

Turn in your Bibles to 1 Cor. 3:9-15 (reading text . . .)
 This word "husbandry" is one we don't use today. I'm sure many people have no idea what it means. This particular Greek word means "cultivated field." You are God's field would be modern English. That is, a field which needs cultivation. . . .

I would like to look with you at a few of the outstanding thoughts in this passage. First, we notice that the passage is addressed to Christians. He is not talking about building by those who have not already received Jesus Christ as their Saviour. This is made very clear in vv. 11 and 15. V. 11 says, "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid which is Jesus Christ." If anyone is building on any other foundation his life has no relevance to this particular passage. This passage is addressed to Christians. In v. 15 "If any man's work is burned he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved yet so as by fire." No one will be saved unless he has first received the Lord Jesus as Saviour. Therefore, this passage is not talking about any building of any sort by non-Christians. It is talking about Christians in this particular passage. Since it is our hope that everyone here has truly from his heart received the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, it is certainly my belief that most of you have. We have -- think everyone is but only God knows the heart. It is rare that a group as large as this has been together that there has not eventually been proved that one or two had only gone through words and as their later life showed had not really received Christ in their heart. But this passage is addressed to those who have truly received Christ into their hearts.

So having received Christ into our hearts it is expected that we will be building. Every Christian builds. We build upon it gold, silver, precious stones, or wood, hay, stubble! We are building something upon it. An interesting thing is that two figures are used in this passage about Christians. You notice we are God's field, God's building. So we are part of that which is built. At the same time we are building. Two different figures are used in this one brief passage. Both figures have relevance to us. We are being built. We must be upon the foundation which is Jesus Christ. At the same time there is the responsibility upon us to be laborers together with God. Salvation is entirely an act of God. No one of us can save ourselves. But after we are saved He expects us to be working. He expects us to cooperate with His Spirit in the processes of sanctification. He expects us to build. We are not merely passive. We have a part in His work, a very important part. We are both laborers and also we are part of the field. Just what is it we are building on? I'd like us to look at three aspects each of us has to think of as we build for the Lord. The first of them combines the two figures here: we are building ourselves. We must think of that. It is very important what we are going to do for Christ. It is very important what we are going to do for Him. Even more important is the building within our own lives and hearts. There was probably never anyone who served the Lord more effectively and more diligently than the Apostle Paul, but Paul in 1 Cor. 9:27 says, "I keep under my body and bring it under subjection lest by any means after I have preached to others I myself should be a castaway." That word "castaway" could give us a wrong impression because that word "castaway" which occurs nowhere else in the NT except here can easily be misunderstood. It is true there have been some who have preached who have not been Christians. There are some who have been utter hypocrites. But if they preached the Word of God He may have used it to bring souls into His kingdom.