

1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Explain Worship

First we see Paul's rebuke for wrongly viewing him and Apollos. The Corinthians were having division over who was influential. It's one thing to prefer one person over another but it's an entirely different thing to find your identity in someone. That's what they were doing.

Paul says that this is fleshly/behaving in a human way/merely human – basically they're acting like an unbeliever.

Verses 1-3

Paul doesn't say, "Don't do that," but he points out their identity: It's like you're not even a Christian. Basically, Paul is saying that at the heart of true Christian living, a Community of faith won't be divided over things that the world would divide over. At the heart of Christian living it's all about following Christ and not man.

Verse 4

Is there an area in your life that if people saw it, they may question your relationship with Jesus?
Paul's correction for rightly viewing him and Apollo

Verse 5-7

Paul straightens out their view of himself and Apollo

Servants – Not "Amazing Super Christian Hero's." We're "servants." I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth...Translation: At the end of the day, it wasn't us that did anything in your heart or changed your lives, but God using us. We're nothing. It's all God. Don't go around causing disunity saying I follow Paul or I follow Apollos. Go around creating unity saying we follow Jesus.

But what's the heart of the issue? We don't want to fix the symptoms only. This was a worship problem. We all worship something. It's supposed to be Jesus. The Corinthians got into a "Leadership Worship War." How does this happen? Wrong Worship.

The Corinthians were worshiping Paul and Apollos. How do I know? We worship whatever we find our identity in.

Tim Keller: Sin is building your identity—finding your greatest meaning, significance and security—on something besides God. Everyone centers his or her life on something, and whatever that is becomes by definition and function a) your god—something you adore and serve with your whole heart, and b) your “savior”—something you have to have in order to feel spiritually and emotionally significant and meaningful.

There are three reasons that it’s wrong

1. We will worship people
2. We will demonize (portray as wicked or threatening) people
3. It always breeds disunity

Worship People – If we worship people we will be asking things of them that they cannot deliver and therefore we will never have ultimate joy and satisfaction, something only God can give.

Demonize People –We will demonize people who disagree with us because people who oppose the person I worship or love are in opposition against me and therefore are threatening to my group.

The Corinthians were naturally divided because of this issue. If you were for Paul, you were against Apollos. Vice Versa.

Who are you worshiping? Who are you demonizing? How is it potentially creating disunity?

The Gospel as a Remedy for the Human Worship

Explain the gospel

If I believe the gospel, I can’t worship or find my identity in another person because I find my identity (meaning and significance) in Jesus.

If I believe the gospel there’s no way that I can demonize people and believe that I’m better than anyone else because **all** people are in sinful rebellion against God, that in and of themselves “no one is good, no not one” and we’re all deserving of punishment for our rebellion.

The gospel destroys disunity because if someone doesn't like or prefer a leader or person that I like or prefer, at the end of the day I know it's a preference and we have unity in Jesus.

How were the Corinthians (and us) supposed to view Paul and Apollos?

The gospel removes any room for boasting in ourselves or others but in God's work. We can be blessed by someone and give them honor but we don't have to worship them.

That's what Paul is trying to get at. Paul is saying, "Don't boast in Apollos or myself. It's all God. Don't identify yourself as a follower of me but identify yourself as a follower of Jesus."

What we need to do is realize that God uses all believers in his body, the church, to encourage and build up the church. Yes, there are men and women who will have more of an impact on you than others. However, we must remember to keep them in a right relation to God. He alone should have our identity.

Remind yourself of the gospel the next time you're tempted to create a human hierarchy and/or worship another person.

Lastly, remember this one thing. We tend to try to mimic the person we idolize or uphold in higher honor than others. God doesn't want another _____ (fill it in for yourself) _____. He wants you.

If he wanted another _____ (fill it in for yourself) _____, he would have done it. But he didn't, so he wants you.

Only _____ (fill it in for yourself) _____ can be the best _____ (fill it in for yourself) _____.

You'll be terrible at it. But you'll be awesome at being you.