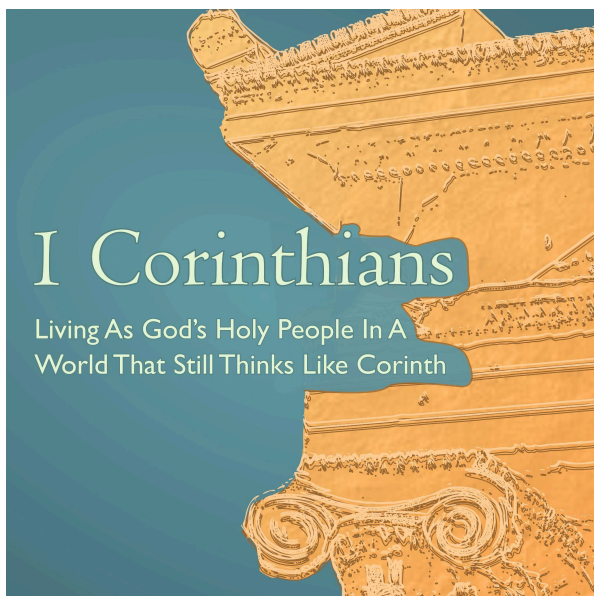




Part 1: Called Saints Learning To Live Together

Study Guide



firstchristian
CHURCH
HELPING PEOPLE FIND AND FOLLOW JESUS

fccgreene.org

This Study Guide is intended to help you meaningfully participate in a preaching series and gain a better handle on God's Word. For maximum utility, don't skip parenthetical references—all of Scripture is God's interconnected special revelation. Some of the best insights are often found in wrestling through the references. Following an introduction to the book, series, or sermon, each week contains:

- Sermon Title, Passage, and space for Sermon Notes
- Passage's Main Points: Exegetical Focus, Theological Principles, Redemptive-Historical Significance
- Hermeneutical-Devotional Commentary (i.e., Scott's "Dad's Daily Devos," available at fccgreene.org/ddd.)
- Daily Bible Readings accompanying sermon themes.
- Life Group Discussion Guide: Summary and Questions¹
- Parent Pages/Kids Lessons. The L-E-A-D framework helps parents LEAD their children through God's Word in a simple, repeatable way that forms understanding, engagement, reflection, and lasting faith.
 - *Learn the Lesson* – Introduces the main truth of God's Word so children can understand what God has said (Deuteronomy 6:6; Nehemiah 8:8).
 - *Engage your Child* – Helps children interact with God's truth through shared activities and everyday conversations (Deuteronomy 6:7; Proverbs 22:6).
 - *Ask the Questions* – Encourages children to think carefully, respond personally, and grow in wisdom and discernment (Deuteronomy 6:20; Proverbs 2:1-5).
 - *Deposit the Word* – Focuses on storing God's Word in children's hearts through repetition and memory so it shapes their lives over time (Psalm 119:11; Proverbs 7:1-3; Colossians 3:16).

¹ We do our best to plan sermon titles, passages, points, etc. but such synchronicity between plans and execution doesn't always happen perfectly. Main differences might be: (1) Passage's Main Points, which will at least be similar to eventual sermon points, and (2) Sermon Titles, which are planned thematically in the Series Guide but may be changed by the preacher, who chooses a representative phrase from the passage as the eventual title.

Additional Resources: Sermon Guide, Manuscript, Parents Pages (for Middle/High School), Podcast, Fridge Magnet

- Sun Sermon Guide/Manuscript are on the app under “Home” and at fccgreene.org/sermonguide. For additional study, Scott’s manuscripts typically have extensive footnotes.
- Parent Pages (for Kids and Middle/High School students) and the Worship Guide are on the app under “Study Guides” and at fccgreene.org/studyguides.
- The Weekly Bible Study Podcast, posted every Thursday, helps prepare for next Sun. Available on the app under “Watch” > “Media,” on YouTube (youtube.com/fccgreene), or fccgreene.org/wbsp.
- Don’t forget to pray with/for your church! 2026 Fridge Magnets available at The Hub and fccgreene.org/2026fridgemagnet.



Helping People Find and Follow Jesus

Praise God for His many blessings and pray He will move in power in our church in 2026!

SUN – Thank God for another great worship service! **Pray for opportunities** this week to preach the gospel, tell the story of God’s work in your life, and hand someone an Invite Card!

MON – Thank God for opportunities to grow! **Pray for our weekly ministries**—Life Groups, Re:gen, Marriage Ministry, Pillar YA, and 180 Students—that we will grow in grace. See you at Life Group!

TUE – Thank God for those who serve! **Pray for our elders, staff, missionaries, and for one another**—for God to strengthen and encourage us for Kingdom mission. Send a text of encouragement to someone today!

WED – Thank God for community partnerships and outreach opportunities! **Pray for our community and school outreaches** to create Kingdom fruit. Help out at your next campus-specific outreach!

THU – Thank God for His many blessings that sustain us even when life is hard! **Pray for generous hearts** that joyfully give to fuel gospel ministry and meet growing needs in every campus and ministry.

FRI – Thank God for His faithfulness in the past year! **Pray for God’s favor and guidance with emerging opportunities**—synced curriculum, Catalyst expansion, Colombian church plant, Residents preaching/serving, producing resources and training leaders, Admin/Ops Director, Jan 2027 Launch of 4th Campus

SAT – Thank God for a Perfect Savior! **Pray for God to use our singing, prayer, and preaching** to strengthen us for another week of gospel service. See ya there—don’t forget your Bible and Series Guide!

Engage in Worship • Serve on the Team • Connect in a Small Group • Pray and Study the Bible Pursue Generosity • Identify with Christ • Tell the Story

Pillar Young Adults Breakouts

Pillar often syncs with Sunday mornings via this Study Guide. (Be done by 8:30p. When done, be respectful of groups still going.)

- (1) How is everyone doing?
- (2) What stuck out from the text? Thoughts or questions?
- (3) What is one next step or takeaway for your life?
- (4) Pray for one another.

