

WHO ARE YOU?

I Corinthians 2:14-3:4

Intro: We are all the time trying to shove people into categories. Economically people are classified as rich or poor. In the social realm we speak of people as being cultured or uncultured. Academically we speak of the educated, the intellectual and those who are illiterate. People are always trying to shoe you into a box and classify you.

Even the Bible classifies people. Note **1 Cor. 10:32** - Everyone is either a Jew, a Gentile or part of the church; **1 Cor. 1:18** - Everyone is either saved or perishing. This passage also introduces to other categories into which every person in his room can be classified. Here, Paul speaks of the Natural Man, the Spiritual Man and the Carnal man. This passage breaks all of humanity down according to their spiritual response to the things of God.

Now, every person in this church will fall into one of the categories I just mentioned. That is, either you are a natural man, a spiritual man or a carnal man. I think it is very important for you to find out for sure which one you are. So, as the Lord gives liberty this evening, I want to look into this text and ask this simple question: Who Are You? Let's examine these three categories of people and see which group we fit into.

I. MR. NATURAL 2:14

(III. The natural man is a person who lives naturally. He lives a "*soulish*" life, that is, he lives his life in the old adamic nature. Simply put, the natural man is a lost man! He may be a church member, he may be a good, moral person, but he is lost. This passage shows us two truths about the natural man.)

A. **He Does Not Appreciate The Things Of God** - The things of God are foolishness to the natural man. The word foolishness gives us the English word "*Moron*." To the lost man, the things of God, and spiritual things are moronic. He doesn't understand or appreciate any type of spiritual expression. When he is exposed to the things of God, or to spiritual expression, he becomes very uncomfortable and will usually respond in one of three way. He will either *drop out, move out* or *lash out*.

B. **He Does Not Apprehend The Things Of God** - This literally means that he is not equipped to receive the things of God. He is spiritually dead in his sins, **Eph. 2:1** and therefore he simply cannot grasp spiritually things. A man who is physically dead cannot respond to physical stimulus. By the same token, a person who is spiritually dead cannot respond to any spiritual stimulus! (III. Man is a triune being - **1 Thes. 5:23**. The natural man is two parts alive, body and soul, but the primary part, the part of him that can know and respond to God is dead! III. **Gen. 2:17**.) *Could you be a Natural Man this evening?*

II. MR. SPIRITUAL 2:15-16

(III. The spiritual man is one who live supernaturally. That is, he lives a "*spiritual*" life. He lives his life not in the old dead nature, but he lives his life in the power of the Holy Spirit. The spiritual man, and every saved person for that matter, has two natures. The old fleshly adamic nature and a new spiritual nature. The spiritual man is one who allows Christ to rule his life. Jesus is not just present, He is preminent. Jesus does not just reside in the spiritual man's life, He presides over that life. These verses reveal certain characteristics of the spiritual man's life.)

A. **He Is Capable Of Discernment** - The word "*judgeth*" means "*to examine, to discern*." The spiritual man is alive in the Spirit, equipped by the Spirit and is open to the truth of God. It is not foolishness to him, but it is a fountain of life. It is like food to his hungry soul. He delights in the things of God! (**Note:** This ability to receive

and understand the deep things of God does not depend upon I.Q. or upon academic ability. This is accomplished through the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the yielded believer, **John 16:13**. There are simple country folks who know more about God than some preachers with multiple doctorates.) The spiritual man is drawn to the things of God and to the truth of God like a moth is drawn to a flame.

B. **He Is The Cause Of Amazement** - The phrase, "*yet he himself is judged of not man*", means that the lost and worldly folks around him can't figure him out. He, and his life, are a mystery to the natural men around him. He baffles and bothers the man of the world! He has peace, joy and faith in the midst of trial. He has standards and convictions, yet he just lives them out and isn't obnoxious and overbearing about them. The spiritual man is a constant source of amazement to the natural man and to the carnal man. ***Could you be a Spiritual Man tonight?***

III. **MR. CARNAL** 3:1-4

(III. The third category offered in this text is that of the carnal man. This kind of person lives his life unnaturally. He lives a "*sensual*" life. Everything his life is decided by how it affects him and how it makes him feel. He lives according to his flesh.

The carnal man is a believer, Ill. **1 Cor. 1:7**. The Corinthians were gifted but carnal. He has two natures just like the spiritual man, but he is dominated by the old nature. He quenches the influence of the Spirit of God in his life. Often, the carnal believer cannot be discerned from the lost sinner! A good example of this was a man my the name of Lot. If you had seen him in **Genesis 13 and 19**, you would have concluded that he was a lost man. But, when you read **2 Pet. 2:7**, you discover that he was a righteous, but carnal man. This section of our text tells us all about the carnal man.) (**Note:** Carnality in the life of God's children is the reason the church lacks power and influence in the community!)

