

“Tested By Fire!”
I Corinthians 3:1-23

How Ministry Works (3:1-9)... Because the Corinthian Christians were bickering over their preferred leaders, Paul gave them a lesson on how leadership in the church actually works. First, he taught the Corinthians that their leaders were merely *servants*, not men to give ultimate allegiance to. Secondly, he pointed out how silly it is to put any leader up on a pedestal for only God can make a leader’s work fruitful anyway.

Sloppy Ministry (3:10-15)... Paul warned that the church must be built upon the right foundation - Jesus Christ. He also taught that they must build on this foundation with the right materials. Not with the perishable materials of human wisdom and power, but rather with the imperishable material of God’s Word which reveals God’s wisdom in the cross. Any so-called church that is built on another foundation and out of the materials of human wisdom and power will not pass the test on judgment day.

No More Boasting in Men (3:16-23)... In these verses Paul reviewed a theme that he has already been stressing – that the Corinthians must stop boasting about men and man’s wisdom and instead put their focus upon Jesus. Paul revealed that it is non-sense for them to bicker about following himself, Apollos, or Peter because all of these leaders belonged to the Corinthians anyway and were given to them by God for the benefit of the whole church.

***Questions for Discussion:**

1. Why is it important for us to remember that only God grows the church?
2. What are some examples of wrong materials with which to build the church? What are the right materials?
3. What does our passage teach you to expect from your pastors? Do you expect/desire the right things?
4. In what ways do people try to destroy God’s temple – the church?