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Introduction To The Series

Part 1 Memory Verses: 1 Corinthians 1:9-10

9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 10 I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.

A True Church Still Thinking Like Corinth

1 Corinthians confronts a church that truly belongs to Christ but still thinks like Corinth. Paul writes to “the church of God that is in Corinth,” to those already “sanctified in Christ Jesus” and “called to be saints” (1 Corinthians 1:2). That matters. Before Paul corrects their failures, he reminds them of their identity. He does not treat them as a fake church that merely needs evangelism; he addresses them as a real church, genuinely set apart in Christ, enriched by grace, gifted by God, and sustained by Christ. Yet they are also fractured, proud, immature, morally compromised, and deeply shaped by the values of the city around them.

Corinth was a wealthy, status-conscious, religiously pluralistic, and morally confused city. It prized wisdom, rhetoric, power, public recognition, and personal freedom. The tragedy in 1 Corinthians is that many of those old values had followed the Corinthians into the church. They believed the gospel, but they were still tempted to evaluate leaders, bodies, rights, worship, and success according to Corinth’s wisdom rather than Christ’s. So Paul does not merely correct a list of unrelated problems. He reshapes their identity, values, and imagination by recentering them on the crucified and risen Lord.

The Series Logic

The logic of the whole letter can be stated like this: Because God has sanctified His people in Christ and united them to the crucified and risen Lord, the church must learn to live—together, publicly, and bodily—in a way that reflects God’s wisdom rather than the world’s values. That is why 1 Corinthians moves so naturally from doctrine to ethics, from church unity to sexual holiness, from Christian freedom to gathered worship, and from

resurrection hope to faithful perseverance. Paul is showing the church what it means to live as God's holy people in a world that still thinks like Corinth.

The Through-Line Illustration: A New City Under A New King

A helpful way to picture the letter is as a church learning to live like a new city under a new King. Corinth thinks it is already ruling—rich, wise, powerful, and spiritually elite. But Paul insists that the Corinthian Christians are citizens of a different city, ruled by a crucified King, whose wisdom looks like weakness and whose power is displayed through love, holiness, ordered worship, and resurrection hope. Every section of the letter presses the same question: Are you living like citizens of Corinth, or citizens of Christ's Kingdom?

Thematic Outline Of 1 Corinthians

Part 1: "Called Saints Learning To Live Together" (1:1-4:21)

In the first section, Paul begins with identity and unity. The Corinthians are called, sanctified, gifted, and sustained by God's faithfulness, but their divisions reveal that they are still thinking according to worldly wisdom and leader-centered status. Paul brings them back to "the word of the cross" (1:18), because Christ crucified destroys human boasting and redefines wisdom, strength, maturity, and leadership. Apostles are not celebrities but servants and stewards. The church is not a platform for human pride but God's temple, built on Christ. The kingdom of God does not consist in impressive talk but in power.

Part 2: "Holiness In The Body And The Community" (5:1-7:40)

In the second section, Paul turns from fractured thinking to compromised living. The gospel does not tolerate open immorality, spiritualized autonomy, or the idea that the body is morally insignificant. Paul addresses church discipline, lawsuits, sexual immorality, marriage, singleness, divorce, and calling by grounding everything in redemption: "You are not your own, for you were bought with a price" (6:19-20). Holiness is not legalism, and it is not escape from embodied life. It is faithful obedience shaped by belonging to Christ.

Part 3: "Freedom, Worship, And Life Together In The Church" (8:1-14:40)

In the third section, Paul shows that Christian freedom must be governed by love and that gathered worship must build up the body. Knowledge can puff up, but love builds up. Rights can be real, but maturity often lays them down for the good of others. The Lord's Table cannot be joined to idolatry, and the gathered church cannot become a stage for selfishness, confusion, or spiritual display. Even when Paul addresses extraordinary gifts in the apostolic era, his enduring burden is clear: the church's worship must be governed by truth, love, intelligibility, order, and edification.

Part 4: "Resurrection, Hope, And Faithful Perseverance" (15:1-16:24)

In the fourth section, Paul anchors the whole Christian life in the bodily resurrection of Christ and the future resurrection of believers. The resurrection is not an optional doctrine added to the gospel; it is essential to the gospel. If Christ has not been raised, faith is futile and preaching is empty. "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead" (15:20), and because He has been raised, Christian labor is "not in vain" (15:58). Resurrection hope gives endurance, steadiness, courage, generosity, and love to a church still living in the tension between the present age and the age to come.

The Pastoral Aim: Growing Up Into The Wisdom Of Christ

1 Corinthians, then, is not a grab-bag of church problems. It is an apostolic call for God's holy people to grow up into the wisdom of Christ. Paul shows that Christ crucified and risen is sufficient to unite the church, humble pride, purify the body, govern freedom, order worship, and sustain hope. The Corinthians needed more than correct answers. They needed a transformed way of life governed by love, ordered by truth, and sustained by resurrection hope. And so do we. This first part of the Study Guide begins where Paul begins: with called saints learning to live together under the faithful rule of the crucified King.

Jun 21, 2026 – Week 1 – “Called To Be Saints... Sanctified In Christ... Not Lacking In Any Gift... Christ Will Sustain You” (1 Corinthians 1:1-9)

Main Passage: 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

1 Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes, 2 To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 4 I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, 5 that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— 6 even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— 7 so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Exegetical Focus

- Paul frames both apostle and church by divine calling, showing that Christian identity and authority begin with God's initiative, not human attainment.
- “Sanctified in Christ Jesus” and “called to be saints” establish a real covenant identity before ethical correction, so holiness is both given status and summoned vocation.
- Paul presents grace-gifts, eschatological waiting, and final blamelessness as realities grounded not in Corinthian maturity but in God's faithfulness.

