

FEBRUARY 27, 2022
LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
FAILURE TO LAUNCH
1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-17
WINTER QUARTER WEEK 7 OF 13

Getting to Know Each Other Better

1. Do you enjoy gardening or yard work? Why?

I do! I enjoy yard work. I enjoy things like mowing and edging and trimming bushes and trees. I don't mind a weed whacker, either. One fun and nerdy thing I enjoy in the spring and summer is taking stolons from bermuda grass and planting them in the dead spots in my yard. Then I water and mow and watch them spread and grow. There is a link to what I enjoy doing with these stolons to 1 Corinthians 3:6. I plant and I water (and I mow), but God makes it grow. And it doesn't grow fast, but rather in a more steady and faithful sort of way. I can almost predict how much growth I'll get in a week. Then, when I look back after a month or so, I see that there was pretty solid progress. But it takes time and patience to see results. I'm okay with that. I think those who garden or do yard work, whether they enjoy it or not, learn much about how spiritual growth happens in their life. I know God teaches me things through it.

Why? I like to watch things grow. I feel like I accomplish something when I'm done mowing or trimming bushes and trees (and the yard usually looks good). I like observing the mystery of growth. I put water on it, and it grows. I do so little. I like seeing bare areas in my yard become filled with green grass. And I like it when the bermuda turns yellow in the fall and winter. It makes me feel like we actually have some seasons.

How about you? Do you enjoy gardening or yard work? Why?

Renewed by Grace/Equipped as Disciples

For this week's discussion, I decided to have us do a paragraph-by-paragraph study. You'll see the same questions for each section of the text. The idea is simply to have a discussion about what each person sees and to bring in what Ryan saw. I don't have any main things that I want the groups to cover, except to try and cover as much of the four paragraphs as possible. I used the 1984 NIV translation to come up with the paragraph divisions. I really want to give the Spirit room to take the conversation where He wants. I'll provide a few notes for you that I hope will add to the discussion.

Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-17

2. Go back and read verses 1-4. Also review your Sermon Outline that covers these verses.

- **What stands out to you from these verses? Why?**
- **Is there a word of encouragement or a word of challenge to be found in these verses? What is it? Why?**
- **Is there a possible point of application for you to consider? What is it? Why?**

Paul planted the church in A.D. 50 and stayed there for 18 months (Acts 18:11), leaving around A.D. 52. Depending on who you read, you'll find that scholars believe Paul wrote 1 Corinthians in either A.D. 53, 54, 55 or 56. He's writing to them anywhere from one to five years after he left them, which would be anywhere from three to seven years after he first arrived in the city and planted the church. The point is this - it's been awhile. These Corinthians have been believers awhile, at least some of them have, and I would think the main leaders, the ones Paul first led to Christ and discipled, would be at least five to seven years old in the Lord. Yet he calls them

worldly! And they are still struggling with jealousy and quarreling. He says he can't address them as spiritual. He calls them mere infants in Christ. He calls them "mere men." Another translation calls them "ordinary people."

Some additional questions -

- How does knowing this affect our interactions with people who aren't as far along as we think they should be? Should we be surprised? Disappointed? Aware that while this isn't desirable, it's not uncommon? Aware that if it happened to a church Paul planted, that it might happen to children we birthed, or people we disciplined or lead in a group each week? We don't want to lower the expectation for growth, but sometimes it doesn't happen like we want it to, as fast as we want it to.
- How can we help people who aren't as far along as we think they should be? (How does Paul speak to the church? What's his tone? What words does he use? Does he pull punches? What can we learn from him?)

3. Go back and read verses 5-9. Also review your Sermon Outline that covers these verses.

- **What stands out to you from these verses? Why?**
- **Is there a word of encouragement or a word of challenge to be found in these verses? What is it? Why?**
- **Is there a possible point of application for you to consider? What is it? Why?**

It's in this section that Ryan's points about Notoriety → Servanthood and Control → Trust come into play.

There is a lot in here about

- responsibility (ours and God's),
- humility (God causes the growth),
- sovereignty (God causes the growth),
- patience (God causes the growth),
- dependence (God causes the growth),
- equality of roles in the spiritual life of another/no place or need for comparison (neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God),
- what we will be rewarded for doing (each will be rewarded according to his or her own labor).

An interesting thing to think about is that the church is still very immature, and yet it is God who causes the growth. God is sovereign over their immaturity and lack of spiritual progress. I sure wish I could understand His sovereignty and our free will when it comes to spiritual growth. All I know is that Paul levels the playing field by saying it's God who causes the growth. Their growth isn't on Paul or Apollos, so why are they picking and choosing one guy over the other? Neither guy has any power when it comes to spiritual maturity.

What do you think about this? I'm not saying their immaturity is God's fault. But I am saying that God is the one who causes growth.

In any event, we should never assign to people power they simply do not have. And, if we are in places of leadership and influence, like every Life Group Leader is, we should not lead people to think we have more power than we actually do. Most of us are water-ers by nature of our role as

Group Leaders. So we pray about how we can be the best water-ers and practice humility and model dependence on Christ.

- 4. Go back and read verses 10-17. Also review your Sermon Outline that covers these verses.**
- **What stands out to you from these verses? Why?**
 - **Is there a word of encouragement or a word of challenge to be found in these verses? What is it? Why?**
 - **Is there a possible point of application for you to consider? What is it? Why?**

This is where Ryan's point about Temporal → Eternal comes into play.

There is also a lot to think about in these verses -

- We do what we do by the grace God gives us
- Either we lay the foundation or we build on someone else's work
- If we did not lay the foundation, then the work we do of building on the foundation someone else laid will one day be shown for what it is.
- We won't lose our salvation if we didn't do a good job of building in other's lives, but we won't have much of a reward.
- Other people's building in my life may get destroyed on The Day and my building in other's lives may get destroyed on The Day.
- We need to be careful as we invest in the lives of others. We don't want the work we did in their lives to be destroyed.

Some additional questions -

- What does it mean to "be careful" in how we build? (verse 10)
- What do you think about verse 12? What might examples of these things be? (I wouldn't take this too far or get too allegorical.)

Sent in Love

- 5. What is one thing you can do to apply this week's message?**