

# 1 Corinthians 3 Worksheet

## Read

Please read the verses listed above three times from at least two different translations. It is recommended to use at least one 'word for word' translation (NKJV, NASB, ESV) and at least one 'thought by thought' translation (NLT, NIV, CSB). Meditate and pray on the passage.

## Cultural Snapshot/Historical Background

At first glance, the idea of a carnal believer seems to be an oxymoron. We often think of a carnal person as someone who lacks a living spiritual nature and is consumed by things of the flesh, and generally we are spot on. However, the church at Corinth showed that carnality could exist among believers in Christ, but such carnality is always a sign of spiritual immaturity. If this is your condition, it will be evident in the way you live and in the things that you consider important. Are you quickly offended over a perceived personal slight? Does a life of selfless commitment to Christ seem burdensome to you? Do you still struggle with sins of the flesh and find yourself yielding to their temptations all too often? A believer who answers yes to either or all of these questions is Spirit-indwelt but not Spirit-filled and certainly not Spirit-led. To remedy this problem in believers, God has given us His Spirit and His Word and has granted us direct access to Him through prayer. A healthy Christian will steadily mature such that he quits behaving as a spiritual babe, begins to consume the solid spiritual food of the undiluted, properly interpreted, Word of God, and endeavor to live according to its dictates.

It's somewhat ironic that Paul, after having assured the Corinthian believers in chapter 2 that God had already equipped them to deal effectively with the problems that were causing division and strife among them, immediately turns in chapter 3 to telling them just how spiritually immature they are. The Corinthians were still behaving like babes in Christ, and the clear evidence of this was that the church was divided into factions based on cults of personalities that they had established themselves. Neither Paul, Apollos, nor Cephas (the apostle Peter who is mentioned as one of the lines of division in chapter 1) had done anything to encourage this form of religious hero worship, but this kind of behavior was common among the pagans, and as many of the Corinthians hadn't move very far from their pagan roots, such a practice was common among them.

The Corinthians, who were very much people of their time and culture, were living lives that reflected that culture and often surpassed it in wickedness, immorality, and debauchery. As Paul will point out shortly (chapter 5), the Corinthians were engaging in behavior so reprobate that even the unbelieving communities surrounding them would have considered it beyond the pale. Just as the modern cultural elites insist that gender is fluid and independent of biology, that the definition of marriage is open to debate, and that the value of the life in the womb is established by the whim of the mother, the human wisdom of Paul's age was also characterized by worldly foolishness. It's because man's wisdom, apart from God, is always at odds with the wisdom of God, that Paul writes that there is no reason to boast in it. In the case of the Corinthian church, this meant that they had no good reason to divide along any lines, especially along the lines of a preferred teacher.

## Verse Breakdown

1 Corinthians 3:1-4

1 Corinthians 3:5-17

1 Corinthians 3:18-23

## Observation

Critically observe the text in its context. Notate the Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How of this passage. Observations should be made considering the verse breakdown above. Write down your observations in your notebook or the space below.

Who: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Where: \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

Why: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Extra Observations

Purposeful Parallels

In this section look for parallels from within this passage to other parts of the Bible. This could be similar stories with similar narratives. It could be how individual characters relate to or remind you of other characters in the Bible from other stories. Write down any parallels in your notebook or the space below.

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### Repeated Words/Thoughts/Phrases

As a subsection of your observations, notate repeated words in the passage and how many times they repeated. You may also write repeated thoughts or phrases. Write down any repeated words/thoughts/phrases in your notebook or the space below.

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### Word Study/Definitions

As you study the passage you may feel led to perform word studies on particular words in the passage. Perhaps you'd like to perform a word study on the repeated word(s) from above. This is your chance to do just that. Write down any discoveries in your notebook or the space below.

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## For extra study:

### Interpretation

Now that we have determined what the text says, move into interpretation. The meaning of the text is not subjective. The goal of interpretation is to discover God's intended meaning for the text we just read and provided observations for. Write down your interpretations in your notebook or the space below. **Please note:** *if you are not comfortable with this portion of the Inductive process, then please do not worry about completing this section. As time goes on it'll become possible and easier for you as this will be discussed in group time.*

## Application

Reading the Bible should change you! The purpose of reading any passage or passages is to gain life changing applications you must consider for your own life. Now that you've made your observations and interpretations it is time to consider the application for our own life. Consider how the text was applied to the original audience and then consider how to bridge the gap from the biblical world to our modern culture. Write down any applications you discover from the passage in your notebook or the space below. **Please note:** if you did not perform both *Observation and Interpretation*, then please skip this step.

### Extra Space or Additional Notes

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[illegible]