

Building on the Foundation | 1 Corinthians 3:10-15

For additional notes on vv. 10-15, see session 7

A note about the judgment of believers.

1. It is possible for believers, through works to be well-pleasing to God. Rom. 14:18, 2 Cor 5:9. (Note that KJV translates to accepted/acceptable the word that should be *well-pleasing*.)
2. There is an appearance of all of us at the judgment seat of Christ. At this appearance we **receive the things done in his body** (2 Cor. 5:10).
3. Because the believer is saved by grace (Eph. 2:8-9) and complete in Christ (Col. 2:10), any doctrine of rewards must be careful to avoid an *incompleteness* in eternity due to individual actions.

The Temple of God | 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

- Verse 16 –
 - Paul uses the plural **ye are the temple**.
 - Grammar strongly suggests (if not requires) that this is to be understood as *you are collectively the temple of God* rather than *each one from among you are individually the temple of God*.
 - For evidence, consider Ephesians 2:21-22, which speaks of the various components of the building being **fitly framed together** until it **groweth into an holy temple in the Lord...for an habitation of God through the Spirit**.
 - This is a *question the assumptions* matter. Paul certainly had a way of saying *each of you individually are the temple* but he did not use that grammar. See, for example, 1 Corinthians 14:26, comparing the singular with the plural.
 - For the greatest proof that it is the *collective local church* that is the temple, consider 1 Corinthians 12:27. I am not the body of Christ, but "we" are the body, and I a member of the body. If I am not the body, am I (individually) the temple?
 - Note: this local church as the **temple of God** in which the **Spirit of God dwelleth** does not prohibit the indwelling of the Spirit in the individual as well.
- Verse 17 –
 - **If any man** - These words, switching to the singular, give strong evidence that the **ye** subject of v. 16 is the collective. Here Paul is clearly speaking to the individual. He could have done so just as clearly in the previous verse.
 - **...defile the temple...** -
 - The word **defile** and **destroy** are the same in Greek.
 - Young's literal accurately translates as *waste*.
 - Since the man who would **defile the temple of God** is saved *by grace*, this is not a threat of losing salvation. Rather, it is a continuation of the manner in which an individual may **suffer loss** (v. 15) through his own works.
 - **...for the temple of God...** -
 - A corruption of the **temple of God** is serious because it corrupts *ourselves*.
 - The local church should seriously guard its purity of doctrine and witness, because to allow corruption is to destroy itself.
 - A note on the local church: Paul was writing this letter to the church at Corinth. His instructions would be applicable to churches everywhere. However, it is the local body, not the collective body, that is the **temple of God** in which God's Spirit dwells. The so-called universal church is a

construct of modern theologians, not of Scripture. The Bible only knows of local assemblies. If there was a universal assembly, it would need officers, membership standards, methods of discipline, etc. Furthermore, if there was one, we would be spiritually obligated to join it, support it, and participate in it.

The Folly of Worldly Wisdom | 1 Corinthians 3:18-20

- Verse 18 - The deception comes when one considers himself **wise in this world**. The Bible is consistent in the denunciation of worldly wisdom (v. 19-20, Is. 19:11-14, 29:14, Rom 1:21-22, etc.)
- Verses 19-20 –
 - Though **the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God**, the desire to use the world's wisdom as foundational for Christian living is growing at an alarming rate.
 - The church growth movement is built on psychology and sociology. This is also seen in so-called Biblical or Pastoral counseling, in which you can get a Master's degree from a Christian university and never take a theology class. And, sadly, this is seen in preaching, which has become an effort to teach psychological and sociological theories and/or give a "liver quiver" experience to the participants.

The Christian Inheritance | 1 Corinthians 3:21-23

- Verses 21-23 - Compare Romans 8:17a, which speaks of being **heirs of God**. The statement that **all things are yours** is beyond comprehension without recognizing that we are *in Christ*, and He inherits all things.