

# CARNAL MINDS HINDER THE GROWTH OF THE SPIRIT

*1 Corinthians 3: 1 – 14*

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## Introduction

Last week, we started a new series of studies on the book of 1Corinthians. The second Minister Bro. Emmanuel Adeoye took us through *1 Corinthians 1:10 – 17*, giving us an highlight of the different types of divisions in the Corinthian Church that is still plaguing the church universally till date.

Today, we will be looking at the topic before us, titled: **Carnal Minds Hinder The Growth Of The Spirit.**

## What Does It Mean To Be Carnal?

If someone is **carnally minded** it means they are operating from their flesh. The flesh is selfish, rebellious, and prideful. Therefore, a carnal person struggles with impure thoughts, believing God's promises, and sin.

Ultimately, a carnal person hasn't died to their carnal nature, and they aren't allowing God's spirit to guide them into purity and freedom. *Furthermore, according to dictionary.com, "Carnality is pertaining to or characterized by the flesh or the body, its passions and appetites; sensual: carnal pleasures. not spiritual; merely human; temporal; and worldly:"*

## Some Signs Of Carnality

- Distrust of God
- Selfish
- Lustful
- Anger
- Hypocritical behavior
- Hearers of the word but not doers of the word
- Judgmental
- Prideful/Legalistic
- Un-repenting
- Excessive desire for earthly things
- Lovers of pleasure

The church at Corinth was full of problems, factions, divisions and splits largely because its members loved the wisdom of men. They were proud of their eloquent ability to explore and explain many fascinating subjects, truly they are academicians.

Despite all of these educational achievements, there was no growth in their Spiritual life. It was on this Back grown, apostle Paul in **1 Corinthians 3:1 - 4** declared: *And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal? NKJV.*

In **1 Corinthians 3**, apostle Paul instructs the Christians who are immature in their faith to keep maturing and growing in their faith. The church in Corinth included many men who were strongly influenced by the flesh. Paul calls them babes in Christ. That was the problem in the church in Corinth; they were immature in their faith.

Paul is writing to grow their faith, to bring spiritual maturity so they will be transformed from babes in Christ to those mature in faith. All fathers want their children to grow and mature. The same is true with God. This is the same problem we are facing in the Church today. Brethren who have been baptized some five to ten years ago are still babes, refusing to grow.

### **MINISTERS ARE MERELY GOD'S SERVANTS – 1 Cor. 3: 5-10**

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? *6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. NKJV*

The Corinthians were claiming loyalty to specific leaders, so Paul uses himself and Apollos as representatives for all ministers to address the issue.

- He asks an important question about himself and his fellow-worker: *"Who is Apollos? Who is Paul?"*

The Corinthians were claiming to belong to a specific faction, and to raise Apollos or Paul to an exalted position of leadership and authority over others. So Paul clarifies what he and Apollos really ARE!

Ministers are Servants (*diakonos*) a lowly serving man; one who executes the commands of another; one who runs errands or waits on tables or does menial tasks. The term *diakonos* denotes servants in distinction from masters. Paul and Apollos were not *masters* but *servants*. Ministers therefore are merely instruments in God's hands for accomplishing His purposes.

Paul immediately makes it clear that the men they thought of as the exalted leaders of factions were in reality merely helpers or "delivery boys" in God's program of salvation.

### **ILLUSTRATION OF DIFFERENT FUNCTIONS BY PAUL**

#### **Different workers serve different functions**

- Paul served one function while Apollos served another function. Both were essential to the overall plan of salvation.

*"God was causing the growth"*, to cause growth means: to generate an increase; to cause to become greater. This is an indication of the continuous involvement of God in the work both of Paul and Apollos.

*"Neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything."* They all are equal. If no one planted, the watering would be useless. If no one watered, the planting would be worthless. They must literally function as a single unit. They have one goal and one purpose, so they are not rivals or competitors, but servants.

### **REWARD FOR WORK DONE - 1 Corinthians 3:11 - 14**

#### **Workers are distinct in their responsibilities as well as in their rewards.**

*"Each will receive his own reward according to his labour."* Reward (*misthos*)" simply means" payment for work done wages.

*"We are God's fellow-workers"* = literally, *"it is of God that we are fellow-workers."* Ministers are simply workers in God's Garden; they are fellow laborers employed by God and are under His direction. *"You are God's field"* = the ones being ministered to are the garden.

God is at work to cause growth in our lives, and often He uses the efforts of ministers to accomplish His purposes. The foundation has been laid. *"If anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear . . . fire will test each one's work . . . If anyone's work . . .*

*endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."*

But the Bible reminds us that a day will come when everything we do will be tested by fire. Some work will survive, but some will be burned. The Bible calls this "wood, hay, and stubble." These are the temporary things that can seem important and desirable in the moment but, ultimately, which don't last. In fact, they can distract us and distort our attitudes and perspectives.

If the work of our lives is based on the right foundation, we "will be rewarded." But if our work fails the test, we can lose it all (Phillips translation). Simply, if we make the wrong choices, we will lose our reward.

### **Conclusion**

Today, think about the choices you are making with your time and resources. Have you been investing in wood, hay, and stubble? What will happen when your works are tested by fire? Make sure that you are laying the right foundation, and ready to face God. Invest your life in His Kingdom and enjoy everlasting life in Heaven.