

# ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

Study to show "The Way of True life,"

## *Bible Study Outline*

**TOPIC:** Moving Toward Maturity

**TEXT:** *1 Corinthians 3:1-9*

**Instructions:** - *Let the above passages be read each time you come together to study this topic so that everyone could participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on the topic and come up with follow-up questions. Participants should be brief in their responses and use relevant Bible references to illustrate their points. They should be careful not to dominate the discussion to allow everyone to have an equal opportunity to participate.*

**Introduction:** We who grow up and grow old in Western culture innately value individualism. Though we become adults, in many ways we are like perpetual two-year-old shouting, "I want to do it myself!" The truths of Christianity stand in opposition to this natural culture of ours. God designed us to become something more together than any of us can possibly become alone—his "fellow workers," his "field," his "building."

Evangelicals are sometimes criticized for being rugged individualists with a poverty-stricken and even nonexistent theology of the church. If this were true, we would have to depart from the biblical vision, including this chapter; 1 Corinthians 3 is one of the great New Testament chapters on the church. In it, Paul tells the Corinthians bluntly that, in his view, they do not qualify as people who are spiritually mature. As Paul measured it, spiritual maturity has something to do with how Christians balance individual and group identity. Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-9.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What are some ways that you enjoy expressing your individuality? How do you decide whether to curb the expression of your individuality and why?
2. What accusations does Paul make against the Christians of Corinth (vs. 1-4)?

3. How serious a problem do you think jealousy and quarreling are? Why do you think that?

4. Begin to think more deeply about jealousy and quarreling among Christians. When Christians engage in jealousy and quarreling, what are they saying about themselves? About God? About the church?

5. Focus on verses 5-9. Paul opens this section with two questions: "What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul?" Use your own words to explain Paul's answer to these questions.

6. In verses 6-7. Paul summarizes, in the briefest possible manner, all the events of Acts 18. What does this summary reveal about what it takes to create and sustain a church or Christian ministry?

7. How does Paul's summary in verses 6-7 address the moral failure of Christians who become jealous of one another or who quarrel with each other?

8. Do you think that there are excusable divisions between Christians? If so, give an example. What are some inexcusable divisions between Christians?

9. How might a Christian leader draw on the principles of this passage to head off unworthy divisions?

10. Some of the most encouraging statements of this passage is four words in verses 6 and 9, "God made it grow" and "God's field" and "God's building" What's your interpretation of these phrases?