Theological Principles

- Christian identity precedes Christian correction, because God names His people in grace before reforming them in holiness (Exodus 19:5-6; Romans 8:29-30).
- Spiritual gifts are evidence of divine generosity, not spiritual superiority, and must serve the body in love rather than the ego in pride (1 Corinthians 12:7; Ephesians 4:15-16).

Paul opens 1 Corinthians by grounding the life of the church not in what must be fixed but in what God has already done, defining the Corinthians first as those who are “called... sanctified in Christ Jesus... called to be saints” (v 2) before addressing any of their failures, because in Paul’s theology identity always precedes correction. Their standing does not rest on maturity or consistency but on God’s initiative, which is why Paul can affirm that they are “not lacking in any gift” (v 7) while still preparing to confront deep divisions and immaturity—giftedness is real, but it is not the measure of faithfulness. The repeated emphasis on calling is deliberate: Paul is “called by the will of God” (v 1), the church is “called to be saints” (v 2), and their shared life is grounded in the God “who called you into the fellowship of his Son” (v 9), locating every aspect of Christian existence in divine action rather than human achievement. Even perseverance is promised rather than produced, because Christ “will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (v 8), and the ultimate assurance rests not in the church’s resolve but in this climactic declaration—“God is faithful” (v 9).

² Adapted from “Dad’s Daily Devos,” available at fccgreene.org/ddd.

graciously calls His people, declares them holy, and sustains them before they ever learn to live consistently with that holiness, a pattern now fulfilled “in Christ” as the church lives between Christ’s first coming and “the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (v 7). Hermeneutical nugget for Scripture and life: notice how Paul begins with identity rather than behavior, teaching us that Scripture grounds obedience in grace already given rather than effort still required, so today, when we drift toward performance-based Christianity—measuring ourselves by gifting, productivity, or comparison—this passage calls us back to gospel realism, reminding us that we obey not to become God’s people but because we already are, and that it is God’s faithfulness, not our consistency, that will carry us safely home.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Mon – Exodus 19:1-6; Leviticus 11:44-45
- Tue – Acts 9:1-19; 1 Corinthians 9:1-2
- Wed – Romans 5:1-5; Ephesians 1:3-6
- Thu – 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Ephesians 4:7-16
- Fri – Philippians 1:3-11; Jude 24-25
- Sat – 2 Thessalonians 3:3-5
- Sun – 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 (“That There Be No Divisions Among You”)

Life Group Summary (Especially For Leaders)

Paul begins 1 Corinthians by grounding the church in grace before confronting its failures. The Corinthians are already God’s church, sanctified in Christ, called to be saints, enriched with grace-gifts, and upheld by the faithful God who will sustain them to the end. This means every correction in the letter flows from identity already given, not identity still to be earned. For your Life Group, the key emphasis should be that believers must learn to live from God’s gracious calling rather than from performance, pride, or comparison, in order to grow in unity, humility, and assurance under Christ’s lordship.

Life Group Questions

- (1) What stands out most in how Paul describes the Corinthians before he addresses any of their problems?
- (2) Why does it matter that Paul says the church is “of God” and that believers are “sanctified in Christ Jesus”?
- (3) How can real spiritual gifts become occasions for pride instead of service if they are disconnected from grace and love?
- (4) What does this passage teach about the church’s present life as a waiting people between Christ’s first coming and His final revealing?
- (5) Where are you most tempted to ground your identity in performance, personality, usefulness, or comparison rather than in God’s call in Christ?
- (6) Share one area where you need to trust God’s faithfulness more deeply this week, and pray for one another to live as saints sustained by Christ.

Kids Lessons

Early Childhood

Learn The Lesson: God calls His people to belong to Jesus. Paul says the church is God's church, and Christians are people God has made holy in Jesus. That means we do not belong to sin, selfishness, or the world anymore. We belong to our faithful God.

Engage Your Child: Draw a big circle and write "God's Church" inside it. Then draw smaller stick figures inside the circle. Explain that each Christian belongs to Jesus, and all of them belong together because they all belong to Him.

Ask The Question: Who do God's people belong to?

Deposit The Word: 1 Corinthians 1:9 – "God [point upward] is faithful [nod firmly and place hand over heart], by whom you were called [beckon toward yourself] into the fellowship [link hands together] of his Son [point upward, then outward], Jesus Christ [make a small cross with your forearms or hands] our Lord [point upward with reverence]."

Elementary

Learn The Lesson: Paul begins by reminding the Corinthians who they are before telling them what they are doing wrong. They are God's church, made holy in Christ, called to be saints, and upheld by God's faithfulness. Christians obey not to become God's people, but because they already are God's people in Christ.

Engage Your Child: Take two index cards. On one, write "Who I Am." On the other, write "What I Do." Talk about why the Bible first tells Christians who they are in Jesus before it tells them how to live. Then list a few truths from the passage under "Who I Am."

Ask The Questions:

1. What does it mean that the church is "God's church"?
2. Why does Paul remind the Corinthians who they are first?
3. How does knowing God is faithful help Christians obey Him?

Deposit The Word: See above.

Jun 28, 2026 – Week 2 – “That There Be No Divisions Among You” (1 Corinthians 1:10-17)

Main Passage: 1 Corinthians 1:10-17

10 I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. 11 For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. 12 What I mean is that each one of you says, “I follow Paul,” or “I follow Apollos,” or “I follow Cephas,” or “I follow Christ.” 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name. 16 (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

Exegetical Focus

- “In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ” grounds unity in shared covenant identity.
- “Schismata” reveals relational tearing rooted in deeper theological misalignment.
- Verse 17 introduces the cross as the corrective lens for division.

Theological Principles

- Unity flows from shared identity in Christ, not shared preferences (Ephesians 4:3-6).
- Allegiance to leaders must never rival allegiance to Christ (1 Corinthians 3:5-7).
- The cross eliminates all boasting (1 Corinthians 1:29-31).

Redemptive-Historical Significance

- God is forming a unified people in Christ (Ephesians 2:14-16).
- The cross is the climactic act that defines this people.
- The church now displays unity across divisions as a sign of the new covenant community.

