

Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians

Servants Used by God

1 Corinthians 3:1-9

1. Infantile Leaders (vs.1-4)

The Corinthian believers should have matured in their faith (Heb. 5:12), but for all of the various gifts for which they were proud (1 Cor. 1:4-7; cf. 1 Cor. 13:1-3) their thinking and behavior were still being governed largely by the dictates of Corinthian culture.

A. Jealousy (v.3)

These are intense negative feelings, often covetous, regarding someone else's achievements or success (cf. Acts 5:1)

B. Strife (v.3)

This is an active engagement in activities of rivalry or wrangling which has the characteristics of discord and contention (cf. Titus 3:9)

C. Divisions (1 Cor. 1:10)

A schism, or a division of one thing so as to cause its fracturing that was a significant problem in this congregation (1 Cor 1:10; 11:18; cf. Matt 9:16)

2. Common Servants (vs.5-7)

Rather than encourage partisanship in the church by making much of his own ministry, Paul describes both his and Apollos' status as being ordinary. Anyone who sought prestige in the church through sectarian divisions would find their own prominence peaking beneath that of a common laborer.

3. Powerful God (v.7)

Paul directs the Corinthians' attention back to God who is the one who has saved them according (1 Cor. 1:29, 30), has given them all of their gifts (1 Cor. 1:4-7), and causes any and all fruitful growth among them.

4. Honorable Labor (vs.8-9)

All Christians should strive to relentlessly work for God in whatever service He has given knowing that the value of his or her work has been determined by the Master and is not dependent upon its status in the eyes of the other workers.