

SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND UNITY

1 CORINTHIANS 3

CORINTH



ANCIENT CORINTH



ANCIENT CORINTH



**SPIRITUAL GROWTH
IS FOUND IN
GOD ALONE**

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

- While the Corinthians may claim grand spiritual experiences, the divisions among them reveal that, much to their surprise, they are not nearly as mature as they think they are.
- The reason for their stunted spiritual growth is that they have boasted in themselves and their local leaders as their source of maturity instead of God Himself.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

- Paul is reminding them in this chapter that while all believers co-labor to build up God's temple, God is the source of all growth and wisdom.
- Since God is the true source of growth, none can boast about the effects of his ministry work.
- In a culture where bragging about personal achievement is the norm, this exhortation is not what the Corinthians expect.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

- These believers desperately need to be realigned with the true source of growth in order to last in their spiritual journey.
- Paul's ultimate desire is for these believers to cease identifying their progress by the local group of Christians they belong to, and instead identify God in Christ as their only hope for spiritual maturity.

**GROWTH IN CHRIST
IS THE RESULT
OF GOD'S WORK IN
A BELIEVER'S LIFE**

1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-9

DIVISIONS (1-4)

- The start of this chapter significantly parallels chapter two.
- Paul provides an example in 2:1–5 of what power and wisdom from God produces in the life of a believer: humility, weakness, and simplicity.
- Here, Paul reveals a stark contrast between that type of character and the character of the Corinthians, which is marked by envy and division.

DIVISIONS (1-4)

- These believers have bought into the ideas of Corinthian culture: to have an ever-growing reputation of being wise, rhetorically savvy, and connected to the best leaders.
- This is much like the world today, Corinthians were obsessed with what we would now call self-help or personal progress.

DIVISIONS (1-4)

- These Corinthians were trying to rise above their peers in areas of wisdom, finance, spirituality or influence.
- To grow above their peers meant they had to connect to the experts.
- Much like the American habit of name-dropping, in Corinth, being connected to a leader provided a personal sense of progress, worth, and maturity.

CHURCH LEADERS (5-9)

- Because of these cultural growth ideals, the Corinthian believers assumed Christian maturity worked the same way as everything else in their society.
- Simply connect your name with the local religious expert and everyone will consider you mature.

CHURCH LEADERS (5-9)

- Paul turns this ideal upside down and forces the Corinthian believers to do some soul-searching by asking diagnostic questions.
- What is Apollos? What is Paul?
- By asking what instead of who, Paul depersonalizes Christian leaders and makes a striking point: the these people are simply instruments in God's hands.

**GOD IS THE ONE WHO
GROWS THE CHURCH**

1 CORINTHIANS 3:10-23

SOLID FOUNDATION

- The Corinthians met in the homes of different leaders and sat under the instruction of different teachers.
- This created divisions among them.
- As usual in Corinthian culture, the loyalty of the believers is deeply tied to their local influencer.
- Paul reminds them that while they meet in different places and learn from different leaders, they all belong to one grand household.

SOLID FOUNDATION

- Verses 16–17 show us that God Himself is building a temple to dwell in—the body of Christ in Corinth.
- He is the One who grows this church body, and the part of the believer and the leader alike is to co-labor with God to see His plan come to fruition.



SOLID FOUNDATION

- In keeping with a building metaphor, Paul reminds these Christians that building a temple requires a solid foundation.
- Verse 11 reveals what the foundation is: the work of Jesus Christ Himself.
- Paul shares in verse 10 that he had laid that foundation; he had preached the Cross in Corinth.

SOLID FOUNDATION

- Paul warns the Corinthians not to build the church according to the wisdom of their culture, but to the “meaty, sustaining realities of the Gospel.”
- Any work done on God’s temple project that is not in line with the Gospel foundation is doomed.
- If personal and corporate growth in the Corinthian church is built on anything but God’s power in Christ, it will not last (wood, hay, and straw).