Sermon Notes

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Hermeneutical-Devotional Commentary

Having grounded the Corinthians in grace-given identity, Paul immediately turns to the visible contradiction of that identity in their life together, pleading “by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” that they be united in mind and judgment (v 10), because division in the church is not merely relational dysfunction but theological confusion. Their problem is not disagreement but misplaced allegiance, as reports of quarrels reveal that believers are lining up behind favored leaders—“I follow Paul,” “I follow Apollos,” “I follow Cephas” (v 12)—importing Corinth’s status-driven loyalty structures into the people of God. Paul dismantles this thinking with piercing gospel logic: “Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you?” (v 13), exposing how absurd it is to anchor identity in servants rather than in the crucified Lord who alone accomplished redemption. Even baptism, meant to signify union with Christ, is being subtly misused as a badge of ministerial association rather than a sign of belonging to Christ Himself (vv 13-15), which is why Paul deliberately distances his ministry from personal brand-building. He explains that he was sent “to preach the gospel, not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power” (v 17), because when rhetorical impressiveness or personality becomes central, the cross is quietly displaced rather than openly denied. Redemptive-historically, Paul is re-centering the church on the cross as God’s great leveling act, where human status is undone and salvation is secured entirely by divine initiative, ensuring that unity flows from shared dependence on Christ rather than shared admiration for leaders. Hermeneutical nugget for Scripture and life: notice how Paul interprets division as a gospel problem before a personality problem, teaching us that Scripture diagnoses church conflict theologically rather than pragmatically, so today, when Christian communities organize themselves around platforms, preferences, or influential voices, this passage presses us to ask whether our loyalties are cross-shaped or Corinth-shaped, reminding us that the church holds together only when the cross remains central and Christ alone receives our deepest allegiance.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Mon – 1 Corinthians 1:1-9
- Tue – 1 Corinthians 1:10-17
- Wed – 1 Corinthians 1:18-25
- Thu – 1 Corinthians 3:1-9
- Fri – Ephesians 4:1-6
- Sat – John 17:20-23
- Sun – 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 (“The Word Of The Cross”)

Life Group Summary (Especially For Leaders)

1 Corinthians 1:10-17 confronts division as a gospel issue, not merely a relational problem. Paul appeals in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ because the Corinthians’ quarrels contradict their shared identity in Him. Their slogans—“I follow Paul,” “I follow Apollos,” “I follow Cephas”—show that they have turned faithful leaders into identity markers, importing Corinthian status culture into the church. Paul exposes the absurdity with gospel questions: Christ is not divided, Paul was not crucified for them, and baptism did not unite them to a human personality. The key emphasis for your Life Group should be that unity is preserved when the cross defines our deepest allegiance and Christ, not leaders, preferences, or personalities, holds the church together.

Life Group Questions

(1) What does Paul mean by “no divisions” in v 10?

(2) Why are the “I follow...” statements such a serious issue?

(3) How do Paul’s questions in v 13 expose the problem?

(4) What role does baptism play in this passage?

(5) Where do we see similar divisions today?

(6) How can we pray for Christ-centered unity in our lives and church?

Kids Lessons

Early Childhood

Learn The Lesson: The Bible teaches that God wants His people to be united. We belong to Jesus, not to different groups or leaders. When we follow Jesus, we are part of one family.

Engage Your Child: Take different colored blocks and separate them into groups. Then bring them together and explain: “These were divided, but now they are one.” Show that God wants His people to be together, not split apart.

Ask The Question: Who do we belong to?

Deposit The Word: 1 Corinthians 1:9 – “God [point upward] is faithful [nod firmly and place hand over heart], by whom you were called [beckon toward yourself] into the fellowship [link hands together] of his Son [point upward, then outward], Jesus

Christ [make a small cross with your forearms or hands] our Lord [point upward with reverence].”

Elementary

Learn The Lesson: The Bible teaches that Christians should not divide into groups based on people they like or follow. Instead, all believers belong to Jesus, and He is the one who brings us together.

Engage Your Child: Write names like “Paul,” “Apollos,” and “Cephas” on paper, and then write “Jesus” bigger above them. Explain that people were choosing sides, but Paul reminds them that Jesus is the only one who matters most.

Ask The Questions:

1. Why were the people in Corinth divided?
2. What does it mean to belong to Jesus instead of a person?
3. How can we stay united with other Christians?

Deposit The Word: See above.

Jul 5, 2026 – Week 3 – “The Word Of The Cross” (1 Corinthians 1:18-25)

Main Passage: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

18 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.” 20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. 22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Exegetical Focus

- Verse 18 establishes “the word of the cross” as the paragraph’s interpretive center, exposing two ongoing trajectories: “those who are perishing” and “those who are being saved.”
- Verses 19-21 argues from Isaiah 29:14 that the world cannot know God through autonomous wisdom; God saves “those who believe” through the proclaimed gospel (Romans 10:14-17).
- Verses 22-25 contrasts Jewish sign-seeking and Greek wisdom-seeking with “Christ crucified,” who is scandal and folly to the world but God’s wisdom and power to the called (Isaiah 8:14; Galatians 3:13).

Theological Principles

- God saves in a way that excludes boasting, grounding salvation in His revelation rather than human wisdom, pedigree, or performance (Jeremiah 9:23-24; Ephesians 2:8-9).
- The cross does not merely accomplish forgiveness; it redefines wisdom, strength, and success, so the church must not borrow

the world's standards without betraying the gospel (Romans 1:16; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

- Effectual calling explains why the same Christ is rejected by some and embraced by others: saving perception is a gift of sovereign grace, not natural reason (Romans 8:28-30; 1 Corinthians 1:9, 24).

