

Carnal? Babes? Milk? As soon as he tells them “ye have the mind of Christ” Paul says “BUT.” When we hear “but God,” it usually means blessing but when we hear “but ye” it often means falling short of God’s purposes. The word “carnal” simply means “fleshly,” and when used figuratively refers to the acts and impulses of ordinary, unsaved human beings. When used speaking of professing believers as it is here, it means they have reverted back to what they were before they were saved. Not that they’ve lost their salvation. But this scripture, among others, clearly shows us we still have in us the sinful nature we were born with. (That’s good to know because otherwise we might think we are lost if we should sin after having trusted on Christ’s death for salvation.) The difference is that we now have a new nature as well. That nature is born of God and does not sin. It is what we desire to have in charge in our lives if we are truly saved.

1John 3:39 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. {is born: or, has been born

Rom 8:6 For to be carnally minded [is] death; but to be spiritually minded [is] life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind [is] enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. {the carnal...: Gr. the minding of the flesh} 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

But those born again desire to grow.

1 Peter 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. 24 For all flesh [is] as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: 25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. 2:1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: 3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord [is] gracious.

Heb. 5:10 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which [be] the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13 For every one that useth milk [is] unskilful {inexperienced} in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, [even] those who by reason of use {habit, or maturity} have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

It is not bad to be an infant, but it is not good to remain so. The Lord desires that we grow and mature as His children

and not remain spiritual infants acting in the infantile ways we see all to often in adults. The Corinthians were acting like babies.

What were the signs of carnality Paul points to in their behavior? Envy, strife, and divisions [factions]. This must be extremely important for Paul devotes four chapters here plus additional references to it later in this same letter. (For example: chapter 6:1-6; 11:17-22.)

He now directs their attention back to their forming childish cliques like kids form clubs that include their friends and exclude others (an all too human trait). Or as youngsters choose a hero to follow, copy and defend. Paul uses this situation to point out the fact that we are all servants of the Lord. We were given spiritual gifts (Romans 12; 1Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4) when we were saved that equip us to serve the Lord who gave them. Where the KJV has “ministers” here the NAS, NIV and JND have “servants.” This is not a position of prominence, leadership or control as some would have it. It simply means one who obediently does what his master sends him to do. That is each of us. Different servants have different jobs, but we all work for the same master. Some must do their work before others can do theirs. The project isn’t complete until each of the workers has done their part. Division of labor wasn’t an invention of mere man. God sets things up so we work together (as the Trinity works together) without independency. Paul uses the illustration of a farmer or gardener. He plants, Apollos waters. But, as every farmer knows (or should realize), God makes things sprout and grow and develop into a harvest. The workers cannot “take pride” in what they have accomplished. They have only done what they were told to. Yet the Lord promises a reward specifically tailored for each of us based upon what we have faithfully done for Him. What grace! (Yet we best don’t do it for the reward, we do it for Him out of love and thankfulness for what He did for us.) He gives every believer work to do, gifts us to do it, guides us to it and in doing it, organizes and coordinates us to do it together **AS ONE**, as He directs, and then He rewards each for our part in it.

v 8. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

Wonderful! He says more on this, read on in the chapter.

By Ron Canner, November 13, 2002