the Corinthians of being “worldly”. How then can he say to the same people, “You are God's temple” and “God's Spirit lives in you” (v.16)?
- 7) The Corinthians had initially claimed “I'm Paul's” or “I'm Apollos” (1:12). In 3:21-23 Paul makes a better claim. In what sense do Paul, Apollos and everything else belong to the Corinthians (and to us)?
- 8) What is the difference between respecting a Christian leader and the problem Paul deals with here? Why should this put an end to boasting about human leaders?