Redemptive-Historical Significance

- The cross fulfills God's purpose to humble human pride and overturn false wisdom, fulfilling Isaiah 29:14 in Christ.
- "Christ crucified" fulfills the Old Testament pattern of God saving through what appears weak, shameful, and unexpected, culminating in the suffering, cursed-yet-vindicated Messiah (Isaiah 53:3-6; Deuteronomy 21:23; Luke 24:26).
- This passage shows the old age's values judged by the crucified and risen Christ, so the church now lives as the people of the new age in a world still thinking like Corinth (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:14-15).

Sermon Notes

[illegible]

Hermeneutical-Devotional Commentary

does not merely forgive sinners; it redefines what counts as wisdom, strength, and success for the people of God, for “the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men” (v 25). Redemptive-historically, Paul shows that the cross is the climax of God’s long pattern of humbling human wisdom and saving through what appears weak and shameful, fulfilling the Scriptures that promised a salvation no one could boast in and inaugurating a kingdom whose values run opposite the old city’s instincts. Hermeneutical nugget for Scripture and life: notice how Paul treats the cross not as one doctrine among many but as the interpretive center of all reality, teaching us that Scripture redefines wisdom rather than accommodating it, so today, when we feel pressure to make Christianity sound more reasonable, impressive, or culturally persuasive, this passage calls us to resist reshaping the gospel for Corinth’s approval and instead to live as citizens of Christ’s kingdom, trusting that God’s wisdom is revealed most clearly where the world least expects it—in Christ crucified.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Mon – Isaiah 29:13-16
- Tue – Romans 1:18-25
- Wed – Deuteronomy 21:22-23; Galatians 3:10-14
- Thu – Isaiah 52:13-53:6
- Fri – Colossians 2:1-5; 8-10
- Sat – Galatians 6:11-15
- Sun – 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 (“So That No Human Being Might Boast”)

Life Group Summary (Especially For Leaders)

1 Corinthians 1:18-25 shows that the cross is not merely the beginning of Christianity but the interpretive center of all Christian life. The same message divides humanity into those perishing and those being saved, exposes the bankruptcy of human wisdom, and reveals that God saves not by meeting our preferred criteria but by preaching Christ crucified. Jews wanted signs, Greeks sought wisdom, but God answered both with the shameful-yet-glorious cross. The key emphasis for your Life Group should be this: the church cannot think like Corinth and

remain faithful to Christ, because God has permanently redefined wisdom, power, and success in the crucified Messiah.

Life Group Questions

- (1) What contrasts in vv 18-25 show that the same message of the cross produces radically different responses?
- (2) How do vv 19-21 explain why human wisdom cannot bring sinners into a true knowledge of God?
- (3) Why were Jews especially offended by “Christ crucified,” and why did Greeks see it as folly?
- (4) What does Paul mean by saying Christ is “the power of God and the wisdom of God” to the called?
- (5) Where do you most feel pressure to measure truth, ministry, or success by worldly standards rather than by the cross?
- (6) Share one place where you need to trust God’s wisdom over your own this week, and pray for one another to rest in and live from Christ crucified.

Kids Lessons

Early Childhood

Learn The Lesson: Some people think the cross sounds strange or weak, but God says the cross is how Jesus saves sinners. What looks small to us is actually God's strength to rescue His people.

Engage Your Child: Hold up something that looks small but is very useful, like a key. Ask, "Does this look strong?" Then use it to open a door, explaining that the cross may look weak to the world, but God uses Jesus' death to open the way of salvation.

Ask The Question: What does God use to save people?

Deposit The Word: 1 Corinthians 1:9 – "God [point upward] is faithful [nod firmly and place hand over heart], by whom you were called [beckon toward yourself] into the fellowship [link hands together] of his Son [point upward, then outward], Jesus Christ [make a small cross with your forearms or hands] our Lord [point upward with reverence]."

Elementary

Learn The Lesson: Corinth cared about what looked wise, strong, and impressive, but Paul says God's wisdom is seen in Jesus dying on the cross for sinners. The cross teaches us not to trust what merely looks powerful, but to trust what God says is powerful.

Engage Your Child: Write two headings on paper: "What The World Thinks Is Strong" and "What God Says Is Strong." Under the first, list things like popularity, muscles, money, or sounding smart. Under the second, write "Jesus on the cross," and talk about why God's power looks different from the world's ideas.

Ask The Questions:

1. Why do some people think the cross is foolish?
2. How does the cross show God's power?
3. Why should we trust God's wisdom more than what the world admires?

Deposit The Word: See above.

Jul 12, 2026 – Week 4 – “So That No Human Being Might Boast” (1 Corinthians 1:26-31)

Main Passage: 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31 so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

Exegetical Focus

- Paul’s command to “consider your calling” (v 26) forces the Corinthians to interpret their conversion by God’s grace rather than by Corinthian categories of wisdom, power, nobility, and status.
- God deliberately chose what is “foolish,” “weak,” “low,” and “despised” (vv 27-28) to expose the emptiness of every human ground for boasting and to show that salvation rests on His sovereign grace.
- Verse 30 centers the whole passage in union with Christ: “because of him you are in Christ Jesus.” Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption are not Corinthian achievements but saving benefits found entirely in Christ.

Theological Principles

- Sovereign Election/Effectual Calling: Divine election humbles rather than flatters the believer, because God’s call comes according to grace, not according to human impressiveness, status, intelligence, or perceived usefulness.
- Sola Gratia/No Boasting: Salvation leaves no remainder for self-congratulation because God saves in such a way that “no human being might boast” before Him (v 29); grace does not merely assist sinners but silences every claim to merit.

- **Union With Christ/Benefits Of Christ:** Christ is not merely the means of salvation but the substance of every saving blessing believers need before God; in Him, God gives wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

Redemptive-Historical Significance

- God's saving pattern has always overturned human expectations, choosing according to grace rather than appearance, strength, or status (cf Deuteronomy 7:6-8; 1 Samuel 16:7).
- Paul's call to "boast in the Lord" echoes Jeremiah's warning against boasting in wisdom, might, or riches and redirects all confidence to God's covenant mercy (cf Jeremiah 9:23-24).
- The new covenant secures God's glory by rooting salvation entirely in Christ, so the church becomes a people whose very existence testifies to grace alone (cf Ephesians 2:8-9).

