

Nepios

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1 Corinthians 3:1-4

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As Paul continues to address these divisions (or Schisms) that are occurring in the Corinthian church, he reminds them that they have God's word and God's Spirit to lead, guide, and direct. However, it's obvious that these are either not being used, or are being ignored.

Dear brothers and sisters, when I was with you I couldn't talk to you as I would to spiritual people. I had to talk as though you belonged to this world or as though you were infants in the Christian life. ² I had to feed you with milk, not with solid food, because you weren't ready for anything stronger. And you still aren't ready, ³ for you are still controlled by your sinful nature. You are jealous of one another and quarrel with each other. Doesn't that prove you are controlled by your sinful nature? Aren't you living like people of the world? ⁴ When one of you says, "I am a follower of Paul," and another says, "I follow Apollos," aren't you acting just like people of the world?" ¹ (1 Corinthians 3:1-4)

Here you have a church that began in one of the most wicked cities of the Roman Empire. But in spite of that, a group of people from all walks of life find forgiveness and grace through Christ Jesus. What a great beginning! Paul even spent a year and a half teaching and training them. And yet here, three years later, it appears that they were losing the battle. He says their sinful nature was dividing the church. He says that they should have matured beyond this point by now. He says they are *Nepios* (*nay'-pee-os*); Childish.

Their failure to mature, or more importantly their immature faith, was dividing this church. We're left with the impression that if they had grown spiritually, these problems would have been overcome. Had they truly allowed the Spirit to work in them and allowed God's word to teach them, they would be better prepared for the battle; a battle every Christian must face at one point in their life, and a battle that even a church must face from time to time.

¹Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

Did you know that the moment you become a Christian, two things happen? You become a Child of the King, but you also become an enemy of Satan. The last thing our adversary wants is another Child of the King out there working for Jesus. He hates it when we become a Soldier of the Cross. And he will do anything within his power to destroy you and your work. The mature believer recognizes this and, to keep from being destroyed, will spend time preparing themselves in Spirit and in Truth. But the immature believer, the one who has not strengthened themselves with God's Truth nor allowed the Spirit to transform them, this believer is easy prey to the one who would destroy them and the church.

So, the Christians in Corinth may have come to Christ, but they did not allow God's Spirit to transform their heart and mind, and they did not spend enough time in God's word to be challenged by His standard of living. They had stopped growing once they came to Christ. They remain Nepios; Babes in Christ. And as immature believers, they become easy prey to the enemy; the Satan who is out to destroy the work of God. According to Paul, because they still lived like people of the world, the Corinthian church was becoming divided. Satan was using their immaturity to destroy God's church. Yes my friend, don't miss what Paul is saying here. One of the ways Satan destroys the church is from within; through immature believers who still live like people of the world.

Well, how can we keep this from happening to us? By becoming a church full of people filled with the Fruit of the Spirit; a church where Christians realize the war that rages within them and against them (**Read Galatians 5:16-26**).

We also need to realize that the world's wisdom and the passions of our heart are ineffective at combating the forces of darkness. We are fighting a Spiritual war; a war against things the world cannot comprehend (**Read Ephesians 6:10-20**).

A spiritual problem will not have an earthly solution. And earthly wisdom cannot combat spiritual warfare. That is why we need to mature in God's truth and in His Spirit to endure this battle that is waged against us. Our adversary is out to

destroy all that is of God, including His people and His church. We must study and pray to become His warriors; Soldiers of the Cross.

The Apostle Peter has said, ³ *By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence.* ⁴ *And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.* ⁵ *In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge,* ⁶ *and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness,* ⁷ *and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone.* ⁸ *The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* ² (2 Peter 1:3-8). Peter is echoing the words of Paul; no Christian should remain as a babe, immature in their faith. And the more you grow in Spirit and in Truth, the more productive and useful you become for the Kingdom of God.

If anyone tells you that life will be easier once you become a Christian, they are deceiving you. That first step of faith is not the end of your journey, it's merely the beginning. We are soldiers, my friend. We must continue our training if we are to withstand the enemies attacks against us and against the church.

²Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.