

Carnality, the Enemy of Life in Christ: I Cor. 1-6

Outline by Neil Anderson

Theme: Paul's agony over carnality in the church at Corinth

I. 1:4-9 Christian are enriched in all spiritual attribute—speech, knowledge, gifts—nothing is withheld that would keep a saint from being presented blameless in the Day of the Lord.

A. 1:10-11 Paul's plea for unity in the Corinthian Church.

B. 1:11-25 Paul criticizes their self glorying, their sin.

C. 1:26-2:5 Glory only in God and His salvation in Christ.

1. 1:30 From God through Christ we may have:

- a. Wisdom
- b. Righteousness
- c. Sanctification
- d. Redemption.

2. 1:31 Reserve all glory for God.

3. 2:1-5 Paul's example in presenting the gospel:

- a. v.1—no self glory
- b. v.2-3—in human frailty and humility
- c. v.4-5—in the wisdom and power of God.

D. 2:6-16 God's revelation is by His Spirit.

1. 2:10 God's Spirit searches all things, deep things of God.

2. 2:14 Natural man (unredeemed man) cannot know the things of God.

II. 3:1-4:21 Paul again attacks sectarianism and pride & carnality.

A. 3:1-4 Carnal behavior *may be due to spiritual immaturity* **or** *it may indicate the absence of spiritual regeneration.*

1. Paul knew that carnality is a sign of the absence of the activity of the Holy Spirit—a grave concern to him.
2. Strife, envy, and divisions are a strong indicators of the lack of spiritual direction. Carnal behavior is typical of

the unsaved, not the saved (vv.3-4). Obedience to the Spirit in faith is the cure for carnality.

B. 3:5-15 Building on Christ, our Foundation.

Note: These verses have been, and continue to be, the source of much theological controversy. Some (particularly those in the 'free grace movement', which includes many dispensationalists), insist that Paul is introducing a doctrine 'carnal Christianity'. However, Paul is not doing any such wicked thing, but, rather, is criticizing many in the Corinthian church for their sinful and destructive behavior in bringing about contentions, strife, and divisions within the church due their carnal, worldly lives. Up to this point in his letter, Paul has been gentle, giving them the benefit of the doubt. Soon he will begin a series of stern warnings for them. Here, he is not emphasizing their security as professed believers, regardless of their carnality, but he wants to cause them to consider if they are actually in Christ (See also I Cor.11:17-22, and notice especially v.19.).

The church today still contains those who would use Christ as an escape mechanism to try to avoid eternal hell, but they do not want to live a holy and separated life from the world, dedicating themselves to the pursuit of holiness and righteousness (See Rom.6:15-23, especially vv.18-19.) (See also Rom.8:13-14 and Gal.6:7-8.). Indeed, Paul is not saying that professed Christians can live in sin and inherit the Kingdom of God! See 1Cor.4:7 and 6:9-10. (See also Gal.5:19-21.). Paul consistently taught holiness for Christians.

C. 3:16-17 Paul's First Warning

1. Do you not know that you [if Christian] are the temple of God.
2. One who defiles God's temple will be destroyed. God's temple is spiritual, so the one who defiles the things of the Spirit, God will judge in the end and will destroy.
**It is worth observing that God can and will blot out of his book [of life] those who sin against Him. Not only was this said to Moses (Exod.32:33), but by the Lord Jesus to the church at Sardis (Rev.3:5). Apparently, the book of life is subject to revision until finalized into*

the Lamb's book of life. All those whom God blots out will experience eternal death, not eternal life.

One should remember that God is sovereign, able to keep or cast off. God's ability to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Christ is not in doubt (Heb.7:25), but those who desire to be partakers of Christ must hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end (Heb.3:14). One who lives a life of sin, deliberately, and without turning to God in repentance, will not go to heaven [false profession not withstanding] (See I John 3:3-10, I Cor.6:9-10, Gal.5:19-21).

What part of these Bible passages does a 'carnal Christian' not understand? See John 2:23-25 on false professions.

D. 3:21-23 God's spiritual resources are available to the saints.

1. "You are Christ's and Christ is God's" (See Col.3:3.).
2. No need for strife where unity reigns.