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Sermon Notes

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passage reveals that the cross does not merely overturn Corinthian values locally but fulfills God's long-standing purpose to create a people whose existence testifies that salvation is by grace alone, leaving no doubt that the kingdom belongs to the Lord and not to human strength. Hermeneutical nugget for Scripture and life: notice how Paul interprets personal biography theologically, teaching us to read our own stories through God's saving purpose rather than cultural metrics of success, so today, when we are tempted to ground confidence in credentials, influence, or competence, this passage calls us to gospel humility, reminding us that our hope is not found in who we were or what we bring, but in the fact that we are "in Christ," where all boasting is silenced and all gratitude is rightly directed to the Lord alone.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Mon – Deuteronomy 7:6-8
- Tue – Judges 7:1-8; 7:19-22
- Wed – 1 Samuel 16:1-13
- Thu – Jeremiah 9:23-24
- Fri – Ephesians 2:1-10
- Sat – Romans 3:21-27
- Sun – 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 ("Not In Lofty Speech... But In Demonstration Of The Spirit")

Life Group Summary (Especially For Leaders)

1 Corinthians 1:26-31 presses the Corinthians to "consider your calling" so they will see that their own conversion disproves Corinthian boasting. God did not choose them because they were impressive by worldly standards; He chose the foolish, weak, low, and despised so that no one could boast before Him. Their salvation is entirely from God and located entirely in Christ, who has become their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. The key emphasis for your Life Group should be that grace leaves no room for superiority, comparison, or self-congratulation. The only faithful response is humble gratitude and boasting in the Lord alone.

Life Group Questions

- (1) What does Paul mean by “consider your calling,” and why is it important?
- (2) Why does God choose those the world considers weak or foolish?
- (3) How does this passage challenge cultural ideas of success and worth?
- (4) What does it mean that Christ is our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption?
- (5) Where do you see subtle forms of boasting in your own life?
- (6) How can we pray for one another to grow in humility and deeper dependence on Christ alone?

Kids Lessons

Early Childhood

Learn The Lesson: God does not save people because they are the strongest, smartest, or most popular. God chooses by His grace. The world says, “Be impressive!” but God loves to use people many overlook so everyone knows the glory belongs to Him.

Engage Your Child: Show your child a shiny toy and a plain rock. Ask which one looks more special, then explain that God does not choose people because they look impressive. God loves to show His grace through people the world might overlook.

Ask The Question: Does God save us because we are impressive, or because He is gracious?

Deposit The Word: 1 Corinthians 1:9 – “God [point upward] is faithful [nod firmly and place hand over heart], by whom you were called [beckon toward yourself] into the fellowship [link hands together] of his Son [point upward, then outward], Jesus Christ [make a small cross with your forearms or hands] our Lord [point upward with reverence].”

Elementary

Learn The Lesson: The world says your value comes from being smart, strong, or popular, but God turns that upside down. God chose the weak and overlooked so no one can brag. In Christ, we boast in the Lord instead of ourselves.

Engage Your Child: Play a quick game where someone succeeds only because another person helps. Ask: “Did they win because they were the best, or because they were helped?” Explain that every good thing we have comes from God.

Ask The Questions:

1. What are some things people brag about?
2. Why does God choose people who seem weak?
3. What does it mean to “boast in the Lord”?

Deposit The Word: See above.

Jul 19, 2026 – Week 5 – “Not In Lofty Speech... But In Demonstration Of The Spirit” (1 Corinthians 2:1-5)

Main Passage: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

1 And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, 4 and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Exegetical Focus

- Paul intentionally rejects rhetorical superiority to center proclamation on “Christ... crucified,” emphasizing divine content over human method (1 Corinthians 1:17; 2:2).
- His weakness highlights God’s power, showing ministry effectiveness depends on divine, not human, strength (2 Corinthians 12:9).
- The Spirit’s “demonstration” produces genuine faith grounded in God’s power, not persuasion (1 Thessalonians 1:5).

Theological Principles

- God saves through the proclaimed gospel, not human eloquence (Romans 1:16; Isaiah 55:11).
- Divine power is perfected in human weakness, overturning worldly values (2 Corinthians 12:9; James 4:6).
- Faith is Spirit-wrought and God-sustained, excluding human boasting (Ephesians 2:8-9; John 3:8).

Redemptive-Historical Significance

- The cross reveals God’s wisdom through apparent weakness, fulfilling prophetic expectations (Isaiah 53; 1 Corinthians 1:24).
- The Spirit’s work fulfills new covenant promises of inward transformation (Ezekiel 36:26-27; Jeremiah 31:33).
- God’s pattern of using weakness culminates in Christ and continues in the church’s mission (Philippians 2:6-11; Acts 1:8).

[illegible]

Hermeneutical-Devotional Commentary

Paul now grounds the Corinthians' understanding of wisdom not only in what the gospel is, but in how it must be proclaimed, reminding them that when he came to Corinth he did so "not with lofty speech or wisdom" (v 1), because the message of Christ crucified cannot be carried by methods that contradict its nature. Paul's resolve "to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (v 2) is not an anti-intellectual retreat but a theological decision, ensuring that the cross, rather than rhetorical skill or philosophical sophistication, remained the controlling center of faith. His "weakness and fear and much trembling" (v 3) were not liabilities but instruments, deliberately stripping away any illusion that saving faith could be produced by human persuasion, for his preaching rested on "a demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (v 4). The purpose is explicit: "so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (v 5), because when the church adopts Corinthian methods to gain Corinthian approval, it quietly undermines the very faith it seeks to produce. Paul is not contrasting good preaching with bad preaching, but divine power with human technique, insisting that gospel content and gospel method are inseparable. Redemptive-historically, this passage situates gospel proclamation within God's long-standing pattern of advancing salvation through weakness rather than dominance, fulfilling the logic of the cross where God's power is revealed precisely where human strength is set aside. Hermeneutical nugget for Scripture and life: notice how Paul interprets ministry effectiveness theologically rather than pragmatically, teaching us that Scripture evaluates success by faithfulness to God's means rather than visible results, so today, when the church is tempted to trust polish, personality, or platform to secure spiritual outcomes, this passage calls us back to gospel dependence, reminding us that saving faith is produced by the Spirit working through the crucified Christ, not by the impressiveness of the messenger.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Mon – Isaiah 53:1-6
- Tue – 1 Corinthians 1:18-31
- Wed – 2 Corinthians 4:1-7
- Thu – John 3:1-8