SOLID FOUNDATION

- Work done in the power of Christ will last and be rewarded (gold, silver, and precious stones).
- Any growth that relies on human influence or worldly success will give out and be proven false in the end.
- The “reward” in verse 14 and the “loss” in verse 15 refer to the judgment that each believer will one day face (2 Corinthians 5:10, Romans 14:10).

SOLID FOUNDATION

- Verses 16 and 17 remind the Corinthians that they, a church, are God's temple and one who attempts to destroy that temple will reap consequences.
- One commentator wrote: "The reason that God's judgment comes to those who profane the temple is simple: God's temple is sacred."
- Paul uses this term to show the Corinthians that as the people of God, they are God's temple.

SOLID FOUNDATION

- Paul's concluding exhortation in verses 18–23 circles back to arguments about wisdom. He reminds the believers that the true way to wisdom and growth is upside-down compared to the Corinthian way.
- Corinthian ideals lead these believers to think that boasting in their own wisdom or the wisdom of their leaders will result in spiritual progress, but Paul reminds them that boasting in God's wisdom and work alone is the true way to grow.

SOLID FOUNDATION

- For the one who has considered himself “wise” according to the ways of Corinth, he must turn his back on this “wisdom” so that he may be a recipient of God’s wisdom (to the world he looks like a “fool”).
- Because men are foolish, do not boast in them.
- Instead of boasting about men, the Corinthians should boast in God.

APPLICATION:

SPIRITUAL MATURITY

THREE CATEGORIES

- First, there is the natural person who Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 2:14. This is the person who has no spiritual life and who can't recognize anything compelling in the gospel.
- Second, there is the spiritual person discussed in 1 Corinthians 2:15. This is the person who is deeply controlled by the Holy Spirit and can receive and discern biblical truth from error.

THREE CATEGORIES

- Third, there is a group of people in between.
- These people are neither natural nor spiritual, so Paul calls them fleshly (3:1) or “babes in Christ.”
- In the early days at Corinth Paul had to address them as babes in Christ.
- He does not assert outright that they are babes in Christ or even that they were, but that is how he speaks to them.

THREE CATEGORIES

- Usually, a deep spiritual walk with God does not usually happen immediately after conversion.
- When the Holy Spirit comes into our life, we can grow spiritually, but that may be fast or slow.
- Galatians 5:24 says “those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh.” But Paul adds, “don’t use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh.”

APPLICATION

- Don't drift in the Christian life. "The current of the flesh and the world will always carry a drifter downstream toward the falls of destruction."
- Hope for God's best in people. Don't be too quick to write off a young believer who struggles.
- Take seriously your spiritual growth. Don't put your Christian life on cruise control or auto pilot.

CLOSING THOUGHTS:

THE ELECTION

ELECTION INFORMATION

- www.collincountytx.gov/elections/
- www.votedenton.com/upcoming-election-information/
- Sample ballot
- Polling places

SAMPLE BALLOT (BOLETA DE MUESTRA)

Official Ballot / Boleta Oficial
 General and Special Elections / Elecciones General y Especial
 Collin County, TX / Condado de Collin, TX
 November 8, 2016 / 8 de noviembre de 2016

