

Session 1 ...Mere Men?

1 **Cor 3:1-4** And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, 3 for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? 4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not mere men? NASU

Paul's Intro to "Mere-menology"

... **Anthropology** is the study of man (his origin, nature, and development).

... **Anthropology reaches into our past to try and understand WHY we are the way we are...**

Biblical "Mere-menology"

- Our Starting Point in this Archeological Dig ... 1Cor 3

1Cor 3:3 ... The Mere Man is "FLESHLY" ("of the flesh" ESV)... their origin, nature, and characteristics are bound up in "the flesh"

OTHER INSIGHTS THAT TOUCH THIS DESCRIPTION

Rom 8:5-8

- **Mere-Man has a Particular MINDSET** (v.5)... His life is generated out of the way he thinks
- **Mere-Man is NOT ABLE**

1Cor 2:14 "The natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God,... he is not able to understand them..."

1Cor 3:2 "I fed you milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it."

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Rom 8:7... *A Mere-Man can LEGITIMATELY SAY—"I Can't!"*

"... I Can't control my anger"

"... I Can't control my lust"

"... I Can't make myself read the Bible"

Gal 5:16-21

"Flesh" takes different meaning in Scripture, but in Paul's letters it often refers to "unredeemed human nature" with all of its desires and characteristic behavior. **ESV Study Bible**, note on p. 2195

Mere-Men (Men of Flesh) come in a variety of Types & Tendencies...

and left unredeemed, will evolve over a period of years. Gal 5:19-21 identifies some of these Types and Tendencies.

- ***Sensual-Man*** (Sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality...) This is a guy who struggles with keeping sensual pleasures in check.
 - Drug/Alcohol-Man (pursuing the pleasure/escape provided to the senses)
 - Pornography-Man
 - Overweight-Man
 - Financial Mess-Man (Laziness in organization or hard work)
 - TV Dependent-Man
 - Game-aholic-Man

- ***Control-Man*** (Enmity, strife, dissensions, division, fits of anger, sorcery) This is a guy who is seeking to control his surroundings and the people around him. Often this is going to exhibit these characteristics due to the effect this control is having on other people (strife, dissension, divisions)(Controlling what other people do is a combat zone waiting to happen) Fits of anger result when "Control-man" cannot get his way (due to the forces of gravity or the wills of others).
 - Intimidation-Man
 - Guilt-trip-Man
 - Victim-Man
 - Manipulation-Man... may come disguised as Whiny-Man, Pitiful-Man, or Charm-Man. All are "techniques" to get what he wants.

- ***Fear-man*** - This is a guy who is timid, restricted, insecure. He is limited and controlled by the opinions of others. He struggles to lead because he's afraid of what others may think of him if he does it wrong or has to lead in an unpopular way.

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- **Ambition-Man** – (Idolatry) This is the guy who is driven, focused, and ever seeking to achieve. He may be rather selfish. He may be very people oriented (if it helps him achieve what he's craving). He may be rather absent from settings/activities of the Kingdom of God (not giving his time, energy, or \$ to God's kingdom because he's ambitiously building his own). On the other hand he may be VERY INVOLVED in the kingdom work—because the Church happens to be the setting where his Idolatrous Ambitions can best be served (musical talents, leadership abilities, title/position, etc.)(Some people seek their fame through American Idol or Success on Wall Street... others seek it through the church). This guy usually is stirring up issues of strife, enmity, rivalries, JEALOUSY/ENVY, etc.)

1Cor 2:14, 3:1-2 ... The Mere Man is NATURAL MINDED

- **Mere Man tends to be a Legalist** – when one is not conducting his life by being "led by the Spirit", the only thing left for him is to put up EXTERNAL FENCES that will control his behavior. Now the Christian life for him and his view of others is controlled by the Location of the Fences.
- **Mere Man Doesn't Have an Appetite for Deep Doctrinal Study** (he wants pre-chewed insights that come in Bulleted List form and can be eaten in a short time span- a devotional moment)
 - 1Cor 2:14 ...
 - 1Cor 3:1-2 ... Staying as infants and not ready for solid food

Today's evangelical church has come to its anemic state primarily because of widespread ignorance of scriptural truth. Uninformed Christians do not have a well programmed grid from which to make good choices. Bill Hull, "The Disciple-making Church", p. 65

Where Does Mere Man Come From?

Those who do not have the Spirit are mere humans; thus they consider the cross folly. At the same time their behavior stems from a merely human, thoroughly self-centered point of view. Gordon Fee, "The First Epistle to the Corinthians", NICNT, p. 127

Mere Man = Man minus the Indwelling Presence of God

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The Story of Mere Man – "Once upon a time, God created man from the dust and BREATHED His life into man..."

Adam's day of sin was the WORST DAY OF YOUR LIFE. In that day man became DIS-ORIENTED ... DIS-CONNECTED ... DIS-MAYED. Everything about man became unplugged from the CENTER and man became his own center.

The Battle for ORBIT ... Mere-Man is desperately seeking to get his universe to Orbit Around Himself! ... Whether as Control-Man ... Fear-Man... Ambition-Man

The Hope of Paul's Surprise

What must capture us and fill us with Investigation & HOPE is Paul's Surprise at this ABNORMALCY!!

... He doesn't say that's NORMAL or To Be Expected (...after all, you're only human)
... " " " MOST GUYS STRUGGLE WITH THAT (and the guys who don't are struggling with lying!)

He's SURPRISED!!

The Corinthians have the Spirit, but are behaving precisely like people who do not, like "mere-humans." What is intolerable is to have received the Spirit, which makes one more than merely human, and to continue to live as though one were nothing more. Gordon Fee, "The First Epistle to the Corinthians", NICNT, p. 127

Spiritual-Man

1Cor 2:7-16

... Reminder: "Spiritual Man has his Origin in God's Decision to "VINDICATE HIS NAME" in and Through His People... **Ez 36**

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2 Cor 5:14-17 For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; ¹⁵ and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. ¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

2 Cor 10:3-5 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, ⁴ for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. ⁵ We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, NASU

Mere-Man says, "I CAN'T" ... but the Spiritual-Man knows, HE CAN!!

Act like a man... but not a Mere-man