

“What is the church to be?” – Pt. 1
1 Corinthians 3:1 – 9a

Big Idea – God wants His church to be all it can be in Jesus Christ.

1. A Family – the goal here is Maturity (vs. 1 – 4)

Previous chapter end he describes two groups in world, the natural (unsaved) and the spiritual (saved) 2:14 – 16

Here he speaks of two different types of saved believers, the immature/baby/carnal Christians

A Christian matures by allowing the Spirit to teach him and direct him by feeding on the Word. The immature Christian lives for the things of the flesh (*carnal* means "flesh") and has little interest in the things of the Spirit.

Some believers are immature because they have been saved only a short time, but that's not his meaning here.

Notice their different diets:

Milk
Solid food or meat

Hebrews 5:10-14 seems to teach that "milk" represents what Jesus Christ did on earth, while "meat" concerns what He is doing now in heaven. The writer of Hebrews wanted to teach his readers about the present heavenly priesthood of Jesus Christ, but his readers were so immature, he could not do it (note Heb. 6:1-4).

The Bible is our spiritual food: milk (1 Peter 2:2). bread (Matt. 4:4), meat (Heb. 5:11-14), and even honey (Ps. 119:103).

as a human needs a balanced diet if his body is to be healthy, so the inner man needs a balanced diet of spiritual food. The baby begins with milk, but as he grows and his teeth develop, he needs solid food.

It is not difficult to determine a believer's spiritual maturity, or immaturity, if you discover what kind of "diet" he enjoys. The immature believer knows little about the present ministry of Christ in heaven. He knows the facts about our Lord's life and ministry on earth, but not the truths about His present ministry in heaven. He lives on "Bible stories" and not Bible doctrines.

no understanding of 1 Corinthians 2:6-7.

Pastor-teachers promote maturity and growth by teaching God's Word

Ephesians 4:12 – 16

2 Timothy 3:16, 17

Notice their character qualities

Envy, Strife, Division

Paul was their spiritual father – he birthed them the 18 months he pastored in Corinth (1 Cor. 4:15)

They were divided and fighting over personalities, whose "hero" was best!

2. A Field – the goal here is the Harvest (vs. 5 – 9a)

Paul took what Jesus said about individuals in the parable of the sower, and made it *collective*: the local church is a field that ought to bear fruit.

The task of the ministry is the sowing of the seed, the cultivating of the soil, the watering of the plants, and the harvesting of the fruit.

Emphasis is on God, not the preachers, the servants vs. 6 only God could make it grow

1. Unique, different ministries
2. United, one purpose

"Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one" (1 Cor. 3:8).

3. A humble spirit

Jesus expressed the same idea as recorded in John 4:34-38. The sower and the reaper not only work together, but one day they shall rejoice together and receive their own rewards.

There is no such thing as isolated ministry, because each worker enters into the labors of others. I've lead people to Christ who were total strangers to me, but others had sown the seed and watered it with their love and prayers.

"And every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor" (1 Cor. 3:8).

Each one receives his own reward:

Rewards – 5 different Crowns

1. Incorruptible – 1 Cor. 9:25

1 Corinthians 9:24 You know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize. So run to win!

25 All those who compete in the games use self-control so they can win a crown. That crown is an earthly thing that lasts only a short time, but our crown will never be destroyed.

2. Crown of Righteousness – 2 Tim. 4:8

2 Timothy 4:8 "Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing."

3. Crown of Rejoicing – 1 Thess. 2:19

1 Thessalonians 2:19 "For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Is it* not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?"

4. Crown of Glory – 1 Peter 5:4

1 Peter 5:2 "Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God.

3 Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example.

4 And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor.”

5. Crown of Life – James 1:12; Rev. 2:10

James 1:12 “God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.”

Revelation 2:10 “Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer for ten days. But be faithful, even if you have to die, and I will give you the crown of life.”