

1 Corinthians 3:8 – 4:1

New American Standard Version

1 ⁸ Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each
 2 will receive his own reward according to his own labor.
 3 ⁹ For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field,
 4 God’s **building** ¹⁰ According to the grace of God which
 5 was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a
 6 foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must
 7 be careful how he builds on it. ¹¹ For no man can lay a
 8 foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus
 9 Christ. ¹² Now if any man builds on the foundation with
 10 gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³ each
 11 man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it
 12 because it is *to be* revealed with fire, and the fire itself will
 13 test the quality of each man’s work. ¹⁴ If any man’s work
 14 which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward.
 15 ¹⁵ If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he
 16 himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. ¹⁶ Do you not
 17 know that you are a temple of God and *that* the Spirit of
 18 God dwells in you? ¹⁷ If any man destroys the temple of
 19 God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy,
 20 and that is what you are. ¹⁸ Let no man deceive himself. If
 21 any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, he
 22 must become foolish, so that he may become wise. ¹⁹ For the
 23 wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is
 24 written, “*He is THE ONE WHO CATCHES THE WISE IN THEIR*
 25 *CRAFTINESS*”; ²⁰ and again, “*THE LORD KNOWS THE*
 26 *REASONINGS of the wise, THAT THEY ARE USELESS.*” ²¹ So
 27 then let no one boast in men. For all things belong to you,
 28 ²² whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or
 29 death or things present or things to come; all things belong
 30 to you, ²³ and you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to
 31 God. ^{4:1} Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of
 32 Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

*Use the suggestions on the back page as a starting point for your own **Observation, Interpretation, and Application.***

Observation (What does it say?):

Circle words or phrases about buildings.

Underline words or phrases about testing.

Put a question mark **?** by words or phrases you want to know more about.

Use a slash **/** to mark where you would break the passage into different sections.

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

How would you title each section in this passage?

How are the different parts of this passage related?

How would you explain the descriptions in this passage (building, testing, rewards, loss)?

Application (What does it mean for me?):

How do Paul’s challenge about building and warning about fire affect your thinking about your role in God’s kingdom?

How motivating to you are Paul’s words about rewards and losses? What effect will they have on your activities in 2016?

Questions for further thought and discussion:

- What does Paul mean by “rewards” and “loss”?
- What is the fire that will test (“will prove”, δοκιμάσει, dokimasei) and when does it happen? Now? Only on “the day”? Some other time?
- How does this passage about building and fire and rewards and loss relate to our sanctification (if it does)?
- Will there be levels or gradations of saints in heaven, a hierarchy of blessings?
- How does this passage fit with Paul’s constant theme of grace? How do we avoid turning this passage into earning something from God by works?

Inductive Bible Study

(A few general ideas)

Observation (What does it say?)

What facts do you **observe** about the passage that help bring out the writer’s thought process?

- Who are the people involved?
- What action takes place?
- What type of literature is it (poetry, history, didactic, etc.)?
- What details are included or left out?
- Are any unusual words used?
- Is there symbolic language?
- What is the grammar of the passage (pronouns, prepositions, verb tenses)?
- Are words or ideas repeated?
- Any comparisons or contrasts?
- Any cause and effect?
- Are there indications of purpose (“in order that...”)?
- Are there conclusions (“Therefore...”)?
- Are there explanations?
- Does the passage logically break into sections?
- How would you summarize the passage?
- What would be a good “headline” for the passage?

Interpretation (What does it mean?)

What questions come to mind about the facts that would help you **interpret** the meaning?

- How would the original readers have understood the passage?
- What is the main emphasis?
- Why does the writer use repetition, or contrast, or unusual words?
- What does the grammar or structure of the passage reveal about the writer’s thought pattern?
- Is there a logical sequence in the passage?
- How are different ideas in the passage connected?
- Are there any new ideas or concepts presented?
- Are there difficulties in the passage?

Application (What does it mean for me?)

What is the impact on your life? What **application** does the Holy Spirit want to show you?

- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a promise to be thankful for?
- Is there an attribute of God to worship?
- Is there an example to follow?

**Read nothing into the Scriptures, but draw everything from them, and suffer nothing to remain hidden that is really in them.
J.A. Bengel (1687-1752)**