

Studies In First Corinthians

(I Corinthians 3:1-8)

1. Was Paul able to teach spiritual lessons to those assembling in Corinth?

No: *“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ” (I Corinthians 3:1).*

- The inspired Apostle Paul spent the previous chapter discussing how he was teaching spiritual things (**I Corinthians 2:6**) that could be understood by spiritually minded people (**I Corinthians 2:13-14**). He can't teach them these things.
- They need to grow up spiritually (**I Corinthians 14:20**).

2. Were those assembling in Corinth able to bear the “meat” of the Gospel?

No: *“I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able” (I Corinthians 3:2).*

- **Mark 4:33, John 16:12** (cf. **Luke 24:15-27**), and **Hebrews 5:8-6:3**.

3. Why were those assembling in Corinth unable to learn spiritual lessons?

They were carnal as was evidenced by the envy, strife, and divisions among them: *“For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men” (I Corinthians 3:3)?*

- Envy and strife existed in Corinth (**I Corinthians 1:11, James 3:16, and James 4:1-8**).
- Division existed in Corinth (**I Corinthians 11:18 and Romans 16:17**).
- The carnal things in Corinth need to cease before they can learn (**I Peter 2:1-3**).
- They walked after man (**Ephesians 2:1-3**) rather than the Lord (**I John 2:3-6**).

4. Were there people assembling in Corinth that wanted to be followers of men?

Yes: *“For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal” (I Corinthians 3:4; cf. I Corinthians 1:12-13)?*

- This wouldn't be wrong if they were just looking at Paul and Apollos as good examples of godliness (**I Corinthians 4:16 and I Corinthians 11:1**).
- The problem existed when they wanted to become disciples of Paul and Apollos (**Ephesians 5:1**).

5. Did Paul and Apollos want to be exalted?

No, they wanted to be seen just as ministers: *“Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man” (I Corinthians 3:5)?*

- Paul never wanted exalted (**Acts 14:8-18** and **II Corinthians 4:5-7**).
- A minister is a servant likened to a waiter [Strong’s #1249]. Consider that word as used in the following verses: **Matthew 23:11** [servant], **Mark 9:35** [servant], **John 12:26** [servant], **Romans 16:1** [servant], and **I Timothy 3:12** [deacons].
- Consider also: **John 7:18**, **Acts 3:1-13**, **Acts 12:20-23**, and **Jude 16**.

6. Did Paul take any credit for the results of the work he had done?

No: *“I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase” (I Corinthians 3:6).*

- Paul started the work in Corinth (**Acts 18:1-8**).
- Apollos was once in error and then turned around to be an effective “waterer” (**Acts 18:24-19:1**).
- God is responsible, through His word, for the conversion of people (**Romans 1:16** and **Colossians 1:5-6**).

7. Are those who start the Lord’s work or those who maintain it anything special?

No: *“So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase” (I Corinthians 3:7).*

- **Galatians 6:3**.

8. On what basis are we rewarded?

Our labor: *“Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour” (I Corinthians 3:8).*

- Paul expressed the unity between he and Apollos (**Romans 12:4-5**) working toward the same goal (**John 4:36-38**).
- Even though they are working together, the reward will be there individually for both of them (**Matthew 16:27**, **Hebrews 6:10**, and **II John 8**).