E. 4:6 This is a very provocative verse, for clearly it refers to the entire context of I Cor.3 -6, and this certainly includes 3:5-15 and the discussion of rewards; and in 4:6 Paul transferred his comments in 3:5-15 to himself & Apollos, for the sakes of *some* in the church at Corinth. In other words, *these* were the sinners, not Paul or Apollos. Hence, there is no room for a dogmatic doctrinal construction here. "that you may learn in us ***and not think beyond what is written***, that none of you may be puffed up ..." Apparently Paul used 3:12-15 to illustrate God's judgment concerning rewards for those who are building their lives on the Rock. If that is the case, the building will be firm, built out of enduring material (spiritual material), otherwise the house is not on its proper foundation and will not stand. Certainly, the Apostle Paul, who wrote so much on sanctified Christian living, would never even suggest a doctrine assuring that a carnal lifestyle can lead to an eternal home in heaven. And all of the teaching of Jesus emphasizes holy living, and His letters to the churches found in Rev. 2 and 3 teach faithfulness to the end.

F. 4:7-8 Paul attacks the pride and arrogance of Corinth church.

1. Who makes you different from another?

2. What do you have that you did not receive?
3. *If you did receive it*, why do you boast as if you had not?

Note: One who has received the grace of God is filled with gratitude and humility, not pride and arrogance [carnality].

4. (v.8) “*You are already full!*” “*You are already rich!*”
“*You have reigned as kings without us!*”
5. (vv.9, 11-13) Paul contrasts himself and Apollos as displayed as a spectacle before the world—poor, hungry, beaten, homeless, reviled, defamed, made like the filth and offscouring of all things until now, but returning good for evil. (In other words, like Christ Jesus was treated).
6. v.10. “We are fools for Christ sake, *but you are wise in Christ!*”
“We are weak, *but you are strong!*” “*You are distinguished*, but we are dishonored!

Note: This is strong sarcastic criticism from Paul, and he is not finished yet.

G. 4:14-23 Paul’s Second Warning]

1. v.14 “...as my beloved children, I warn you.”
2. v.15 “...in Christ Jesus I have begotten you in the gospel.
3. v.16 “I urge you to imitate me (follow my example).”
4. v.17 Timothy will come and inform you of my life and method of teaching in all the churches.
5. vv.18-21 When I come to you, shall I correct you harshly (a rod) or fellowship with you in gentleness?

III. Chapters 5-6 Sterner Warnings

A. Chapter 5: Sexual Immorality, Their Big Problem.

1. 5:1 “...a man has his father’s wife.”
2. In Paul’s thinking, this was worse than their former pagan practices (temple prostitutes, perversions). “...such as not named among the Gentiles...”
3. 5:2 “puffed up” pride, no mourning over sin in the church.
4. 5:3-5 Paul had already judged the guilty man and here he exercised church discipline –put this man out of the

church, (5:13b—‘*put away from yourselves the evil person*’ (see Deut.17:12 & others). Notice that Paul used the same principle here as used under Moses, only he did not say to take his life (Roman law governed then as civil and criminal law governs now), but to turn him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh—that his spirit might be saved in the Day of the Lord [that he might repent of his sin and be saved—see 2 Cor.2:6-11].

- B. 5:6-8 Paul’s Third Warning—“...purge out the old leaven”**
1. “A little leaven leavens the whole lump.” Blatant sin that is openly tolerated in the church will spread like leaven through dough.
 2. Saved persons are truly ‘unleaven’ because Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us.
 3. “Therefore keep the feast [live the sanctified Christian life]
 - a. “not with the leaven of malice and wickedness,
 - b. but with the unleavened [sanctified character] of sincerity and truth.”
 4. 5:11 The church must judge presumptuous sin within its ranks, breaking off fellowship with such persons, not even to eat with them.
- C. Chapter 6—Warnings against using worldly judges to settle disagreement and offenses within the church.**
1. 6:5-7 Avoid civil lawsuits, even to accepting being wronged or cheated.
 2. 6:8 ***You, yourselves do wrong and cheat your brothers!***
- * 3. 6:9-10 Paul’s Fourth Warning
- a. ***NO presumptuous sinner (practicing lawlessness) will inherit the kingdom of God.***
- D. 6:15-18a Paul’s Fifth Warning Flee Sexual Immorality.**
1. “Do you not know your bodies are members of Christ?”
 2. **“He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.”**

NOTE: THIS STATEMENT IN VERSE 17 IS OF ABSOLUTE AND ESSENTIAL IMPORTANCE TO A BELIEVER IN CHRIST AND CONCURS WITH 1 JOHN 3:4-9 A person who is born of the Spirit of God will live according to His Spirit (Rom.8:14)!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

