



# CROSS CHURCH

DISPLAY THE BEAUTY OF THE GOSPEL

## **Scripture | 1 Corinthians 3.1-4**

1 Corinthians 3.1-4 may seem like it is a harsh word. Paul says he can't talk to them as people who live by the Spirit, but as people who are still worldly: "Mere infants in Christ." By now they should be displaying fruits of maturity. They are not. Casual Christianity – then and today – is an insidious danger. On the surface it seems as though followers are growing in Christ. Yet they were not acting any different from the world around them. They were living according to the pattern in Corinth not Christ. These verses will help us identify what happens when disciples fail to thrive. Thankfully, neither Paul and more importantly the Lord has not given up on the Corinthians (or us for that matter!). These words are straightforward but loving words of a pastor, a teacher, a brother.

## **Observation**

### **READ 1 Cor 3.1-4 | Living in the flesh means living in merely human ways.**

What does Paul mean by "spiritual people?" What has he said about the Corinthians that declares that they are spiritual people? (vv7, 10, 12, 16)

Why could Paul not address them as spiritual if they had the Spirit? What does Paul call them? Why?

What does Paul mean by "the flesh?" What relationship between the Spirit and the flesh does Paul seem to assume?

What had Paul hoped for the Corinthians? What displayed the reality for them?

What does it mean to behave in a way that is "merely" human? Why "merely?"

If their behavior was "merely" what would it's opposite look like? Why is being spiritual something other than "merely?"

What is implied about how people relate to the Spirit if they can receive the Spirit but then live in merely human ways? How do relationships between people display their relationship to the Spirit?

What can believers do to try to determine whether they are living in merely human ways? What does Paul mean by milk and solid food, and what can those do to help believers live in Spiritual ways?

Why "carnal" Christians?

### **READ Romans 7.21-8.14 | Jesus sets us free from life in the flesh to live by the Spirit.**

How does Paul seem to identify in Romans 7:21-25 part of the problem happening in Corinth where those with the Spirit are living in the flesh/ like mere humans?

What contrasts/ conflicts does Paul talk about in vv21-25? What does Paul say makes someone captive?

What effect does that captivity have? How does captivity make someone live a dual life?



How can anyone escape such captivity? (8:1-2) Why is Jesus the only hope of escape? (8:1-4)

How do Paul's words in vv5-8 help us understand what he means by "the flesh?" How does his contrast with the Spirit help us understand about the flesh?

How does Paul describe in vv9-11 the radical change the Spirit brings about? Who is changed?

How do vv9-11 describe identity? How do they describe destiny?

What might be Paul's point in vv12-14? What does he want the Roman believers (and ultimately the Corinthian and Flower Moundian believers) to do?

If you or I are a follower of Jesus, how are we able to live by the Spirit instead of the flesh?

**READ Galatians 5.13-26 | Life in the Spirit enables us to serve one another through love.**

What word in Galatians 5:13 seems to set the stage for what will follow? What is it about the Galatian believers that Paul seems to want them to remember?

What does Paul say freedom in Christ is for and what is it not for in vv13-15? What in vv13-15 would look living in the flesh and what would look like living in the Spirit?

What works against Paul's command to walk/ live by the Spirit (v16)? Why must we work to accomplish that? How does walking by the Spirit displace gratifying the desires of the flesh?

How does Paul describe the works of the flesh? Why might he say they are "evident?"

How can we know whether we are functioning in a way that gratifies the desires of the flesh? (vv 19-21a, 26) Why does Paul declare what he does about the outcome for those who "do such things?" (v21b)

What term does Paul use in describing the Spirit in v22 that parallels "works of the flesh" in v19? How do the two terms complement one another and help us understand the how flesh or Spirit show up in our lives?

What does Paul say that the display of the Spirit is in a church? Why must this display be a collective expression?

What is the case for those who live by the Spirit? (v24) What does walking by the Spirit disqualify? (vv15, 26)

How/ why does life in the Spirit enables us at FMFB to serve one another through love? How would that be different than living in merely human ways?

## **Application**

1. What stuck out to you or challenged you in what you heard in the sermon or read in the text? How did the Spirit move you to respond?
2. What's the best coach or teacher you've ever had? How was that person able to motivate you so well?
3. How does the Spirit regularly influence you? Where do you desire to see the Spirit at work more greatly in your life?

4. What does a lack of the Spirit's work in a person's life signify?
5. What substitutes for true gospel food do believers crave today? How can we be sure we are receiving a steady diet of the Word? How has the church sought to help in this area?
6. How do you think most people look at the process of spiritual growth? How are some of the ways we think that growth is meant to happen?
7. What do you think God expects of Christians when it comes to growing in Christ?
8. In what ways do you think the gospel is distorted in our culture today? How can you be a loving counterpoint to that warped message?
9. How do you know when the gospel is being threatened or distorted? What are some telltale signs?
10. Why is unity so important in the church?
11. If looking at interactions with other believers is a mark of maturity (or lack thereof), where do you see signs of growth and areas which need improvement in your own life?
12. If the selfless use of gifts in the body is a mark of maturity, what next steps do you need to take?
13. How can we prevent and protect the church from strife, jealousy, and petty rivalries? When are 'prayer requests for the church' really gossip?
14. How can we promote growth in Christlikeness in fellow believers?
15. How should we respond when the Word or another follower of Christ rebukes us?

## **Prayer**

- Ask the Lord to forgive spiritual immaturity in our lives together. Ask him to show you any areas of jealousy, strife, quarrels, rivalry, dissension, division, envy, or enmity toward fellow believers. Pray that we would grow in wisdom and knowledge, and in favor with God and others.
- Pray that we would keep in step with the Spirit. Seek the Spirit's help and strength to bless & keep, directing your every step.
- Pray and ask the Lord of the Harvest to send us gospel workers to help us reach the 154,421 without a living relationship with the Lord and his church.
- Pray for the kids and leaders who attended Super Start. Pray that their hearts would be good soil for the gospel seeds which were planted there.

## Observations & Prayer Requests

- **MY THOUGHTS** | Record insights and questions from the group experience.

- **MY RESPONSE** | Note specific ways you'll put into practice the truth explored this week.


- **MY PRAYERS** | List specific prayer needs and answers to remember this week.



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