

LABORERS TOGETHER **(1 Corinthians 3:5-9)**

I. We get to be servants of God (vs. 5).

A. Paul asks who is Paul or who is Apollos.

1. We know who Paul was.
 - a. He was one of the greatest men to ever live.
 - b. He is probably the greatest missionary to ever live.
 - c. He was an apostle of Christ with a special mission to the Gentiles.
 - d. He had received the best training possible to a Jew.
 - e. We could preach a sermon about his life and be here for a while.
2. We don't know as much about Apollos.
 - a. We know he was an eloquent speaker and used the scriptures very well (Acts 18:24).
 - b. He was humble enough to accept correction and more teaching from Aquilla and Priscilla (Acts 18:26).
 - c. He did a great work Achaia, both strengthening the brethren and teaching the Jews there (Acts 18:27-28).
 - d. Paul speaks highly of his work here in 1 Corinthians 3.

B. Paul's emphasis is to simply say, who are we to be followed?

C. Notice his next statement: they were "but ministers".

1. The word "minister" is the Greek word for "servant".
2. Strong's says it is "one who executes the commands of another".

D. When we are laboring for the Lord, we are servants of God.

E. Hopefully, we realize that we are servants already.

F. The truth is we are always servants, when in sin or in Christ, we are servants.

G. Romans 6:16-17.

1. We are either servants of sin, which leads to death.
2. Or, we are servants of obedience which leads to righteousness.

H. No matter what we do for the Lord, how many souls we may win, we are servants and we don't need to forget that.

I. We are such because Jesus paid our ransom price (Matthew 20:28).

J. At the end of this campaign, we need to remember what Jesus taught us (Luke 17:10).

K. All we are doing this week is that which it is our duty to do.

II. God gives the increase (vs. 6-7).

A. The only one who Paul would give any credit to was God.

1. Paul did a lot for the Corinthians.
2. No doubt Apollos did as well.

B. No matter what they did, it was all a result of God's blessings.

C. All our efforts are in vain if they are not for the glory of God.

1. We shouldn't do anything for the praise that it brings.
2. Jesus let this be known early on in the sermon on the mount (Matthew 5:16).
3. That goes for this campaign, me or anyone else preaching, or anything we do.
4. It is all done for the glory of God.

D. With that in mind, we should not get discouraged if we don't have the results we may hope to see.

1. It is our job to plant and water.
2. God is the One who gives the increase.
3. All we can do is go out and give our best effort.
4. All that we do for the Lord is never in vain, even if we may not see results (1 Corinthians 15:58).

III. We will be rewarded for our labor (vs. 8).

A. Everyone has a role to play in the congregation and work of it and each will be rewarded for his/her labor.

B. Paul quoted an Old Testament passage to Timothy when he wrote, "The laborer is worthy of his reward".

1. If we work, we will be rewarded.
2. Notice what Daniel was inspired to write many years ago (Daniel 12:3).

C. Those who engage in the Lord's work are showing wisdom (Proverbs 11:30).

D. It is rewarding because of the end result of working for God is heaven.

E. However, it is rewarding in this life as well.

1. Jude says we are pulling some out of the fire (Jude 23).
2. James says we are saving souls from death (James 5:19-20).
3. Think of how we are helping people when we bring them the gospel.
4. That in itself is a great reward.

IV. We are working with God (vs. 9).

A. Paul told them that whoever had brought or taught them the gospel was a fellow laborer with God.

B. You and I get to work with God when we are doing His will.

C. As great a co-worker as we may have had here on earth, none is greater than God.

D. It is pleasing to God when we put forth efforts such as this (Colossians 1:10).

E. What a blessing it is to be able to work with God for the greatest cause ever known to man.

1. You and I are involved the saving of people's souls.
2. As we mentioned, we are striving to pull people from the fire and save souls from death.

F. What greater work could there be and what great Co-Worker could we have?