

# Growing Up: The Carnal Man

## (I Corinthians 3:1-4)

### Introduction.

A) The story of the farmer.

The story is told of a preacher that was very concerned for his neighbor, a local farmer. The farmer was well-known and influential in the community. His “claim to fame” was that he raised the best hunting dogs in the county. He took great pride in that.

Regularly, the preacher would drop by to visit in order to build a relationship with the man. The two became friends and had a mutual respect for one another. However, every time the conversation swerved toward spiritual things, the farmer would bring up this person or that person, that was not fully living out the gospel in their life, as an excuse for his lack of interest in spiritual things. The preacher would counter, “but you can’t judge all Christians by those few! Look at the many who are genuine and walking with God.” The farmer would just smile.

One day the farmer’s favorite hunting dog had puppies. He asked his preacher friend if he wanted a pup. The preacher knew how good this man’s hunting dogs were and quickly said “yes.” The farmer told the preacher that he would give him the pick of the litter.

When the pups were old enough to be weaned, the preacher dropped by to pick-up his dog. The farmer showed him the litter of puppies and told him to pick any one he wanted. The preacher picked up each pup and examined them closely. Finally, he made his choice. The preacher chose the runt of the litter.

The farmer was surprised. Knowing that the preacher was influential in the community. The preacher said, “I’ll take this one (the runt). By the way, I’ll make sure everyone knows you gave me this pup and I’ll show him off to everyone.”

The farmer said, “No don’t do that. You pick the runt of the litter. Pick one of the strong ones. If you show him off, you’ll ruin my reputation and people will judge all of my dogs, by that runt.” The preacher just smiled. The farmer said, “message received.”

- Not every Christian is a model Christian.

- Distinguish between a New Born in Christ (new believer) and a Carnal Christian.
- Contextualize I Corinthians 3:1-5.
- By spiritual decline (backsliding), we mean the stagnation and then waning of spiritual growth and vital godliness in the life of a believer. Spiritual decline consists of a weakening of faith, a cooling of love, a lessening of zeal, an abatement of that whole-hearted devotedness to Christ, which marks the healthy saint.

## **I. Decline of Carnal Christians (I Cor. 3:1-5)**

### **A) Stagnant (3:2-3)**

### **B) Fleshly (3:3)**

### **C) Rebellious (3:3-4)**

A born-again Christian will never sink into a state of unregeneracy, but he may decline to the point that neither he nor spiritual onlookers are warranted in regarding him as a regenerate person.

Note:

The decline is often gradual and undetectable to the one in decline.

## **II. Example of a Carnal Christian**

**A) Peter followed Jesus from a distance (John 18:54).**

**B) Peter denied knowing Jesus (John 18:54-60).**

**C) Peter was absent at the crucifixion (John 19:25-37).**

### **III. Reason for Carnal Christians**

**A) Failure to mortify indwelling sin.**

Galatians 5:17

Romans 7:18-25

Romans 6:13

Romans 8:4-5.12-15

**B) Failure to maintain personal disciplines (Luke 5:15-16)**

**C) Companionship with Unbelievers (II Corinthians 6:14-18)**

### **IV. Remedy for Carnal Christians**

*If you realize you are in decline . . .*

**A) Seek a fresh moving of the Holy Spirit**

**B) Renew your commitment to a unreserved living**

**C) Ask God to show you life-changes that must occur**

**D) Find an accountability partner and follow through.**

*If you are living with someone in decline . . .*

**A) Model genuine faith before them.**

**B) Pray passionately for them.**

**C) Trust God to touch their hearts.**

### **Conclusion**