



**Nutshell Summary: Carnality, 1 Cor 3:1-3; Paul's Behavior Problem, Rom 7:14-25; Mandate to Understand Divine Will, Eph 5:6-17; Denominational Family Trees**

**1 Corinthians 3:1** - And I [ Paul ], fellow believers, could not speak to you as spiritual [ filled with the Holy Spirit ], but carnal [ under the power of the sinful nature ], even as babies [ νήπιος, *nēpios* ] in Christ.

**v. 2** - I have fed you with milk, not solid food; for you were not able to take it in and you are not yet able to bear it now.

**v. 3** - For you are still carnal!

Without the filling of the Holy Spirit the believer is incapable of learning doctrine and thus will revert to the paths of least resistance which were facilitated in unbelief or while in prolonged carnality as a believer.

Recovery from this carnal status requires the inculcation of basic doctrines characterized by Paul as “milk,” the food of small children. He uses the Greek word for a small child who is without understanding:

**νήπιος, *nēpios*** - “without understanding,” “impotent,” “weak.” Used for children from infancy up to puberty. Used metaphorically for those who are immature or foolish and for believers who are devoid of spiritual understanding.

The believers at Corinth were of this category and Paul makes it clear to them by the use of *nēpios*. However, he comes close to placing himself in this category in Romans 7. In this passage he describes not a state of ignorance due to reversionism but a struggle to overcome facilitated wheel-tracks of wickedness.

Paul experienced this latter problem as he grew spiritually and it created a dilemma that he describes in:

**Romans 7:14** - Consequently, we know, that the Law is spiritual but I am carnal, I am inclined toward the trends of the sinful nature, when I have been led astray by the authority of the sinful nature.

**Romans 7:15** - For what I continuously do, what persistently works its way out of me, I do not understand, for what I desire to do, these things I am not practicing, but what I detest, these things I keep on persistently doing.

**v. 16** - Now if I keep persistently doing this thing which I do not desire to do, I agree with the Law that it is advantageous [ in pointing out my error ].

**v. 17** - But as the case really stands, I am no longer habitually performing this thing but the sinful nature which keeps on living in me.

**v. 18** - In fact, I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, there does not reside any good of intrinsic value, for the habitual desire to do the will of God is present in me, but habitual divine-good production of my desire is not.

**v. 19** - For the intrinsic good I habitually desire, I do not habitually do, but the evil which I do not habitually desire, this I presently practice.

**v. 20** - Now if, as a result of my personal volitional decision, I am presently doing what I habitually do not desire to do, I am no longer the one persistently producing the sinful act but the sinful nature which continuously resides inside of me.



**v. 21** - Consequently, I discover this principle, that when I habitually desire to habitually do the honorable thing, the law of evil continuously resides in me.

**v. 22** - For along with other believers, I habitually delight in God's principles in the soul.

**v. 23** - But I see a different kind of principle in my body parts laying siege in a campaign against the principle of my mind and so making me a continuous prisoner to the principle of the sinful nature which is located in my body parts.

**v. 24** - I ... a miserable person! Who will rescue me from the body of this death [ **operational death** ]?

**v. 25** - Grace belongs to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, on the one hand, with my mind I myself am obligated to comply with the principle of God but, on the other hand, with my flesh I myself impulsively capitulate to the principle of sin.

From this we can see that Paul had a behavior problem that could only be overcome by the dominance of biblical thought in his soul which would suppress the former dominance of sin, human good, and evil.

Once he was able to do this he enjoyed a harmony of soul that enabled him to be at harmony with God and man. From a renovated soul He wrote the following to the Ephesians some three to five years after he wrote Romans:

**Ephesians 5:6** - Let no one seduce you by means of empty words [ **doctrines of demons** ] for because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disbelief [ **in the Gospel** ].

**v. 7** - Therefore, stop becoming partners with them.

**v. 8** - For you were formerly in darkness [ **cosmic viewpoint of an unbeliever** ], but now in light [ **a believer with divine viewpoint** ] in the Lord. Keep on walking as children of the light ...

**v. 9** - (For the fruit of the light [ **divine viewpoint** ] is intrinsic good, righteousness, and truth),

**v. 10** - ... putting to the test those things acceptable to God.

**v. 11** - Stop being involved in the fruitless works of darkness but instead expose these fruitless works;

**v. 12** - because it is presently and will ever be a disgrace to speak approvingly of the things which are accomplished by them in secret.

**v. 13** - But all these things when exposed are made known by the agency of the light [ **the execution of biblical standards makes manifest the works of the flesh** ].

**v. 14** - Therefore He says [ **Isaiah 26:19 cp. Romans 13:11** ], "Wake up [ **awareness of carnal status** ] you who are asleep [ **out of fellowship** ], get up [ **imperative for confession of sins** ] from among the dead ones [ **quit imitating the lifestyle of the unbeliever** ] and Christ will shine [ **impute blessings** ] on you.

**v. 15** - Therefore, be mindful how you walk, not as the unwise but as wise ones,



**Ephesians 5:16** - constantly redeeming your time [ **converting it into something of value** ], because the days [ **assigned to you** ] are evil [ **the plan of Lucifer in opposition to the grace plan of God** ].

**v. 17** - Because of this disposition, stop becoming unwise, but keep on understanding [ **imperative mood of σύνεσις, sunesis: a positive command** ] what the content of the will of the Lord is.

This final verse is a command to the believer to “understand what the content of the will of the Lord is.” This is accomplished on the one hand by rejecting the seductive words of the cosmic lie and on the other hand by taking in the light of the Word of God.

The passages we have noted contain direction on how the pastor is to teach and a series of commands directed to the believer to make himself available to that teaching.

The reason for this emphasis on spiritual growth is so that the believer can serve God from a willing mental attitude and with a soul filled with principles given to him by God through His Word.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Let me address those who find our approach to the Scripture to be quite different from that practiced by mainline denominations and traditional churches:

There are indeed many ways to teach the Bible as is evidenced by the multiplicity of denominations, most of which have splintered off into two or more schisms everyone of which occurred following a disagreement over an interpretation of an essential doctrine of the faith.

NOTE:      See visuals:  
                Denominational Family Trees:  
                Presbyterian  
                Baptist  
                Lutheran  
                Methodist  
                Reformed and Congregationalist  
                Pentecostal  
                Mennonite