

## WRITER'S CORNER



### A New Way To Trust God!

First, a few questions to consider:

**Did God have a thought out purpose and order to the set up of His precious Holy Scriptures, or did He leave it up to man? Why was Genesis placed first and Revelation last? Maybe John should have been first and Matthew last?**

God is very wise, and a god of perfect order. We see a glimpse in His Creation: the microscopic & macroscopic worlds, the food chain, and a self-perpetuating eco-system, etc.

Similarly, God arranged His Word precisely. A college curriculum is well-planned, arranged to be most beneficial for the student, so also is God's Word. Genesis is first, because it means 'beginnings,' documenting the many firsts. (first man, first sin, etc.) Revelation is last, since it 'reveals' the completion of prophecy, detailing the end times.

Matthew-John is a unit, manifesting the fullness of who Jesus is and all he accomplished. They were strategically placed after the 400 year period of silence.

Likewise, we can fully trust God that Paul's epistles were placed in logical sequence to study for edifying saints. Each book was placed to progress us forward in maturity.

Romans-Galatians contain foundational Truths that establish us, one chapter/book at a time. Ephesians-Philemon are advanced teaching, building onto this crucial foundation. As an organized 'form of doctrine,' it teaches from milk to meat.

**Study this issue for yourself: Rom. 6:17, 12:2, I Cor. 3: 1-10, I Tim. 4:16, Heb. 5:12-14.**

## Just A Minute! *With Scripture*

The King James Bible is used for all references. Verses may be made bold for emphasis.

### The Corinthians Seemed Unaware: Once Is Not Nearly Enough!



Since the living Word is unlike any book, we need to read, hear, & think on it over and over to attain what God teaches to mature us and keep it 'front and center.' The Corinthians exalted what 'they knew' and didn't grow in the doctrine they heard, forgetting basic Truths Paul taught. *"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:9)*

Each time we read/hear it, it reads us, and will teach us more depth, **if we listen.** *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piecing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with who we have to do." (Heb. 4:12-13)*

Scripture is God intimately speaking to us, leading us individually by the Spirit. There's eternal depth to His Word; God designed it to teach us in layers, over time, as we believe. We're not able to digest the fullness of what it's saying **in one reading.** Each time we read and study, the Spirit can help us consider what it's saying in order to believe and put it into practice. This is how it 'effectually works' in us, teaching new and deeper Truths. *"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." (I Thess. 2:13)*

Scripture instructs uniquely where we are, stirring up what is already known, to progress us and build understanding toward maturity. Paul helped to open the eyes of the Corinthians, reviewing the foundation so they were able to go on and grow. I Corinthians 3:9-13 relays that we are co-laborers together with God in this learning process: *"...But let every man **take heed how** he buildeth thereupon."* Study Romans-Philemon in the order God laid out; do this over and over, as most definitely, once is not nearly enough!





Search it out!

Living As Who You Are In Christ

# I Corinthians 3: How We Live And Think Matters To God

Examine verses!



The fullness of the 'gospel of Christ' is actually, all of Romans-Philemon. Paul relays the first aspect of the gospel: *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also the Greek."* (Rom. 1:16)

The Corinthians didn't realize the importance of what Paul taught. It was the message to save them from the penalty of their sins. Yet, more, it was to become the very 'wisdom and power of God' that could work in their lives. *"That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."* (I Cor. 2:5) Instead, these saints were stuck, focused on the flesh. Explore Chapter 3 for yourselves.

**1) Read the chapter several times:** Often it takes a few times through a section before the details surface to the reader's awareness. Find five topics that help you realize the theme of the chapter.

**2) Notice two examples used: physical growth (as a child or plant) and construction:** What can you learn from these analogies about spiritual maturity? Reflect.

**3) Determine why certain issues were addressed:** God strategically teaches saints to mature. (In Chapter 1, He helped them see the true wisdom and power, that of God. In Chapter 2, they can be taught by the Spirit to value and live resurrection wisdom/power to gain Christ's mind. Chapter 3 instructs them to follow God's growth or construction plan to be a temple that He can use.) What's Paul's goal in this chapter? How does Chapter 3 help these saints attain his goal? Can it help you also?

**4) All Scripture is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness (II Tim.3:16):** a) Define these terms, then read Verses 4-9 to assess which of the approaches Paul is using as he perfects their view of teachers. b) How did the Corinthians see their teachers? (I Cor. 1:10-17) c) What information was given to teach them a proper attitude.

**5) Analogies help teach:** How does the analogy of 'various building materials' assist you to understand the sort (quality) of a believer's labor? (Vs. 9-15)

**6) Ask questions as you read:** Reflecting helps you search for answers in the passage. For example: Vs. 18-How can it help you, to account yourself a fool, to be spiritually wise? Vs. 19-How did God take man in his own craftiness? Vs 20-21-Here, is God teaching you to trust Him as all-wise, rather than yourself?

*\*Newer students: Focus on 'reading' Scripture rather than on using many new study insights.*

## Living Unto God... What Does It Look Like?

God's teaching process causes us to be more Christ-like: to think, live, and labor like Him, valuing things as He does. This helps us learn how to respond to circumstances and problems in a new way. Sound doctrine renews the mind to transform it to Christ's mind, but how? Read, study, meditate, and pray: *"And be not conformed to this world: but **be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.**"* (Romans. 12:2)

Aspects of our thinking will change as we study Scripture, affecting decisions and judgments, because we are to live by faith. As we grow spiritually, our interests adjust: We may go to Bible study, read Scripture, and pray more often. Choices are slowly refined as we mature and apply things God teaches us i.e. use of our time, quality of friendships, and living consistent with our new identity. *"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate **to be conformed to the image of His Son...**"* (Romans 8:29)

There will be glitches. At times, we will make mistakes and yield to the flesh instead of living unto God. There will also be life struggles, even persecution as some will be unreceptive to our new found faith. In any case, God cares how we live. He rewards us for building properly on the foundation of Jesus Christ. *"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."* (I Cor. 3:10-11)

**To Do:** A student will find that God begins to explain how the doctrine lives within the inner man in Romans 6. This happens slowly as we learn and make choices to yield unto God. Search this out yourself to gain further insight.



