

# “Three Kinds Of Men”

## 1 Corinthians 2:14-3:4

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**Introduction:** “Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief. Doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief.” Man is always trying to put himself and others into various categories.

\* Our world is divided by race, religion, wealth, education, age, geography and nationality, but God divides all mankind into three categories. These divisions are not according to the measure of our possessions or the color of our skin. God’s divisions of mankind are based entirely upon the spiritual condition of the human heart.

\* In our text, Paul is describing responses to divine wisdom. In doing this, we discover there are three divisions of mankind.

### I. The Natural Man (v. 14)

\* Who is the natural man?

- Greek- *psychikos*
- It’s the unsaved man (unchurched).
- He is not a Christian
- He’s the person who has only been born once. He’s alive physically but dead spiritually.
- You can be religious but still a natural man.
- Illustration- John 3- Nicodemus

\* The natural man is governed and controlled by his body.

\* How Paul describes the natural man in our text:

- 1) He does not “receive the things of the Spirit of God.” (v. 14)
  - a. (v. 14) “Like a deaf critic of Bach” or “a blind critic of Raphael.”
  - b. So is the unsaved critic of God’s Word.
  - c. It’s really a judgement of his spiritual blindness.
  - d. Vance Havner- *“The wise Christian wastes no time trying to explain God’s program to unregenerate men; it would be casting pearls before swine. He might as well try to describe a sunset to a blind man or discuss nuclear physics with a monument in the city park. The natural man cannot receive such things. One might as well try to catch sunbeams with a fishhook as to lay hold of God’s revelation unassisted by the Holy Spirit. Unless one is born of the Spirit and taught by Him, all this is utterly foreign to him. Being a Ph. D does not help, for in this realm it could mean ‘Phenomenal Dud!’”*
  - e. His life is empty.
- 2) “The things of God are foolishness to him” (v. 14)

- a. Illustration- Paul preaching before King Agrippa (Acts 26). Paul preached Jesus and His resurrection from the dead.
- 3) The natural man cannot know the things of God's wisdom (v. 14)
  - a. Because they are spiritually understood.
  - b. He's "Mr. Worldly Wise Man"
  - c. "Cannot know them"
  - d. The natural man is lost and needs salvation. He does not have the Holy Spirit.

## II. The Spiritual Man (v.v. 15-16)

- \* The contrast- "but he that is spiritual."
  - o Who is the "spiritual man?"
  - o He is "saved" or "born again," indwelt by the Spirit of God and yielded to Him. He is no longer blinded by Satan and has been enlightened by God. He is spiritually alive.
  - o Illustration- Ephesians 2
- \* Three things Paul says about him:
  - 1) The spiritual man judges all things (v. 15)
    - a. He has the Holy Spirit to teach him all things.
    - b. He understands the natural man.
  - 2) The spiritual man is not understood by the natural man (v. 15)
    - a. Your joy, your peace, your love, your faith or your hope.
  - 3) The spiritual man has the mind of Christ (v. 16)
    - a. Illustration- Why go to the unsaved for counsel?
    - b. Isaiah 40:13
    - c. Philippians 2

## III. The Carnal Man (3:1-4)

- \* What does Paul mean by "carnal?"
  - o According to the Greek dictionary, it means "to have the nature and characteristics of the flesh," or more simply it means "fleshly."
  - o Here it is referring to man's sinful, fleshly nature received from Adam.
- \* The really big questions is- is the carnal man saved? Is he a Christian?
  - o The answer is yes.
    - He has been born physically and spiritually.
  - o How do we know?
    - "Brethren" (v. 1)
    - "Babes in Christ" (v. 1)

\* So, the carnal man is saved, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but is controlled by the flesh (not filled).

- This does not mean that they have no spiritual fruit of any kind. A Christian's carnality will not be lifelong or total.
- Jesus made it clear in Matthew 13:8 that true believers will bear fruit- "some thirty, some sixty, and some one hundredfold."

\* John Calvin recognized the difference between the natural man, the spiritual man, and the carnal man. *"Paul does not mean that they were completely carnal without even a spark of the Spirit of God, but that they were still much too full of the mind of the flesh, so that the flesh prevailed over the Spirit, and, as it were, extinguished His light. Although they were not entirely without grace, yet they had more of the flesh than of the Spirit in their lives, and that is why he calls them carnal. That is plain enough from his adding immediately, that they were "babes in Christ," for they would not have been babes, if they had not been begotten, and this begetting is the work of the Spirit of God."*

- 1) The carnal man is controlled by the flesh, not the Spirit.
  - a. He's a Christian, yet lives for self.
  - b. A saved soul and a wasted life!
  - c. "Wood, hay, stubble"
  - d. He's more interested in movies than ministry, in pleasures than prayer, in buying things than Bible study, in serving self than serving the Savior.
  - e. They have just enough of the Lord that they are unhappy in the world, yet enough of the world so they are unhappy in the Lord!
  - f. Illustration- The farmer who has an apple tree on the border of his orchard.
  - g. The danger of being disciple by God (Hebrews 12).
- 2) Lacks Spiritual growth
  - a. (v. 1) "babes"
  - b. (v. 2) "milk"
  - c. Christians who want to be entertained not instructed and edified.
  - d. Hebrews 5:12-14- "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food for the mature, which because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil."
- 3) The carnal man is a spiritual baby (v.v. 1-2)
  - a. Before salvation we were "natural men," then we were "born spiritually." If we fail to grow we become "carnal."
  - b. Illustration- As a father watching my children grow
  - c. (v. 12) their diet was "milk" not "meat."
  - d. Remember they had all the gifts of the Spirit, but not fruit (Galatians 5).

- e. G.R.O.W.:
  - i. G- Go to God in prayer
  - ii. R- Read God's Word
  - iii. O- Obey God
  - iv. W- Witness to some
- 4) The carnal man acts like the natural man or unsaved man (v.v. 3-4). Carnal Christians are marked by:
  - a. "Envy" or "jealousy" (feelings) (v. 3)
    - i. Its rivalry. The dislike or seeing someone else getting ahead.
    - ii. Don't forget we are members of the same body
    - iii. Romans 12:15- "Rejoice with them that do rejoice"
    - iv. Do you have bitterness toward another believer because God has blessed them and is using them?
    - v. Are you willing to forgive?
    - vi. Ephesians 4:31-32- "Let all bitterness...and be ye kind..."
  - b. "Strife" (words) (v. 3)
    - i. Fighting with others, anger, unkind words, etc.
  - c. "Divisions" (actions) (v. 3)
    - i. In the church.
    - ii. Unconfessed sin in their lives.
    - iii. No fellowship

## **CONCLUSION**

### **\* Do I live any different than the world?**

- **If the answer is no, then perhaps you're a natural man and have never been saved. You need to be born of the Spirit!**

### **\* Or, if there's a battle going on between the flesh and the Spirit, perhaps you are a carnal Christian.**

- **The cure for carnality is total surrender to the Holy Spirit and the Lordship of Christ.**
- **It is living in obedience to God's Word.**
- **It is dying to self and serving Jesus with all your heart, your strength and your soul.**
- **Romans 12:1-2**
- **It is becoming the Spiritual Man!**