- Fri – 1 Thessalonians 1:2-5
- Sat – Acts 18:1-11
- Sun – 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 (“We Have The Mind Of Christ”)

Life Group Summary (Especially For Leaders)

1 Corinthians 2:1-5 shows that Paul’s ministry in Corinth was intentionally shaped by the message he preached. Because the gospel centers on Christ crucified, Paul refused to rely on the kind of lofty speech, rhetorical impressiveness, and human wisdom that Corinth admired. Instead, he came in weakness, fear, and trembling, so that it would be unmistakable that any true spiritual effect came from God, not from him. His resolve to know “nothing... except Jesus Christ and him crucified” does not mean he avoided all doctrine or careful teaching, but that the cross governed both his message and his method. The result was a “demonstration of the Spirit and of power,” so that the Corinthians’ faith would not rest on human persuasion but on God’s power. Help your group see that this passage is not anti-preparation or anti-clear communication, but anti-boasting, anti-performance, and anti-self-reliance in ministry. For your Life Group, the key emphasis should be that God is pleased to use plain, faithful, cross-centered proclamation through weak servants so that all confidence rests in Him alone, not in the impressiveness of the messenger.

Life Group Questions

- (1) What does Paul mean by rejecting “lofty speech,” and why is that important?
- (2) Why does Paul emphasize “Christ crucified” as central to his message?
- (3) How does Paul’s weakness actually serve God’s purposes?

- (4) What is the difference between human persuasion and the Spirit's power?
- (5) Where are we tempted to rely on human methods instead of God's power?
- (6) How can we pray for one another to depend more fully on the Spirit this week?

Kids Lessons

Early Childhood

Learn The Lesson: God doesn't need big fancy words to save people—He uses the message about Jesus dying for us.

Engage Your Child: Show two boxes—one fancy, one plain—and explain the best gift is inside the plain one, like the gospel.

Ask The Question: What is the most important message in the Bible?

Deposit The Word: 1 Corinthians 1:9 – “God [point upward] is faithful [nod firmly and place hand over heart], by whom you were called [beckon toward yourself] into the fellowship [link hands together] of his Son [point upward, then outward], Jesus Christ [make a small cross with your forearms or hands] our Lord [point upward with reverence].”

Elementary

Learn The Lesson: Paul teaches that trusting Jesus is not about being impressed by people but about God's power working in our hearts.

Engage Your Child: Talk about trusting a strong bridge vs. a weak one—faith must rest on something strong (God's power).

Ask The Questions:

1. Why didn't Paul try to impress people?
2. What does it mean to trust God's power?
3. How does the Holy Spirit help us believe?

Deposit The Word: See above.

Jul 26, 2026 – Week 6 – “We Have The Mind Of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:6-16)

Main Passage: 1 Corinthians 2:6-16

6 Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. 7 But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”—10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. 13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. 14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. 15 The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. 16 “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

Exegetical Focus

- Paul's “wisdom” language in 1 Corinthians 2:6-9 does not retreat from the anti-worldly argument of 1:18-2:5, but redefines wisdom as God's once-hidden, now-revealed saving plan centered in Christ crucified and ordained “before the ages.”
- 1 Corinthians 2:10-13 teaches that the Spirit alone knows “the depths of God” and therefore alone can reveal and teach the things freely given by God, making spiritual understanding a matter of revelation rather than autonomous discovery.
- In 1 Corinthians 2:14-16, the contrast between the “natural person” and the “spiritual person” shows that the issue is not

mere information but spiritual capacity, culminating in the astonishing claim that believers possess “the mind of Christ.”

Theological Principles

- God’s saving wisdom is sovereignly planned, Christ-centered, and Spirit-revealed, so no sinner can arrive at it by independent reason or self-confident spirituality (Daniel 2:22; Matthew 16:17; John 16:13-15).
- True maturity is measured not by elitist claims, gifted display, or intellectual self-importance, but by Spirit-enabled conformity to Christ’s perspective and priorities (Philippians 2:5-11; Ephesians 4:13-15).
- The Spirit does not bypass the mind but redeems and reorients it, enabling believers to receive, understand, and discern reality according to God’s revelation rather than the world’s value system (Romans 8:5-9; Colossians 3:1-2).

Redemptive-Historical Significance

- What was hidden in God’s counsel before the ages is now unveiled in the crucified and risen Christ, showing that the gospel is the historical manifestation of God’s long-ordained redemptive plan (Ephesians 1:7-10; 2 Timothy 1:9-10).
- The Spirit’s revelatory work fulfills the new covenant expectation that God Himself would inwardly teach and transform His people, granting them understanding and obedience from the heart (Jeremiah 31:33-34; Ezekiel 36:26-27).
- This passage marks the church as the people of the new age, already participating in God’s revealed wisdom while still living in the midst of a world and an age that are passing away (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:14-15).

