

3ABN SABBATH SCHOOL PANEL

03 - TUESDAY – July 14, 2026

Wisdom and Maturity

By and large, cliques result from too high a view of human leaders. This is very threatening to the unity of the church and to the members' spiritual health, for a distorted view of Christian ministry may lead a church to give excessive importance to certain leaders, all to the detriment of others. The consequence of such behavior is an atmosphere of competition, which can split the church. More than that, if we treat human leaders as central to our Christian identity, we risk moving Christ from the correct position in our lives.

“From Carnal to Spiritual: Growing Into Maturity in Christ”

I. The Problem: Spiritual Immaturity in the Church

Key Text: 1 Corinthians 3:1-4 (NKJV) “(1) And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. (2) I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; (3) for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? (4) For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” are you not carnal?”

Question 1: How does Paul describe the spiritual immaturity of the Corinthians?

Answer: Paul describes them as:

1. Carnal (Fleshly)

- Living according to human nature, not the Spirit
- Controlled more by emotions and pride than by truth

“I could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal...”

2. Infants in Christ

- Spiritually underdeveloped
- Lacking depth and discernment

They had experience with Christ—but no growth in Christ

3. Unable to Handle Solid Truth

- Fed on **milk**, not **solid food**
- Not ready for deeper spiritual understanding

Immaturity limits spiritual capacity

4. Divided and Competitive

- Saying: “**I am of Paul**” — “**I am of Apollos**” — **Elevating leaders instead of Christ**

5. Marked by Envy, Strife, and Division

- Evidence of immaturity is not lack of knowledge: It is **lack of Christlike character**

II. The Standard: What Spiritual Maturity Looks Like

Supporting Texts:

- **1 Corinthians 2:6-7, 13-14 (NKJV)** “(6) However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. (7) But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, (13) These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (14) But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”
- **Hebrews 5:12-14 (NKJV)** “(For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. (13) For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. (14) But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

Key Characteristics of Maturity:

1. Understands the Wisdom of God

- Not human wisdom
- Rooted in the Cross of Christ

2. Spiritually Discerns Truth

- Compares **spiritual things with spiritual**
- Sensitive to the Holy Spirit

3. Feeds on Solid Food

- Goes beyond basics
- Develops depth in the Word

4. Exercises Discernment

- Able to distinguish:
 - Good vs. evil
 - Truth vs. error

Discernment comes through **practice and growth**

5. Christ-Centered, Not Personality-Driven

- Does not divide over leaders
- Sees all workers as: **“God’s fellow workers”**

III. The Foundation: Christ Alone

Key Texts:

- **1 Corinthians 3:9-11, 16-17 (NKJV)** “(9) For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building. (10) According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. (11) For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (16) Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (17) If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.”

Key Truths: We are: God’s field — God’s building — God’s temple: **Christ is the only foundation**

Power Insight:

Division happens when: People build on personalities
Instead of Building on Christ

IV. The Root Issue: Misplaced Loyalty

Spiritual Danger: Idolizing leaders — Attaching identity to people instead of Christ

This produces: Division — Disappointment — Spiritual stagnation

Question 2: What has been your experience with being disappointed by someone you admired, and what lessons can be learned?

Answer (Teaching + Application): Universal Experience: At some point, we all experience:

- Disappointment in leaders
- Letdown from those we respect

Why? Because humans are imperfect

Lessons We Must Learn:

1. Never Put People in the Place of God

- Leaders are **tools**, not foundations “*No other foundation can anyone lay than... Jesus Christ*”

2. Admire Without Idolizing

- Respect leadership
- But keep your **loyalty anchored in Christ**

3. Spiritual Maturity Requires Personal Faith

- You cannot live off: Someone else’s relationship with God
- Your walk must be **personal and rooted**

4. Disappointment Can Produce Growth

- It exposes:
 - Where your trust really is
 - Whether your faith is in God or man
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5. God Uses Imperfect People

- Even faithful leaders will fail at times
- But God's mission never fails

Power Statement: “If your faith is built on people, it will collapse—but if it is built on Christ, it will stand.”

V. Practical Signs You Are Growing Spiritually

- Less easily offended
- Less drawn to division
- More focused on Christ
- Greater discernment
- Deeper hunger for truth

VI. Final Summary

- Immaturity = division, pride, shallow faith
- Maturity = unity, discernment, Christ-centered living
- The Cross is the wisdom of God
- Christ is the only foundation

Closing Challenge

The question is not: “Who are you following?”

The real question is: “Are you growing up in Christ?”

Closing Appeal — “Lord, move me from milk to meat, from division to unity, from people-centered faith to Christ-centered maturity. Build my life on the only foundation that cannot fail—Jesus Christ.”