

“The Results of Carnal Christianity”

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4/8/15

1 Cor. 1:1-3(NLT) - This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and from our brother Sosthenes.

² I am writing to God’s church in Corinth, to you who have been called by God to be his own holy people. He made you holy by means of Christ Jesus, just as he did for all people everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours. ³ May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

1 Cor. 3:1(NKJV) - And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people* but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.

The Corinthians loved Jesus, but they had never learned to control their flesh. The Corinthian culture was very liberal morally and as a result the Corinthian Christians were constantly acting in ways that were hurtful to themselves and others.

1Cor. 1:2(NKJV)- To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to besaints*, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.

1 Cor. 3:1(NKJV) - And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people* but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.

The word carnal literally means “body ruled” or controlled by the flesh:

1 Cor. 3:2-3(NASB) - I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able *to receive it*. Indeed, even now you are not yet able,³ for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?

If a believer never learns to control their flesh and its selfish impulses, they will look and act like the world and unsaved folks.

The only remedy for the carnal Christian is to strengthen their spirits and renew their minds with the solid food of God’s Word.

Gal. 5:19-21(NLT)- When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures,²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division,²¹ envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

The Apostle Paul informs us there are serious consequences for allowing the sinful impulses of your flesh to govern your life.

He goes on to warn carnal Christians that persistently allow the flesh to govern our lives will disqualify us from the privileges of God’s kingdom.

The truth is we believers do not get a free pass from the consequences of sinful behavior. In fact our relationship with God as our Father actually places us in a position of great responsibility.

The unbeliever will face God as their judge, but the believer lives everyday with God as their Father. A good father does not ignore the immaturities and poor choices of his children. A good father is actively involved in the discipline of his children.

Heb. 12:5-11(NLT) - ^{And} have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as his children? He said,

**“My child, don’t make light of the LORD’s discipline,
and don’t give up when he corrects you.
⁶ for the LORD disciplines those he loves,
and he punishes each one he accepts as his child.”**

⁷ As you endure this divine discipline remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? ⁸ If God doesn’t discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children at all. ⁹ Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn’t we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever?

¹⁰ For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God’s discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. ¹¹ No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it’s painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.

1). Broken Fellowship, Not Relationship:

When a believer intentionally sins, it immediately causes us to break our fellowship with God and as a result we lose our peace.

There is a difference between fellowship and relationship. A child's disobedience does not change his or her relationship with his or her father-it does though impact the warm and loving fellowship between the child and father.

Fellowship is that sense of pleasure and closeness that is shared between two people. When a believer sins, their spirit instantly knows that something wrong has occurred. The indwelling Holy Spirit convicts the believer that their thoughts or actions have broken the will of God. This sense of conviction is designed to draw us to the Father for mercy and forgiveness.

1 Tim. 4:1-2(NKJV)- Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ² speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.

Our conscience is the voice of our born again spirit. It has been designed by God to give us a sense of peace when we are living in God's will, and to be disturbed and troubled when you sin or act outside of God's will.

Eventually a person can become so acclimated to the sinful choices they continue to make, that they fall into deception and begin to think their sin does not matter to God.

Titus 1:15(NKJV) - ¹⁵ To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.

2). Destroyed Confidence:

1 John 3:20-22(NKJV) - ²⁰ For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. ²¹ Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. ²² And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

When our flesh is governing our choices, it impacts our peace with God and erodes our assurance that God will answer our prayers.

3). Loss of Testimony:

1Cor. 5:1-2(NKJV)- It is actually reported *that there is* sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father’s wife! ² And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.

When a believer perpetually commits sin, it has the potential to ruin their influence to those in and outside the family of God.

If we continue to act like the world, we will have no platform from which to share Christ with those who are in the world and lost.

1 Cor. 5:6-7(NKJV) - Your glorying *is* not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?⁷ Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover was sacrificed for us.

4). Diminished Authority:

The believer who continues in sinful behavior loses their sense of spiritual authority over the work of the enemy.

James 4:7(NKJV) - Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

We cannot yield our body to the enemy through sin and then expect him to submit to your spiritual authority in Christ.

5). Opening Doors to the Enemy:

Gen. 4:3-7(NKJV) - ^{And} in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. ⁴ Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, ⁵ but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

⁶ So the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? ⁷ If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire *is* for you, but you should rule over it.”

1Peter 5:8-9(NKJV) - Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may

devour. ⁹ Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

1 John 5:18(NLT)- ¹⁸ We know that God's children do not make a practice of sinning, for God's Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot touch them.

6). The Loss of Rewards:

1 Cor. 3:10-15(NLT) - 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 Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials—gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. ¹³ But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person's work has any value. ¹⁴ If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. ¹⁵ But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames.

Heb. 9:27 (NKJV) - and as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.