

BRIARCLIFF CHURCH

Small Group Study Guide: 1 Corinthians

Week of August 25 (Week 4)

1 Corinthians 3: The Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness



1 CORINTHIANS 3: SUMMARY

1 Corinthians 3 highlights the necessity of spiritual maturity and unity in Christ. It underscores the vital role of every believer in building the Church and emphasizes our accountability to God. The chapter is a powerful reminder that while we labor in God's vineyard, it is God who provides growth and judges the quality of our work. Furthermore, it elucidates the beautiful truth of our identity as God's temple, urging us to honor God in our bodies and eschew worldly wisdom for the profound wisdom of God.

OBSERVING & APPLYING THE TEXT

Starting with God

1. What do we know about the character and nature of God from 1 Corinthians 3?

Reflection: How does the character and nature of God found in chapter 3 speak to you?

Continuing the Conversation

The Church is More Than Human (3:1-4)

2. In 1 Corinthians 3:1-4 why did Paul consider the Corinthians as “unspiritual” but as “people of the flesh”?

Reflection: The Corinthians are participating in spiritual tribalism ... I follow Paul, Apollos, Peter ... and it is tearing the church apart. For this reason, Paul rebukes the Corinthians for behaving in “a merely human way.” But the church is more than human, however, tribalism, wherever it exists leads us to deny the spiritual realm and focus only on earthly realities. Do we at Briarcliff Church see the church as more than human realm?

The Church is God’s Instrument (3:5-9)

3. In verses 5-9, how does Paul describe himself, Apollos and any other Christian workers?

4. In what way does Paul assist the Corinthians in seeing God in their fixation on Christian leaders and their perceived abilities?

Reflection: *On having too high or too low a view of ministers and ministry:* Some tend to exaggerate the status and importance of Christian ministers and Christian leaders, while others undervalue them and pay them scant respect. Which is more harmful for the church and for its leaders? Is flattery or lack of appreciation the more damaging burden for a minister? (Thiselton, 63).

The Church is Urgent (3:10-20)

5. What metaphor does Paul use to describe the role of Christian leaders like him, and the role of the congregation?

Reflection: Christians have a privileged opportunity to use their lives and gifts for a work that will survive “the fire” of the last judgment and survive forever. Is Christian witness, service, ministry and love (13:13) seen as having potentially eternal significance rather than some short-term good? Members may well pray that their work will be “solid” and endure (Thiselton, 68).

The Church is Christ's (3:21-4:1)

6. How does Paul help the Corinthians see the church beyond their self-interest and factionalism?

Reflection: Factionalism ignore the wealth of the heritage we as Christian properly enjoy. In picking out certain leaders for special admiration and loyalty risks devaluing other leaders as additional sources of wisdom.

PRAYER

PRAYER GUIDE

August 26-30, 2024

Read 1 Corinthians 2

Monday: 3:1-2 *"But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready ..."* It is possible for us to act in a spiritually immature way in all circumstances. Pray that we will be spiritually mature daily.

Tuesday: 3:5-9 *"What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. ⁶I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth ... and each will receive his wages according to his labor. For we are God's fellow workers." Reflect and appreciate the role each individual plays in ministry and above all praise God for the growth He gives.*

Wednesday: 3:14-15 *"If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire." Pray that our Christian witness, service, ministry and love may have eternal significance rather than some short-term good. In other words, that our work will be "solid" and endure.*

Thursday: 3:16-17 *"Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? ¹⁷If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple." Give careful consideration to the dire consequences of demolishing God's temple, which is the church.*

Friday: 3:21-23 *"So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Pray that God will guard our heart against picking out certain leaders for special admiration and loyalty that risks devaluing other leaders.*