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1 Corinthians 3:1-7

1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; 3 for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? 4 For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” are you not carnal? 5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.

1. **SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND MATURITY (1 Corinthians 3:1-3):**

Paul begins by highlighting the Corinthians' spiritual immaturity, comparing them to infants in Christ who are not ready for solid spiritual food. This immaturity is evident in their behavior, marked by jealousy and strife. Paul emphasizes the need for believers to progress from spiritual infancy to maturity, where they can handle deeper truths and live out their faith without being controlled by worldly desires.

* Reflection Questions
  + 1. What steps can we take to foster spiritual growth and maturity?
    2. How is envy, strife, and division a sign of spiritual immaturity?

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1. **DIVISIONS IN THE CHURCH (1 Corinthians 3:4):**

Paul points out a specific issue causing division in the Corinthian church—loyalty to human leaders like Paul or Apollos. By identifying themselves with different leaders, the Corinthians were creating factions and undermining the unity of the body of Christ. Paul reminds them that such divisions are contrary to the spirit of Christ and hinder the church's effectiveness in fulfilling its mission.

* Reflection Questions
  + 1. How can we promote unity and cooperation while still honoring the diversity of gifts and perspectives within the body of Christ?

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1. **GOD’S CHURCH GROWTH STRATEGY (1 Corinthians 3:5-7):**

Paul shifts the focus from human leaders to God's role in the growth of His church. He clarifies that leaders like Paul and Apollos are merely servants through whom the Corinthians believed, with God assigning different roles to each. It is ultimately God who brings growth to individuals and the church as a whole.

* Reflection Questions
  + 1. How does understanding God's sovereignty in church growth impact our approach to ministry and evangelism?
    2. What practical steps can we take to align our efforts with God's growth strategy?

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