

Metaphors of Maturity

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I Corinthians 3:1-15 ¹Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual, but as worldly—as infants in Christ. ²I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for solid food. In fact, you are still not ready, ³for you are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and dissension among you, are you not worldly? Are you not walking in the way of man? ⁴For when one of you says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere men? ⁵What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? They are servants through whom you believed, as the Lord has assigned to each his role. ⁶I planted the seed and Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. ⁷So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. ⁸He who plants and he who waters are one in purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. ⁹For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building. ¹⁰By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one must be careful how he builds. ¹¹For no one can lay a foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, ¹³his workmanship will be evident, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will prove the quality of each man’s work. ¹⁴If what he has built survives, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵If it is burned up, he will suffer loss. He himself will be saved, but only as if through the flames. (BSB)

I. What can we learn from this passage?

- A.** Paul is using a **nursing** mother as a metaphor for his relationship to the Corinthians. Christians who constantly need to be entertained, spoon fed truth, and cannot disciple others are still **baby** Christians. V. 1-2
- B.** Jealousy and dissention are characteristics of an **immature** Christian. Jealousy is craving something you believe that only you should have. Dissention is when there are factions in a local church that see themselves as the only ones who are acceptable. V. 3
- C.** There was more than one perspective on how a church should **function** even back in the first century. V. 4-5
- D.** Paul now uses a **farming** metaphor to describe the relationship that he, and others, have with the Corinthians. V. 6-9
- E.** Paul then uses an **architectural** metaphor to describe the relationship that he, and others, have with the Corinthians. V. 10-15

II. How can we apply these truths to our lives?

- A.** Our world needs more **adult** Christians. We must humble ourselves and admit where we are in our maturity.
- B.** We must learn to be **comfortable** with what God has given us with no comparison to what others have.
- C.** On **non-essential** doctrine points we must not draw circles of “us” and “them”.
- D.** We must be willing to **plant seeds** even though we may never see the blessings that come at the harvest.
- E.** We must be willing to **build things** that we may never get to enjoy.