

**The Sacred Local Church**

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**I Corinthians 3:16-23** <sup>16</sup>Do you not know that you yourselves are God's temple, and that God's Spirit dwells in you? <sup>17</sup>If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is holy, and you are that temple. <sup>18</sup>Let no one deceive himself. If any of you thinks he is wise in this age, he should become a fool, so that he may become wise. <sup>19</sup>For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness." <sup>20</sup>And again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile." <sup>21</sup>Therefore, stop boasting in men. All things are yours, <sup>22</sup>whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future. All of them belong to you, <sup>23</sup>and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God. (BSB)

**I.** Here are the details of this passage.

**A.** There is a huge **division** among Christian teachers on the interpretation of the word Temple. V. 17

1. It is referring to the **human body** that a Christian is living in. This is usually based upon **I Corinthians 6:19-20** "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, glorify God with your body." (BSB) Suicide is self-murder, and no one has the authority to commit suicide.
2. It is referring to the **local church**. This is based upon two details of this passage. The first is the use of the plural of "you". The second detail is the entire context of the passage. Nowhere else in this passage does it refer to suicide. The passage is referring to divisions inside a local church. This passage is emphasizing the sacredness of the local church.

**B.** **Arrogance** is often at the center of local church disputes. The cure is humility. V. 18-20

**C.** Our **security** is based upon the promises of Jesus Christ and not in any human teacher. V. 21-23

**II.** How should we apply this passage to our life?

**A.** We must show **mercy** and **compassion** to those who have lost a loved one due to suicide. If anyone can save those who have committed this sin it is our Lord!

**B.** We must value the **sacredness** of our local church.

**C.** We must settle **quarrels** with one another within biblical parameters. See Matthew 18.

**D.** Our focus has got to be on the **foundation** of Jesus Christ and not any human constructed theology.