

TITLE AND NUMBER: 119. Spiritual growth



REFERENCE AND KEY VERSE(S): 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly – mere infants in Christ. (v.1)

For when one says, 'I follow Paul,' and another, 'I follow Apollos,' are you not mere human beings? What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe – as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. (v.4-6)

LOOKING FURTHER: Philippians 1: 3-6; Colossians 4:12

What does this Bible passage tell us?

The Christians in Corinth, to whom Paul was writing in this passage, were arguing among themselves about whom they followed – Apollos or Paul. They were like schoolchildren saying, 'My teacher is better than yours!' Paul hopes that they will mature and live more by the Spirit of God. Until they do this, he cannot give them any deeper teaching.

Paul explains that it is neither he nor Apollos who is important; both are God's servants through whom the Corinthians came to believe and it was God who sent them. He says that God's servants have tasks allocated to them by God. He likens this to labourers in a field – one plants and one waters but it is God who makes the seeds grow.

It is like this for God's workers today. God gives us our jobs to do and all those jobs are important. For example, the one who plants the seeds of the Gospel in someone's heart may not be the one who encourages that person - and neither of these may see the results of their work. When we have carried out our task, we have to trust that God will inspire others to carry out theirs, so that the new Christian will continue on the path to maturity. But remember, it is God who is in charge of the growing.

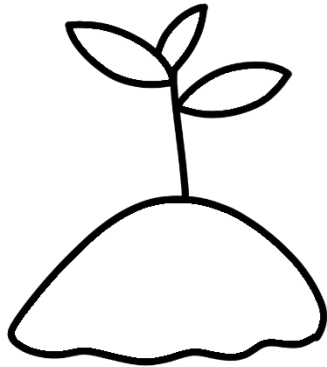
This is particularly relevant for those who work or live in prisons. It is rare to see the results of the seeds we sow or water. However, we trust in God's faithfulness and that He will finish what He started.

Reflections:

- Do you ever find yourself arguing about things that don't really matter? When that happens, pause and see if you can change the argument into a useful discussion.
- Think of all the people in your life who may have contributed to your faith journey. Give thanks for them.
- Think of those whom you may have helped on their faith journey. Pray for them.



Write or draw something you read in this Bible Study that stood out to you.



Do you have any questions about this week's Bible Study?



How does this week's message apply to your life?



What can we learn about God from this week's passage?



What would you like to ask God this week?



Has God responded to your prayers this week in the way you had hoped for? It's okay to talk to God about this.