A. **The Maturity Of The Carnal Believer** - Paul says that the carnal man is a baby. He has started out the right way; he has been born again, but he has progressed no farther. (Ill. Babies are cute and precious, but they are designed to grow up and become adults. The same is true in the spiritual realm.) It is fitting and normal to start out as a baby, but is tragic to remain one! The carnal believer suffers from "*arrested development*". They haven't grown as they should. By the way, how long you have been saved has nothing to do with your level of maturity. I have seen believers who have been saved a short time who have grown substantially in the Lord. By the same token I have seen others who have been saved for lengthy periods of time, yet who have not gotten out of the nursery spiritually. They are still crying, griping, whining and calling attention to themselves. The tragedy of this is that God did not save us to stay babies. He saved us to grow into the image of Jesus, **Rom. 8:29; Eph. 4:13**.)

B. **The Menu Of The Carnal Believer** - The carnal believer is still on milk spiritually. Milk is fine for babies, **2 Pet. 2:2**, but as we mature, we are supposed to move beyond the milk of the Word into the meatier places of the Word, **Heb. 5:12-14**. Here is the very reason some people are not growing in the Lord. They do not want to go any deeper in the things of the Lord than they already are! You try to lead them deeper in the book and they get spiritual indigestion. They do not want to go. They want to come to church, put their mind in neutral and never have to think! In other words, as long as you stay simple and feed the "*gospel lite*" they are happy. You know, tell a few stories. Tell about the time you visited so and so and what happened in this place or the other. Talk about your life, talk about the Lord, talk about the church, but keep it lite! But, when you begin to preach the deeper truths of the Word that call for commitment and a change of life, they get and upset stomach and they will spit up all over you! Friend, you will never get out of the nursery until you begin to dig your spiritual teeth into the deeper truths of the Word of God.

C. **The Marks Of The Carnal Believer** - There are three tale-tell characteristics of the carnal believer. If these are evident in your life, then you are carnal and need to change. You are a baby spiritually and need to grow up.

1. **Selfishness** - Babies are by nature selfish creatures. They care about no one but themselves. They don't care how tired mom and dad are! They don't care about anything else in the world but themselves! As long as they are the center of attention and their needs are being met they are fine. But, when something is wrong in their world, they cry, whine and complain until someone does it their way. The same is true in the life of the carnal believer. The focus is always on themselves. It doesn't matter what's best for the church, all that matters is how it affects them personally. And, when a carnal believer is unhappy everyone knows it! How? They act like a big baby, calling attention to themselves!

2. **Strife** - Babies want their way and they are prepared to fight for it! They don't care to take by force what they think is theirs. You get a couple of babies together and there will be strife, discord and dissension. Friend, you mark it down, anytime there is trouble in the church, you have a baby on your hands! Someone didn't get their way and they want everyone to know it. Someone got their little feelings hurt and they want someone to pay for it. I don't care where they are found in the church, you can count on spiritual babies to be at the center of every disturbance!

With a baby believer, it's always about them. They are always complaining about someone else or something. They are always tattling. They are always pointing their pudgy little fingers at everyone else. They never can see that it might just be them! They might be the problem. They might be easily offended. They might be the ones in the wrong.

If you find that you are always offended at someone for what they have said or done; if you think you are always getting the short end of the stick; if you always think you are right and everyone else is wrong, mark it down, you are a baby and you need to grow up. I just want to remind any babies that are listening tonight, if you come to me to tattle on someone else, either you will give me names, dates and specifics which I will take to the person alone with your name, or I won't listen to your whining, complaining and gossiping!

3. **Splits** - Another trait of the carnal believer is that he brings division everywhere he goes. The carnal believer always carries a divisive spirit within him. He is easily offended and always responds by being offensive. As a result, the carnal believer kills everything he touches, **Rom. 8:6**. A carnal believer will kill a Sunday School class, a committee, a choir, a testimony service, etc. Everything the flesh touches dies!

Conc: Who are you this evening? Are you saved, or are you still a natural man? Are you spiritual? If you said "Yes" then you probably aren't! Are you carnal? We all are from time to time, Ill. Paul - **Rom. 7:14**. If you can see within your present condition the fact that you are lost, a natural man, please come to Jesus and be saved! If you can see that you are carnal, that you act more like a baby most of the time and you act like Jesus, then please come and deal with the problem. Let God begin to mature you tonight. Who are you? (Ill. Man who lives at the foot of the mountain& never saw the view from the top. What are missing by not climbing higher?)