

Going Deeper: Building on the Foundation of Christ

A study Guide & Resources for Spiritual Growth Based on 1 Corinthians 3

Sermon Summary: “Spiritual Journey; From Milk to Solid Foods”

This message challenges us to move beyond spiritual infancy into mature faith. Using Paul's letter to the Corinthians, we're reminded that Christianity isn't just about avoiding sin or attending church—it's about building our lives on Christ's foundation with materials that will last for eternity.

Key Metaphors:

Food (milk vs. solid food) - Our spiritual diet and maturity level

Foundation (gold/silver/precious stones vs. wood/hay/straw) - What we're building our lives upon?

Future (the Day) - Living with eternity in view

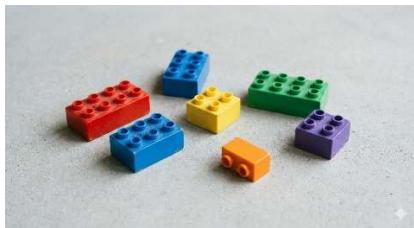
Fascinating Background

The Corinthian Context: Corinth was a wealthy port city known for extreme immorality and religious pluralism. The church there struggled with bringing their old worldview into their new faith—mixing Greek philosophy (like Platonic dualism that separated body from spirit) with the gospel. This is why Paul had to address such basic issues even after they'd been believers for some time.

The Three Stages of Spirituality: The early Church Fathers identified three stages of spiritual growth:

- 1. Purgative** - Removing sin and unhealthy patterns
- 2. Illuminative** - Learning and understanding God's truth
- 3. Unitive** - Union with Christ's mind and heart, living kingdom-focused

Over 1 Million Combinations: Pastor Ron's LEGO illustration reminds us that if we can't comprehend the possibilities in six simple bricks, how much less can we fully grasp the infinite God? Yet He invites us into relationship and understanding through His Spirit.



Biblical Foundation

Key Passage: 1 Corinthians 3:1-15**

Paul identifies the problem: "I could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ" (v. 1). The Corinthians were stuck in spiritual immaturity—focused on factions, immorality, and ego rather than Christ's lordship.

Related Scriptures for Study:

Hebrews 5:11-14 - Another passage contrasting milk and solid food

Matthew 16:24-27 - Jesus on losing your life to find it

2 Corinthians 5:10 - We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ

1 Corinthians 13 - The love chapter (what maturity looks like)

Philippians 2:12-13 - Working out your salvation

What Are We Building With?

Gold, Silver, Precious Stones (lasting materials):

- **Core doctrines:** Trinity, incarnation, atonement, resurrection
- **Gospel-driven living:** dying to self, living for Christ
- **Kingdom investments:** evangelism, discipleship, sacrificial service
- **Spirit-led obedience:** listening to and following the Holy Spirit
- **Eternal perspective:** living with "the Day" in view

Wood, Hay, Straw (temporary materials):

- **Self-centered spirituality:** "What do I get out of this?"
- **Prosperity focus:** Using God for personal gain
- **Performance religion:** Going through motions without heart transformation
- **Comparison and competition:** Factions, jealousy, spiritual pride
- **Comfort-seeking:** Avoiding sacrifice, wanting only to "feel good"

Questions for Personal Reflection

Assessing Your Foundation:

1. If you're honest, which stage of spiritual growth best describes you right now: Purgative, Illuminative, or Unitive? Why?
2. What "milk" issues might you still be dealing with? (Getting along with others, basic obedience, unconfessed sin, lack of love)
3. Are you building with gold and silver or wood and straw? What evidence would someone see in your daily life?

Moving Toward Maturity:

4. The sermon mentions living with "eternity in sight." What decisions would you make differently today if you truly believed you were investing for forever?

5. Who in your life demonstrates spiritual maturity—someone eating "solid food"? What specific qualities do you see in them that you want to develop?

Practical Application:

6. What is one area where you're currently living for yourself rather than for Christ's kingdom? What would repentance look like?

7. If "the Day" came tomorrow and your works were tested by fire, what do you think would remain? What would burn up?

8. What is one concrete step you can take this week to move from spiritual infancy toward maturity?

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Refuge for Women

Human Trafficking Webinar

January 22, 2026

12:00pm CST

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Ygm3t1H6TYeUfYqy5t9Nrw#/registration

Serve on our NextGen volunteer team - Our volunteers have the privilege of impacting lives with their gifts of teaching, discipling, singing, praying, playing, creating, and planning. If you're not sure where to serve, consider attending the Volun-Tour taking place at both campuses on February 8. You'll see volunteers in action, take a spiritual gifts survey, and be able to ask questions. For more information, visit RPC.fm/sayyes or contact Linda Morrison at linda.morrison@rpcstaff.org.

Additional Resources for Going Deeper

For Understanding Spiritual Maturity:

- ❖ The Pursuit of God by A.W. Tozer
- ❖ Celebration of Discipline by Richard Foster
- ❖ The Cost of Discipleship by Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- ❖ From Pentecost to Patmos by Craig L. Blomberg

For Biblical Study:

- ❖ Study the entire book of 1 Corinthians to understand the full context
- ❖ Use a study Bible with notes on 1 Corinthians 3 (ESV Study Bible, NIV Study Bible)
- ❖ Read commentaries on 1 Corinthians by Gordon Fee or Anthony Thiselton

For Practical Growth:

- ❖ Find a mature believer to disciple you or meet with regularly
- ❖ Join a small group focused on spiritual formation
- ❖ Establish daily time for Scripture reading and prayer
- ❖ Practice spiritual disciplines: fasting, solitude, service, generosity

A Prayer for Growth

"Father, forgive me for settling for spiritual infancy. I confess that too often I've been content with milk when You've offered solid food. I've built with wood and straw when You've provided gold and silver. Transform my heart. Give me a hunger for Your Word, a passion for Your kingdom, and the courage to lose my life so I might truly find it in You. Help me live today with eternity in view. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Remember: Spiritual maturity isn't about perfection—it's about direction. God isn't asking you to be perfect; He's asking you to take the next step. What will that step be for you today?