



STRAIGHT TALK.

LEADER'S GUIDE

Bold Letters to the Corinthians

Week #5 Leader's Guide – May 8, 2016

Straight Talk: Bold Letters to the Corinthians
SDBC Community Groups

“Our Identity in the Spirit vs. the Flesh”

Key Passage: 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

1 Corinthians 3:1-9

1 But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. **2** I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, **3** for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? **4** For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not being merely human?

5 What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. **6** I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. **7** So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. **8** He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. **9** For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

1. **Ice Breaker:** Do you recall a time in your life when, as an adult, you have been called out as an “infant”, behaving and acting like a child? What was your reaction? How did you process this rebuke? Was your reaction to immediately defend or push back? What was the final outcome?
2. **Read the key passage, 1 Corinthians 3:1-9.**
3. In this passage, Paul tackles unapologetically that the behavior of the church of Corinth is not of the Spirit, but the Flesh. He uses the imagery of an infant whose primary diet is milk and not solid food. How do you think the church of Corinth would have reacted to being called out as “infants”?
4. In verse 3, Paul points out that ultimately their “infant” like behaviour reveals their heart and motivation. They are, in principle, focused on Christ, but in practice and in stance still focused on the interests of self (similar to a child’s egocentric nature):
 - Jealousy (desire that the self may have status, possessions, wealth)
 - Strife (the expression of this desire in active strategies to gain advantage for the self)
 - Acting in a human way; flesh (opposed to a spiritually empowered way)

How do you think personally and as a community group you can guard against interests of the self taking over? Share what you have in place in your life or what you have found effective in your walk. *(Accountability, spirit empowered people speaking into your life, spiritual disciplines in place in your life, prayer, serving, community group participation, commitment to the Bible)*

5. **Read Acts 2:42-47.** We see a fantastic image of the early church in action and being a community united for the gospel. At Corinth, this is no longer the kind of church community that is in place. In verse 4, we see that factions and division have taken root. How could this become our reality at SDBC moving forward? How can you personally and as a community group actively guard against factions and division taking root?
6. In verses 5 to 7, Paul makes it clear his status along with Apollos: they are servants not faction leaders, which demand status to be assigned to them based on their leadership qualities
 - the word servant in Greek could mean “the one who waits at tables”. In other words, Paul and Apollos are simply food runners from the kitchen with God in charge
 Do you find it a struggle to assume the posture of a servant?
7. Keeping our heart aligned with the interests of Christ over the flesh becomes paramount to guard against division. For us in the 21st century, one of the primary sources of “solid food” we have at our disposal is the bible. What is your view of the bible?
 - road map to life -- moral compass -- manual "about" God -- source of spiritual food
 How do you relate to the bible? *(hard to understand, boring, check-list of spiritual discipline you must complete, love it, must have it in your life, can't go without reading it and digesting it)*

Read Hebrews 4:12. Our understanding of and interactions with scripture can be a good indicator of where we are at with God and what is governing our motivation. Spend time praying as a community group for the Holy Spirit to shape your understanding of and interactions with scripture. Pray for a deep desire to crave the Word.