



# Blueprint for the Church:

## *Live the Gospel!*

Small Group Study Guide



1 CORINTHIANS 3:16-23

## The Temple of God

One angle after another, Paul is presenting his case that it goes completely contrary to God's design and **Blueprint for the Church** to have strife, divisions and cliques among God's people. In this section he will present two more perspectives which will show the folly of such actions.

1. Paul is stating that the temple of God is none other than the collective whole of all who believe in Christ; in other words, the church. In particular he is speaking to the local church in Corinth. Based on this understanding, answer the following questions:
  - When Paul speaks about "any man" who destroys the church, is he referring to believers in Christ (those who make up the temple of God) or unbelievers (those who may either be a part of or outside the congregation)? Look at what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1:10-15 to help you answer this question.
  - What might be some specific ways in which the church is in danger from those outside - those in the culture and who promote its values?
  - What might be some specific ways in which the church is in danger from those inside - those in the greater Christian community or part of a particular congregation?
2. "One of the desperate needs of the church is to recapture [a Biblical] vision of what it is by grace, and therefore also what God intends it to be."<sup>1</sup> This gets to the heart of Paul's intent in 1 Corinthians: To lay out God's **Blueprint for the Church**. Based on 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, give a brief statement of the Biblical vision of what God intends the church to be.
  - Based on the issue Paul is addressing, how did the church in Corinth miss the heart of God's **Blueprint for the Church**?
  - In what ways does our vision of being an **ACTS** church fit within Paul's description of what God intends the church to be?

<sup>1</sup>Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eardmans Publishing, 1987), p. 149.

Don't Forget:

*Discuss the Sermon Notes from this week*

<sup>2</sup>Simon J. Kistemaker,  
*1 Corinthians*  
(Grand Rapids:  
Baker Books, 1993),  
pp. 119.

3. “The wisdom of the world manifests itself in people who want to be independent, govern their own lives, and manage their own affairs rather than submit to the lordship of Christ.”<sup>2</sup> Based on this description of the wisdom of the age, answer the following questions:

- In what ways is the wisdom of this age foolishness before God?
- Explain what the “craftiness” is that the world seeks to engage in? How is this their own trap in which God catches them in?
- How is a worldview like this futile and useless in the end?
- In what ways do you see yourself tempted to fall into the wisdom of the age?
- We are instructed to become foolish according to the world's standards. In your own words, what does “foolish” living before the world (yet “wise” living before God) look like?

4. Paul concludes this section by stating that “all things belong to you.” It is important to know that this is not to be taken from a selfish perspective, or from a “self-sufficient and therefore ultimately independent and self-centered” way.<sup>3</sup>

- So what does it mean that “all things belong to us”?
- How does this relate to the next verse that says that we belong to Christ?
- How does this also shed light on the final statement which says that Christ belongs to God?

5. The sixteenth-century Heidelberg Catechism asked this question: What is your only comfort in life and death? The answer is: That I am not my own, but belong ~ body, soul, in life and death ~ to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ. How does this help to explain what it means that “all things belong to us”?

6. How does all this expose the folly of “boasting in men” or anything else?

7. Spend some time and ask God to examine your heart and mind. Where are you tempted to not view the church as God intended; to follow the wisdom of the age; and/or to view people or things from a self-centered perspective?

<sup>3</sup>Gordon D. Fee,  
*The First Epistle  
to the Corinthians*  
(Grand Rapids:  
Eardmans Publishing,  
1987), p. 154.

**For Next Week:**  
**Prayerfully meditate and study the following: 1 Corinthians 4:1-5**