To vote, completely fill in the oval to the left of your choice(s). Use pen or pencil. DO NOT ERASE. If you make a mistake you may request a new ballot. If your vote for a candidate or question is marked in such a manner that your intent is not clearly demonstrated, your vote for that office may not be counted. To protect the secrecy of your vote, do not put your name, initials, or any identifying mark on your official ballot. STRAIGHT PARTY. You may cast a straight-party vote (that is, cast a vote for all the nominees of one party) by filling in the oval adjacent to the name of that party. If you cast a straight-party vote for all the nominees of one party and also cast a vote for an opponent of one of that party's nominees, your vote for the opponent will be counted as well as your vote for all the other nominees of the party for which the straight-party vote was cast. You may vote for a write-in candidate by writing in the name of the candidate on the line provided and completely filling in the oval provided to the left of the line. (Para votar, rellene completamente el óvalo a la izquierda de su(s) elección(es). Marque solamente utilizando la pluma o lápiz provisto. NO BORRE. Si comete un error, puede solicitar una nueva boleta electoral. Si su voto por un candidato o pregunta está marcado de tal manera que su intención no es claramente demostrable, su voto por ese cargo/pregunta no será contado. Para proteger el secreto del voto, no escriba su nombre, sus iniciales o cualquier marca distintiva en la boleta electoral oficial. PARTIDO COMPLETO. Usted puede votar por todos los candidatos de un solo partido político (Straight-Ticket) así como solo rellenas el óvalo que está a la izquierda de el nombre de el partido. Si usted vota por uno de los partidos políticos (Straight-Ticket), y también vota por el contrincante de uno de los candidatos de dicho partido político, su voto por el contrincante será contado tanto como su voto por todos los demás candidatos del partido político de su preferencia.) Usted podrá votar por un(a) candidato(a) escribiendo el nombre del candidato en la línea provista y llenando completamente el espacio ovalado a la izquierda de la línea.)

STRAIGHT PARTY (Partido Completo)	<input type="radio"/> Republican (Republicano)	REP	Justice, Supreme Court, Place 3 (Vote for one or none) Juez, Corte Suprema, Lugar Núm. 3 (Vote por uno o ninguno)	<input type="radio"/> Debra Lehmann	REP	Judge, Court of Criminal Appeals, Place 6 (Vote for one or none) Juez, Corte de Apelaciones Criminales, Lugar Núm. 6 (Vote por uno o ninguno)	<input type="radio"/> Michael E. Keasler	REP
	<input type="radio"/> Democratic (Democrático)	DEM	<input type="radio"/> Mike Westergren	DEM	<input type="radio"/> Robert Burns	DEM	<input type="radio"/> Robert Burns	DEM
	<input type="radio"/> Libertarian (Libertario)	LIB	<input type="radio"/> Rodolfo Rivera Munoz	GRN	<input type="radio"/> Mark W. Bennett	LIB	<input type="radio"/> Mark W. Bennett	LIB
<input type="radio"/> Green (Verde)	GRN	Justice, Supreme Court, Place 5 (Vote for one or none) Juez, Corte Suprema, Lugar Núm. 5 (Vote por uno o ninguno)	<input type="radio"/> Paul Green	REP	State Representative, District 67 (Vote for one or none) Representante Estatal, Distrito Núm. 67 (Vote por uno o ninguno)	<input type="radio"/> Jeff Leach	REP	
President/Vice-President (Vote for one or none) Presidente/Vice-Presidente (Vote por uno o ninguno)	REP	<input type="radio"/> Donald J. Trump Mike Pence	<input type="radio"/> Doni Contreras Garza	DEM	<input type="radio"/> Scott Coleman	DEM	<input type="radio"/> Ray Brewer	LIB
			<input type="radio"/> Tom Oxford	LIB				
			<input type="radio"/> Charles E. Waterbury	GRN				

FOUR P'S

- Person – What kind of character does the candidate have?
- Proverbs 28:6 says, “Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity than a rich man who is crooked in his ways.”
- Proverbs 28:18 adds, “Whoever walks in integrity will be delivered, but he who is crooked in his ways will suddenly fall.”

FOUR P'S

- Personnel – for a candidate who will be an executive (President, Governor) we need to look at who he or she will put in the cabinet and in executive offices.
- Who has that candidate surrounded himself or herself in the campaign? Who will be in the executive branch?
- Proverbs 13:20 say, “Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise.”

FOUR P'S

- Policies – What legislative history does he or she have? What policies do they advocate when they speak? What policies on their website do they expect to implement?
- Platform – Candidates run within a political party and are expected to hold to the principles set forth in their party's platform. What is in the party platform?

PLATFORMS

REPUBLICAN
PLATFORM
2016

2016
DEMOCRATIC
NATIONAL
CONVENTION
PHILADELPHIA
JULY 25-28

POLICIES



PERSONNEL



Tim Kaine



Mike Pence

SUPREME COURT



FUTURE PRESIDENT

