





# CARNALITY

1 COR. 3:1-4

## BEHAVING LIKE MERE MEN

# CARNAL VS SPIRITUAL

## Context – Receiving the Wisdom of God

- **1 Corinthians 2:13-16** – contrast of natural/spiritual man.
- **1 Corinthians 2:6-7** – speaking wisdom among mature (spiritual). (cf. **Hebrews 5:13-14**)

# CARNAL VS SPIRITUAL

## A Contrast of Christians – Babe or Mature

- Beginning – **1 Corinthians 3:1-2b** – babe in Christ is a Christian, but not spiritual (in context); not able to discern spiritual wisdom.
- Time Elapsed – **1 Corinthians 3:2c-4** – should have developed into a spiritual person, but still carnal.

# FLESHY VS FLESHLY

## Babes in Christ are Carnal

- **1 Corinthians 3:1** – although a Christian, still carnal.
  - Carnal – *sarkinos* – “consisting of flesh” [merely] (VINE)
    - Fleeshy; *inos* – made of; “*men of flesh*” (NASB)
- New (**2 Corinthians 5:17**); Unskilled (**Hebrews 5:13**);  
Need teaching (**Matthew 28:20**); Need pruning (**John 15:2**);  
Need renewing (**Ephesians 4:20-24**)

# FLESHY VS FLESHLY

## Remaining a Babe Leads to Carnal Behavior

- **1 Corinthians 3:2c** – given time, should be mature/spiritual, but carnal.
  - Carnal – *sarkikos* – associated with or pertaining to, “the flesh, carnal,” (VINE).
    - Fleshly; *ikos* – characterized by; “*fleshly*” (NASB)
- Remained infants/didn’t grow (**1 Peter 2:2**); Result – fleshly, behaving as mere men (**1 Corinthians 3:3-4**)

# THE DANGER OF REMAINING MERE MEN

“they were intellectually as well as spiritually tarrying at the threshold of the faith (cf. Heb. 5:11, 12); making no progress, and content to remain where they were, when they might have been carried far onward by the mighty transforming powers of that Spirit freely given to them of God. He does not charge them in this word with being antispiritual, but only with being unspiritual, with being flesh and little more, when they might have been much more.” (R.C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament)

# THE DANGER OF REMAINING MERE MEN

“He goes on indeed, at ver. 3, 4, to charge them with the graver guilt of allowing the [sarx, flesh] to work actively, as a ruling principle in them; and he consequently changes his word. They were not [sarkinos, fleshy] only, for no man and no Church can long tarry at this point, but [sarkikos, fleshly] as well, and, as such, full of ‘envying and strife and divisions.’”  
(R.C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament)



# THE DANGER OF REMAINING MERE MEN

## Turning the Spiritual into Carnal

- Context – Corinthians' view of the gospel, and preachers/teachers.
  - Division – **1 Corinthians 3:3-4; 1:11-13**
  - Result of viewing gospel preached as a man's wisdom – **1 Corinthians 1:17, 20-25; 2:4-5**

# THE DANGER OF REMAINING MERE MEN

## Turning the Spiritual into Carnal

- Man's Nature and Sin
  - Is it in man's nature to sin? – “Man's nature is not sinful, but he cannot help but sin”?
    - By nature? (*Ephesians 2:3, physis, habitual*)
  - Sin is contrary to man's nature (*Ecclesiastes 7:29; 1 John 2:1; Hebrews 4:15*)

# THE DANGER OF REMAINING MERE MEN

## Turning the Spiritual into Carnal

- Christ's Perfect Life
  - Substitutionary? – “Christ was perfect so we don't have to be”?
    - Life (no); Death (**Romans 5:8; 2 Cor. 5:21; Isaiah 53:4-6**)
  - Reduced Responsibility – God sees Christ, not our sin?  
(**cf. 1 John 2:6**)

# THE DANGER OF REMAINING MERE MEN

## Turning the Spiritual into Carnal

- Grace
  - Separate from doctrine? – **Romans 6:14**
    - **James 1:25** (law, liberty); **Titus 2:11-12** (grace, teaches)
  - Turned to lewdness – **Jude 4; Galatians 5:13**



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