

DISCOVERY BIBLE STUDY — GENERATIONS & NEW STREAMS

A discovery Bible study on 1 Corinthians 3, and another on James 1, will offer insights into the ways in which healthy (or unhealthy) churches are established. Before and after the study, ask the Lord, “Open our minds to understand the Scriptures” (Luke 24:35). As you go through the study, and afterwards, ask the Lord (then write down and discuss):

- What do You want us to learn from this?
- What does this passage show us about Your character, Your values, and Your priorities?
- How would the principles in this passage look lived out in our own local context?
- How do You say it should impact our approach to ministry overall?
- How do You want it to inform leadership development, discipleship, the culture of the emerging Church, etc.?
- How might it inform our next steps?
- How were You involved in the Corinthian community? What part did you play in wise building? How can we pray accordingly for the work here?
- Invite the Lord’s counsel into steps or changes that we consider.

As you take steps forward, remember that this is God’s temple, God’s building (1 Cor. 3:9, 17). Keep asking him to lead His people in building His Church. Continually ask Him to be “the head over everything for the church” (Eph. 1:22) and offer Him opportunity to lead through Scripture and the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 3:5-17

Many people apply 1 Corinthians 3:5-17 to the life of individual believers, especially those who backslide. However, this passage is actually a defense of Paul’s church-planting ministry and a warning to other church planters. (That is why, in verse 16, “*you together* are God’s temple” is plural.) Paul issues a stern warning to all of us—BE CAREFUL how you plant churches!

Do a prayerful discovery Bible study with this Scripture passage, inviting the Holy Spirit’s counsel using some or all of the questions suggested above. This can be done by an individual, but a team or church doing it together brings the possibility of agreement and community response.

1 Cor. 3:5-17 [NIV]

3 ⁵ What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. ⁶ I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. ⁷ So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. ⁸ The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. ⁹ For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.

¹⁰ By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. ¹¹ For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, ¹³ their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. ¹⁴ If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.

¹⁶ Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? ¹⁷ If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.