

Studies in 1 Corinthians

► LESSON XI: WHAT ARE YOU BUILDING? (PART DEUX)

Text: 1 Corinthians 3:9-17 (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.

16 Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you? **17** God will destroy anyone who destroys this temple. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

Questions for Thought & Discussion

There are several different views of verses 12-15. Some say the passage applies to teachers/preachers who will be evaluated by the fruits of their ministry. Others contend it refers to the Christian who has not fully lived up to his calling, but will be saved anyway (though in the process he will lose a great deal of his reward). Some go so far as to suggest that Paul has purgatory in mind—a hypothetical place of “purging” between heaven and hell where a person is given a second chance at redemption. Let's see if we can decipher the true meaning by looking at a few key thoughts in each verse.

1. First off, who is Paul addressing in this passage? (vs. 1, 9-10)

2. What foundation are we building our lives upon? (**vs. 11**; cf. Acts 4:11; Ephesians 2:20; 2 Timothy 2:19; 1 Peter 2:6)

3. What is the use of each of the materials mentioned in **verse 12**? What is the value of each in structural projects? Which ones will fire singe, destroy?
 - a. Gold
 - b. Silver
 - c. Precious Stones
 - d. Wood
 - e. Hay
 - f. Straw

4. What is our “work”? How will our work be evaluated? By whom? When? (**vs. 13**; cf. Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10)

5. What is the outcome of good work? (**vs. 14**; cf. vs. 8; Matthew 16:27; Luke 6:22-23; Ephesians 6:8; Hebrews 10:35)

6. What happens to someone whose work is lacking? (**vs. 15**; cf. Matthew 10:42; 1 Pet 1:6-8; 2 John 1:8; Jude 1:23; Revelation 22:12)

7. How do verses 16-17 fit into the overall discussion?