

Title: A SERVANT'S ROLE, 1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-9  
(Chatham, NJ; 02/16/14, AM) [D – Exegesis]

Theme: A servant rises above petty jealousies because he humbles himself and allows God to do the work that only God can do.

Purpose: To clarify what is true spirituality and to remind us that God is the important factor in church growth.

Introduction:

1. Do we sometimes forget just how unimportant we are?
2. Luke 17:10 – “We are unworthy servants.”
3. Inflating our sense of importance stems from a misunderstanding of spirituality.
4. Spirituality is defined in terms of our relationship to others as well as our relationship to God.

## I. True Spirituality, 1-3

### A. Off the rails

1. Corinthians pursuit of spirituality has jumped off track
2. Arrogant behavior among them, 4:6-7, 19; 5:2
3. Boasting, 1:29-30; 3:18, 21; 4:7
4. Puffed up with knowledge, 8:1
5. Divisions – groups divided against one another, 1:11-13
6. Jealousy and strife, 3:3-4
7. Beware the illusion of the false spirituality that fails to account for our relationships with one another
8. What did this look like?

### B. A mark of spiritual immaturity

1. Quarreling, 1:10-11
2. James 3:4-5, jealousy and selfish ambition is demonic wisdom
3. Gal. 5:19 – seven of these apply to Corinth

## II. True Status of Christian Leadership

### A. Instruments in God's Hand

1. Individuals do not define the Christian life and doctrine
2. Paul and Apollos in Corinth, Acts 18:4, 11; 24-28
3. Paul made disciples (though he personally baptized few of them)
4. Apollos – taught, encouraged, and strengthened them
5. As a tandem team, they planted and watered

### B. Servants Only

1. Mark 10:45 – Jesus came to serve
2. John 13 – he washes the feet of the disciples
3. Phil. 2:1-11, he served to the point of giving his life
4. Paul maintains this humble perspective
5. Conclusion: none of us is truly indispensable
6. All of us must see ourselves as servants
7. No one greater than the others, Rom. 12:3-4

## III. God's Primacy in the Work of Salvation

### A. God gives the growth

1. What sounds perfectly logical and reasonable can easily be forgotten

2. We think the more we push, cajole, and persuade the more conversion will occur
3. Paul says "we persuade men" (2 Cor. 10:3-5)
4. At the same time, only those drawn by God, can come to him (John 6:44)
5. God works in the human heart when we can see or do nothing to assist the change
6. We must be patient like a farmer waiting for seeds to grow
7. We can plant and water but nothing else
8. A seed will grow on its own if the soil is right

B. We Must Be United in Purpose

1. To be his servants who plant and water
2. To be his witnesses to the ends of the earth
3. To Glorify God
4. We are his field and building
5. And we are his fellow workers

Conclusions:

1. True spirituality takes the role of a servant.
2. It is not jealous, and it does not cause strife or quarrels.
3. Plant and water and let God do His work inside the human heart.
4. The seed is the word of God, the Gospel: hear it, believe it, confess it, and obey it in baptism.