

## The problem of the carnal Christian

1 Corinthians 3:1-4, p. 924

The problem: Corinthian believers were following their sinful/carnal nature instead of the Holy Spirit.

### I. PAUL DID NOT DOUBT THEY WERE SAVED; HE GRIEVED THEIR SINFULNESS (1 CORINTHIANS 3:1).

- *Brothers* = believers (1:10, 1:26, 2:1)
- *Spiritual* = believers (1 Corinthians 2:10-16)
- *Fleshly/carnal/worldly* = When believers persist in sin like unbelievers – following the sin nature
- Believers in Jesus have the new nature (Ephesians 4:22-24; 2 Cor. 5:17) but still have the sin nature (Romans 7:14-25).
- *Infants* = A synonym for carnal – immature like babies

### II. INTERNAL IMMATURITY: PAUL CONFRONTED THEIR SPIRITUALLY IMMATURE MINDS (1 CORINTHIANS 3:2).

- *Milk* = Believing the gospel, but mostly unchanged by it
- *Solid food* = Applying the gospel power of transformation

### III. EXTERNAL BEHAVIOR: PAUL CONFRONTED THEIR OBVIOUS RELATIONAL SINS (1 CORINTHIANS 3:3-4).

- A. Jealousy and quarreling are childish and carnal just like unbelievers (3:3).
  - *Mere men/humans* – Indistinguishable from unbelievers
- B. Division and conflict are childish and carnal just like unbelievers (3:4).