# 1 Corinthians Study 4

#### Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-17

## KEY VERSES—

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gives the increase. So that neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase." (3:6-7)

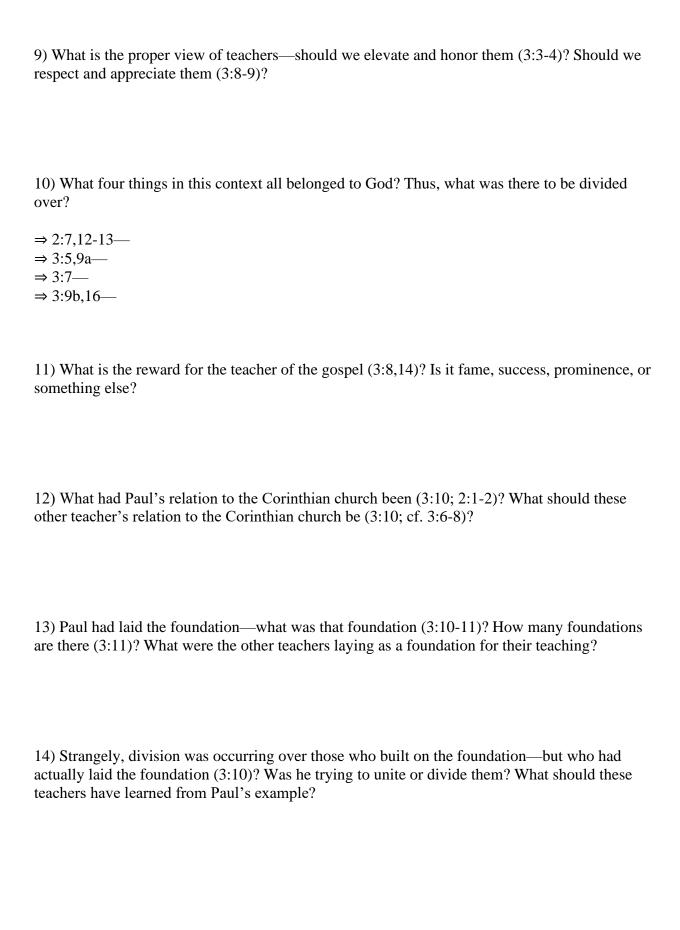
#### SUMMARY—

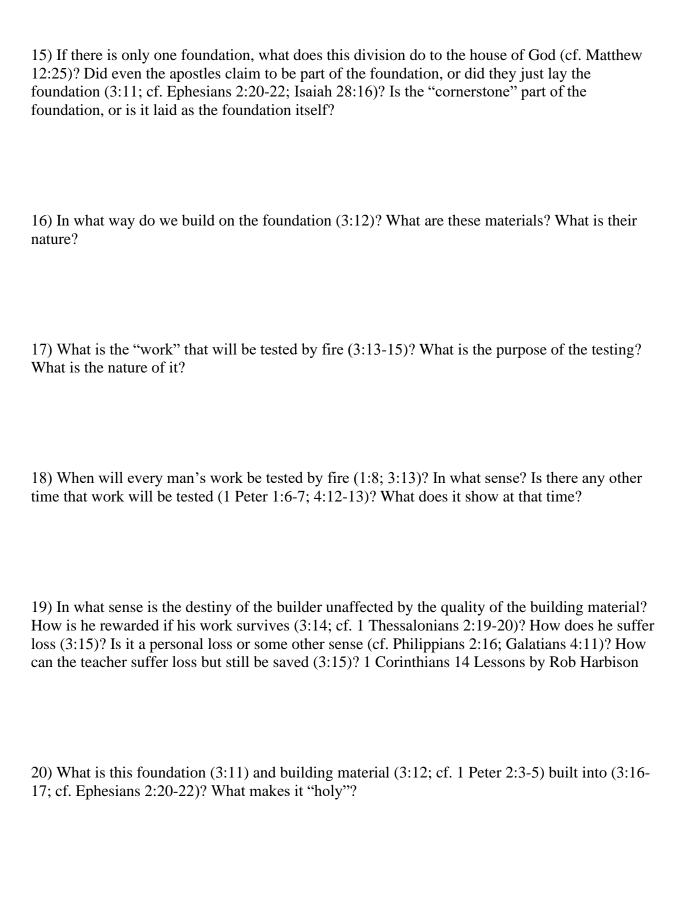
The problem of division in the Corinthian church grew from two sources—not only from the envious, self-promoting teachers, but also from the strife-filled brethren who were dividing over such things. Stumbling over the most basic things, they were unprepared to receive the greater spiritual truths the apostle had for them. In chapter 3, he addresses the folly of following men (cf. Matthew 15:14). Dividing and following men is a sign of spiritual immaturity and carnality (3:1-4; cf. Jude 19). It elevates teachers to a place that is not theirs (3:5-9), because there is only one foundation (3:10-11). Teachers are not the foundation, they merely build on the foundation—some with good material, others with bad material—and difficulties such as the ones they are facing will prove the mettle of these brethren (3:12-15). At the same time, anyone who is instrumental in defiling this temple of God, is doomed (3:16-17).

## **QUESTIONS**—

- 1). How does he describe those who are involved in the divisions of the church (3:1-4)? What had not yet happened to these people? What kinds of problems arise when we do not grow (3:1-2; cf. Hebrews 5:13-14)?
- 2) What began as a condition of spiritual denseness (2:14; 3:1) led to something even worse (3:34). What was it?
- 3) What were some of the proofs that they were still carnal—dominated by the flesh (3:3-4; cf. Galatians 5:19-21)?

4) In what three stages did this problem manifest itself (3:3)?
⇒ Began with— ⇒ Led to— ⇒ Ended in—
5) Is the spirit which aligns itself with prominent men and teachers dead today, or do we still see it in various ways? Can you give some possible examples? Does our alignment with those particular men show we are greater than other brethren?
6) What is the proper place of teachers in God's plan (3:5-6,8-9)? Note the word "ministers" (3:5). What does it mean? What does it imply about the position of teachers and preachers?
7) Although men actively benefit the church, who is instrumental in its growth (3:6-7)?
8) How should teachers view themselves (3:7; cf. 2 Corinthians 4:5,7; 12:11)? Why is it dangerous to exalt men? 1 Corinthians 13 Lessons by Rob Harbison





21) How serious is it to defile the temple? How was God's temple being defiled according to this context?
22) In what two ways could it be said we are God's temple—how does God dwell in us (3:16-17; 6:19-20)?