## The 'Making Of A Case' In Your Mind



### The 'Quality' Of Your Labor

**Gold... Silver... Precious stones... Wood... Hay... Stubble**

What's the quality of your labor? In I Corinthians 3, Paul informed saints at Corinth, as well as all believers, about the importance of maturing to construct an edifice of sound doctrine in our inner man. *"For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."* (Verse 9) As Scripture abides or feels at home in us (dwells), it becomes a conviction, affecting what we think/how we live. (Rom.8:9-14)

The Corinthians didn't realize the great privilege and eternal profit to attain the foundation, then to build on it: *"Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."* (Vs. 12-13)

On a particular day, the believer's judgment, God determines the 'sort' of construction we have done. There will be a great reward for the quality of labor assessed to be 'gold, silver, or precious stones.' However, works that are 'wood, hay, or stubble' will be burned. *"If any work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."* (Verses 14-15)

The Corinthians had become high-minded and puffed up, so God taught: *"Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise."* (Verse 18) Sometimes it takes the sufferings of this life to humble us and work the doctrine within, enabling us to quiet ourselves enough to listen to His teaching, realizing we're not as wise as we thought. As we are renewed by God's Word, Christ will be gloriously manifest, actually magnified in our mortal body.

The Corinthians had envy and strife among themselves, causing divisions; we can have similar challenges. Let's think what happens when there is a quarrel or a misunderstanding that ends poorly: Does your mind 'make a case' against the person to justify or exalt self? Do you put them down by mentally listing all the negative things they did that injured you?

Typically, the exceedingly 'biased analysis of your mind' concludes, 'that person' is totally blameworthy; you are innocent. *"But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."* (Galatians 5:15)

Does it matter what you're thinking, no one knows your thoughts. Yes, at the least, it affects your inner man and attitude as you live under legalism. Inside, you're 'tearing down' this saint, seeing them in the flesh, & placing them 'under your performance system' (law).

**Insight:** We are to think and live as who we are in Christ. Be aware of what is happening in your mind. Your thinking affects your words and behavior, response to others, and service to God. It also reveals where YOU really are in your own spiritual maturity.

How can this legalism change? Study & pray to... **Understand & love them:** The Corinthians had fleshly challenges, made mistakes in thinking, and did not always respond well. As any saint, they generally functioned where they were in their walk: *"...are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"* (1 Cor.3:3) Love surely can deal with this.

**Think differently:** Deal with them in grace, seeing them in Christ. You have the same flesh. Forgive them with the love of Christ. *"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."* (Col. 3:13)

Since everyone has a unique journey and lives in a fallen creation, views on topics will be different and each will have fleshly attitudes. Paul responded to saints at Corinth in great patience, using Scripture as his authority. He taught and helped them grow, correcting their mistaken and ungodly ways in grace and love.

**Christian Life Coach Support Services**  
 (804) 519-1210 - lifecoachesdjbj@yahoo.com  
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To:

**“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...” (Romans 3:24)**



## Who Really Wants To Suffer?

Try as we may to live a quiet and peaceable life, things happen that cause challenges and dilemmas. God allows us free will to choose how to respond, “...for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” (Rom. 6:14) The Corinthians didn’t want to change their fleshly ways to trust/live unto God. It was inconvenient and felt a lot like suffering. They preferred ‘their’ wisdom/power. We have similar tendencies, so what do we need to know that will help?

**Romans 8:18-Sufferings of this present time:** We are not protected from the ordinary troubles that happen in this world. At times, God placed a ‘hedge’ around Israel. If they obeyed under the law, they were physically blessed. God deals differently with us; the Body of Christ is always dealt with under grace. God has already given us all things to enable us to endure any challenge. We have the completed Word and His Spirit in us to teach our inner man how to deal with sufferings. Though we are not delivered from troubles, in foresight and love, God causes them to work for our good!

**Romans 8:17,35-Sufferings of Christ:** As we study, live, and preach Truth, we may indeed suffer: Living unto God takes time and energy, like reading, studying, and meditating. Also, some old ungodly habits that we used to love, diminish in importance. Unbelievers or fellow saints may not like our new Christian ways and we can be wrongly accused, injured, or even rejected by family or friends. In many countries, believers are fearful of physical harm just for being a Christian and experience revenge for speaking Truth.

**Yet, eternal glory is manifest as we respond in faith:** “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Rom. 8:18)

**As we yield, God’s own power rests on us:** “And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” (II Cor. 12:9)

**Most saints don’t want difficulties, even to simply read His Word. Yet, we can walk by faith, with a thankful heart in the midst of the sufferings.**

## In January, 2018 Read The Bible With Us!

If you haven’t read through the Bible for some time or desire increased familiarity with all Scripture, join our Bible Reading Group this January.

The goal will be to read a little each day, progressing **at your own pace**. It is all grace, no pressure. If you want to finish in a year, a Daily Reading Schedule will be available.

Those who would like to join us, have questions, or feel they need help to stay on track, please call:

**Brian/Deborah: (804) 519-1210**

## Bible Study Opportunities

In North Chesterfield, VA

1. Brian’s Family Study: Fri.: 7-9 pm
  2. Women’s Bible Study & Support Wed.: 10:30-12 pm local library
- Call for Info at (804) 519-1210**

Request email/postal subscriptions/past issues or forward questions and ideas using contact information above.