

THE BIBLE VIEW

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Baby Christians

Bill Brinkworth

In I Corinthians 3, Paul discusses spiritually weak people. He identifies this type of Christians at the church in Corinth (I Cor. 1:2) as baby Christians (I Cor. 3:1).

Because they had not spiritually matured, the preacher had to watch what he said and taught them. He could only tell them less demanding things of God. If he revealed to them the “harder” things of God, they would react improperly to the spiritual “meat.” They were saved because Paul addressed them as “brethren” (I Cor. 3:1), but they were very carnal (I Cor. 3:3).

Noah Webster defined “carnal” as “pertaining to the flesh.” The “baby” Christians’ deep involvement in things of the world clouded any dealings the Spirit of God tried to have with them. They did what felt good and interested them, but they were not spiritually pliable.

Today, Christianity is also weakened by those that are trying to straddle both worlds. They never grow in the things of the Lord. They try to be like everyone else and have all the pleasures this life can offer them, and

minimally tip their hat to God. Obedience to God is not a priority in their thinking.

Any mention of “harder” things of God, and many today also get uncomfortable or mad. They can agree on being saved, and may even be baptized. Heads will nod in agreement to Christian practices that do not require sacrifice or changes.

However, mention separation from sinful practices or from influences that could get one too close to sin, and suddenly “the preacher is fanatical.” Suggest obeying the commandments recorded in the Bible, and their justification will be “I don’t think God meant it for today’s people. That was for people a long time ago.” Show them where the Bible says that one should give God part of their income, (Malachi 3:8-9) and their anger turns their face red and they stammer, “God knows I can’t afford it, so he doesn’t expect me to give.” Hint that they should be faithful in attending church and you will hear more justification and excuses for their lack of commitment to the assembly of local believers.

We still have “baby” Christians today. They never “grow up” spiritually. They never take the steps of faith necessary to help them grow closer and be more dependent on their loving Father. Amazingly, many of them even model themselves after the early, carnal church of Corinth, and ignore Paul’s rebuke of that church’s immature Christian practices.

Carnality will always be a temptation for all Christians. Encouragingly, however, there are still some that step out by faith and follow wherever the Holy Spirit leads them. They are the ones that are saved and desire, “Okay Lord, show me what you want me to do next in your Word and I will do it.” They happily do what they are shown to do, and allow God to use them and work in their lives. They are the ones that have no problem digesting the “meat” that God allows them to hear. Those Christians are the ones God is looking for and uses the most.

“If a Christian does not read and obey the Bible, they will never grow spiritually!”

Stay!

Bill Brinkworth

Paul, like so many Christians even today, faced some opposition from other Christians. Some in the churches that he spoke at questioned his apostleship, and others accused him of walking in the flesh (II Cor. 10:2). No matter the accusation, Paul chose not to fight back. He chose not to fight those who were carnal with his own carnal retorts. He chose to let his works for the Lord speak for themselves, and let the Lord do the rest of the battling (II Cor. 10:4-8).

Everyone that attends a church has someone falsely accusing him of something, or else has his feelings hurt at least once. No church is perfect. It is a God-commanded assembly of believers, and it may have mostly Christians in attendance, but none of them are perfect. Some

members of the church family are more carnal than others. They see things from a fleshly perspective and not how God sees them (II Cor.10:5). To make matters worse they often voice their opinions about other members. When this is done, someone usually gets hurt.

Too many, unfortunately, get wind of what was said about them and leave the church — never to darken the church doors again. My first thought is usually, “Who would be behind such a move of leaving a church for the wrong reasons — God or Satan?” It certainly would not be of God to disobey his command (Hebrews 10:24-25) to assemble with other believers; yet people leave churches all the time for the wrong reasons.

There have been times that we also have had things said about us by other church family members. The false accusations hurt us deeply, but we remembered that we were not in attendance for those people, but for God. He wanted us to stay, and we did. It was a hard time, and much praying was done on our part. We never missed a meeting, however, and we kept at the work the Lord had for us. Over time, we looked around and noticed that we had our nose to the grindstone doing what God had laid on our hearts, but our accusers were no longer in attendance. God does take care of his own, but that does not mean that there will not be difficulties.

Paul stayed and did what God told him to do, and God used him greatly. His accusers’ names are not mentioned in the Bible, but Paul is still remembered. Be a “Paul.”

Purpose in your heart who you will serve (Josh. 24:15), and then let the Lord handle the light work!

“Hopefully, you didn't go to church for "feelings," so don't leave if they get hurt. You should be going to church to be obedient to the Lord!”

Blinded by Carnality

Bill Brinkworth

Many of Paul's letters were spent rebuking the Corinthian church (I Cor. 11:17, 22). Because many in that church never truly rid themselves of the snares of their past worldly lives, it hampered them quite often from growing in the things of the Lord. Scriptural instructions intended to help them grow spiritually and get closer to their God and Christian brethren, often became a source of contention amongst themselves and caused division instead (I Cor. 11:18-19). One such instance was the way they conducted the Lord's Supper.

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper was to help them remember (I Cor. 11:25-26) what Jesus had done for them. It was to be a time of solemn remembrance of the sacrifice God's Son made for them when His body was "broken" (nailed to the cross), and His blood spilt for their sins.

Instead, they took that time and made it into a feast. Some went hungry. Some got drunk (I Cor. 11:21). Others were embarrassed for not having what others had (I Cor. 11:22). The meaning of the Lord's Supper was forgotten.

Because they lost the meaning and purpose (I Cor. 11:29) of the supper, Paul warned that it would bring them harm rather than good. Instead of blessing and unity, their drinking and eating was bringing them damnation and division. So wicked did the event become that some got sick and others even died (I Cor. 11:30) because of their refusal to discern the Lord's body. They were to judge and remember their own sins at the time. They did not, and God judged some of them for their added sin.

Believers are to continue this time of remembering the broken body and spilt blood of our Saviour even today (I Cor. 11:26). It is not to be a "party-time", but a judge-our-own-sins time. It is a time that we do not look around at others to see their faults, but remember our own. The intent of this time is for us to remember. Remember what Jesus did for us and to keep our spiritual "slate" clean between Him and us.

"Humility is produced by remembering the pit we have come from."

What the Bible Says about Carnality

- *"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject*

to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Rom. 8:5-7
Many worldly Christians think themselves spiritual, but God says they are His enemies.

- *“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon [worldly desires of the flesh].” Mat. 6:24*
- *“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” I Cor. 2:14* A Christian may be saved on the inside, but he still has the natural side of him He was born with. He will battle the desire to do what his “natural man” wants to do until the day he dies. Those living for the flesh’s needs will not understand the things of God.
- *“Ye adulterers and adulteresses [Those that serve the flesh are committing spiritual adultery. They are going after the ‘gods’ of this world, and our not faithful to the God in Heaven], know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” James 4:4*

“Christian, if you feed the ‘carnal’ part of you more than the spiritual part, the worldly, carnal side will grow stronger. You will battle spiritual weakness and immaturity until you change your feeding habits!”