

Studies in 1 Corinthians

▶ LESSON IX: WHAT ARE YOU BUILDING?

Text: 1 Corinthians 3:9-14 (NLT)

9 For we are both God's workers. And you are God's field. You are God's building. **10** Because of God's grace to me, I have laid the foundation like an expert builder. Now others are building on it. But whoever is building on this foundation must be very careful. **11** For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ.

12 If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, **13** his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. **14** If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. **15** If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. Verse 9 describes Christians in three ways—what words are used?

- _____
- _____
- _____

- a. What is the significance of each?
- b. What did this likely mean to the Corinthians?
- c. What does it mean to this church, today?

2. What was Paul's role in the church? (vs. 10; cf. 2 Cor. 11:23)
 - a. With such a heavy burden, how did Paul managed to “stay afloat?” (1 Cor 6:4-6; 15:10; Col.1:29)
 - b. Was Paul the only “builder” there?

3. There are various interpretations of vv 11-15. Some teach that this alludes to purgatory. Others say it refers to the Christian who has not lived up to his calling, but will be saved (though lose all or some of his reward). Let's look at a few key thoughts in each verse to see if we can decipher the true meaning:
 - a. **vs. 11:** What foundation are we building our lives upon? (Acts 4:11; Eph 2:20; 2 Tim 2:19; 1 Pet. 2:6)
 - b. **vs. 12:** What is the difference in quality between these materials: *gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw*? What do these represent here?
 - c. **vs. 13:** What is our “work”? Will our work be evaluated? How? By whom? When?
 - d. **vs. 14:** What is the outcome of good work?
 - e. **vs. 15:** What about someone whose work is lacking? (Jude 1:23; 1 Pet 1:6-8)

