

Tested by Fire: Measuring a Life That Lasts

How do you measure your life? How do you measure success? Do you measure your life by Kingdom standards or the world's, by what is seen or what is hidden, by externals or the heart? "Your life is measured not by what you build, but by what survives." What will survive when your life's work is tested by fire? Let's see what God's Word has to say!

1 Corinthians 3:1-23

1 Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. 3 You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? 4 For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere human beings? 5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. 6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 8 The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor.

9 For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building. 10 By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13 their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. 14 If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. 15 If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.

16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple. 18 Do not deceive yourselves. If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age, you should become "fools" so that you may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness"; 20 and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile." 21 So then, no more boasting about human leaders! All things are yours, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, 23 and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.

Connect the points below to the verses above.

- The world, like Corinth, measures the wrong things.
- There are only two types of building materials.
- Fire reveals what was hidden, refines what is valuable, and consumes what is worthless.
- Your life is measured not by what you build, but by what survives.
- Crowds are not the metric. Crowns are! Crowns that we will cast at Jesus feet.
- All things belong to you, and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

Ask the following questions as they relate to the points above.

1. What stands out to you from these verses? Which passage speaks to you most?
2. How was the church in Corinth measuring the wrong things? How does this apply today? In what ways do you measure the wrong things, spiritually and otherwise?
3. What are the two types of building materials? How are they different? Why does it matter what you build with? What is the foundation on which we build?
4. What is the fire? What does it represent? What doesn't it represent here? What does it do? How does the fire test the quality of each person's work? Why does this matter?
5. What is the reward you receive if your work survives? Who receives the reward? What about the one who suffers loss? What do they receive?
6. Identify one major takeaway from this lesson. What insight did you gain? Summarize it in one or two sentences.

How do you measure a life that lasts? In 1 Corinthians 3:9–15, Paul says the Christian life is a building project. Jesus Christ is the unshakable foundation upon which your life is built. The question isn't whether you're building—it's what you're building with. You can spend your whole life stacking wood, hay, and straw—building things that look impressive but won't survive the fire of God's evaluation. Or you can build with gold, silver, and precious stones—the hidden, costly, faithful things of eternal value

Our salvation is secure, but our reward is tied to the quality of our work. Paul says, "Each one's work will be revealed by fire." The fire exposes what was really done for Christ, and what was merely done for show. Whatever survives will be our eternal reward. And that reward is not human applause or recognition. Our reward is the smile of God, the crown of life, the lasting fruit of righteousness, the joy of faithfulness, and the Father's "Well done." It is the joy of having built something that lasts forever.

"Lord, teach me to build my life with gold. Purify my motives. Align my heart with yours. Let my private devotion secure heavenly rewards that survive the fire."

Bible Refs: [1 Corinthians 3](#); [Revelation 20:11-15](#); [Rom 14:10-12](#); [2 Cor 5:10](#); [2 Tim 4:8](#); [Matthew 6:1-4](#) [**SPANISH**]