



United we stand—divided we fall
1 Corinthians 3

Read over 1 Corinthians 3

1 Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. 3 You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? 4 For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere human beings?

5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. 6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 8 The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. 9 For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building.

10 By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13 their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work. 14 If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. 15 If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.

16 Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst? 17 If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person; for God’s temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.

18 Do not deceive yourselves. If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age, you should become “fools” so that you may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God’s sight. As it is written: “He catches the wise in their craftiness”; 20 and again, “The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile.” 21 So then, no more boasting about human leaders! All things are yours, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, 23 and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.

What do we learn about the church and Christian ministry from 1 Corinthians 3? Come up with summary descriptions (from this passage alone) about:

a) the nature of the church

b) the role of Christian leaders

c) the core responsibilities of ministry

Chapter 3 continues an extended message by Paul (1:10-4:21) addressing the matter of factions and divisions in the church in Corinth.

What did these divisions look like?

What do such divisions reveal about the spiritual health of the church and the individuals involved?

Have you been a part of a church or Christian group that has experienced divisions? How did this affect the church? How does the impact of such division impact the wider community?

How does Paul call upon the church in Corinth to address these issues?

What part does the gospel play in solving problems of factionalism and disunity?

What do you see as current or potential threats to the unity of Stromlo church?

How should the gospel combat such divisions in our fellowship?

How does 1 Corinthians 3 equip us to work hard to maintain unity within our church?

Is there such a thing as false unity in churches? If so, what does it look like?

How does this passage challenge us to avoid competition between churches or Christian groups?

Spend time together praying...

- **for our church**
- **for our relationship with other churches**
- **for leaders within our church**
- **for one another in our various ministries within the fellowship**