Sermon Notes

[illegible]

Hermeneutical-Devotional Commentary

Paul clarifies that rejecting worldly wisdom does not mean rejecting wisdom altogether, for he insists that “among the mature we do impart wisdom” (v 6), but it is a wisdom that does not belong to “this age or the rulers of this age,” whose power and values are already passing away. This wisdom is God’s, long hidden and now revealed, a “secret and hidden wisdom of God” (v 7) centered on Christ crucified, which the rulers failed to recognize—“for if they had, they would not have crucified the

Lord of glory” (v 8)—demonstrating that true understanding is not achieved by intellect, status, or authority. Paul explains that this wisdom can only be known because “God has revealed it to us through the Spirit” (v 10), since the Spirit alone searches “even the depths of God” and grants access to what human reasoning cannot penetrate. This is why the “natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God” (v 14); the problem is not lack of information but lack of spiritual capacity, because divine truth must be spiritually discerned. By contrast, believers have received “the Spirit who is from God” (v 12), enabling them to understand “the things freely given us by God,” culminating in Paul’s astonishing claim that those in Christ possess “the mind of Christ” (v 16). Paul is not flattering the Corinthians but redefining maturity as Spirit-enabled alignment with the crucified Christ rather than Corinthian confidence in human wisdom.

Redemptive-historically, this passage locates the church within the climactic moment of God’s saving plan, where hidden purposes are unveiled not to the powerful but to those united to Christ by the Spirit, fulfilling the promise that God Himself would teach His people. Hermeneutical nugget for Scripture and life: notice how Paul explains misunderstanding as a spiritual issue rather than an intellectual one, teaching us that Scripture is rightly grasped only through God’s self-disclosure by the Spirit, so today, when we are tempted to treat biblical truth as something we master rather than something we receive, this passage calls us to humility and dependence, reminding us that thinking like Christians means submitting our instincts, values, and judgments to the mind of Christ revealed by the Spirit.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Mon – Daniel 2:19-23, 27-30, 44-47
- Tue – Isaiah 40:12-14, 25-31
- Wed – Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27
- Thu – John 14:16-17, 25-26; 16:12-15
- Fri – Romans 8:5-9; Philippians 2:1-11
- Sat – Ephesians 1:15-23
- Sun – 1 Corinthians 3:1-9 (“You Are Still Of The Flesh”)

Life Group Summary (Especially For Leaders)

1 Corinthians 2:6-16 shows that Paul has not rejected wisdom altogether; he has rejected worldly wisdom and replaced it with God's wisdom revealed in Christ through the Spirit. What was once hidden in God's redemptive plan has now been disclosed, but only the Spirit enables people to receive and discern it rightly. The natural person remains blind to the gospel's true meaning, while believers are enabled to understand the things freely given by God and to share the mind of Christ. The key emphasis for your Life Group should be this: true maturity is not sounding impressive, but learning to see all of life through the Spirit-revealed wisdom of the crucified Christ.

Life Group Questions

- (1) What does Paul mean by saying he speaks wisdom "among the mature," and how is that wisdom different from the wisdom of this age?
- (2) How do vv 7-9 show that God's saving wisdom was planned long before the rulers of this age acted against Christ?
- (3) Why does Paul say only the Spirit can truly reveal and teach the things of God?
- (4) What does the contrast between the "natural person" and the "spiritual person" teach us about why people respond so differently to the gospel?

- (5) Where do you most feel tempted to evaluate life, ministry, or truth by worldly categories rather than by Christ's wisdom?
- (6) Share one area where you need the Spirit to reshape your thinking this week, and pray for one another to grow in the mind of Christ.

Kids Lessons

Early Childhood

Learn The Lesson: We cannot understand God's truth by ourselves. The Holy Spirit helps God's people know that Jesus is wise, good, and true.

Engage Your Child: Cover a flashlight with a cloth so the light is dim, then remove the cloth so the light shines clearly. Explain that without God's help we do not see clearly, but the Holy Spirit helps us understand what is true about Jesus.

Ask The Question: Who helps us understand God's truth?

Deposit The Word: 1 Corinthians 1:9 – "God [point upward] is faithful [nod firmly and place hand over heart], by whom you were called [beckon toward yourself] into the fellowship [link hands together] of his Son [point upward, then outward], Jesus Christ [make a small cross with your forearms or hands] our Lord [point upward with reverence]."

Elementary

Learn The Lesson: Paul teaches that God's wisdom cannot be discovered by human cleverness. The Holy Spirit reveals God's truth and helps believers understand what God has freely given in Christ. To have "the mind of Christ" means learning to think according to Jesus' wisdom rather than the world's wisdom.

Engage Your Child: Make two columns labeled “Worldly Thinking” and “Christ’s Thinking.” List examples like pride vs humility, showing off vs serving, and selfishness vs love. Talk about how the Spirit teaches Christians to think differently because they belong to Jesus.

Ask The Questions:

1. What does it mean to have “the mind of Christ”?
2. Why can’t people understand God’s truth without the Spirit?
3. How should Jesus change the way we think and act?

Deposit The Word: See above.

Aug 2, 2026 – Week 7 – “You Are Still Of The Flesh” (1 Corinthians 3:1-9)

Main Passage: 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

1 But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, 3 for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? 4 For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not being merely human? 5 What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 8 He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

Exegetical Focus

- Paul calls the Corinthians “brothers” and “infants in Christ,” showing they are true believers, yet their jealousy and strife reveal fleshly immaturity rather than Spirit-shaped maturity.
- The milk/solid food imagery does not imply a secret higher gospel but the need to digest the same gospel of Christ crucified more deeply and apply it across all of life.
- Paul’s agricultural metaphor relativizes leaders: Paul plants, Apollos waters, but God alone gives growth; therefore ministers are servants, and the church is God’s field and building.

Theological Principles

- Spiritual maturity is measured not by gifts, knowledge, or preferred leaders, but by Spirit-shaped humility, unity, and obedience flowing from the gospel (Galatians 5:22-26; James 3:13-18).
- God sovereignly uses appointed servants, but He alone creates spiritual life and growth, excluding all human boasting in leaders, methods, or ministry success (Psalm 127:1; John 15:5; 2 Corinthians 4:7).

- The church belongs to God, not to its leaders or members, so both pastors and people must submit to God's ownership, evaluation, and purposes (Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:4-5).

Redemptive-Historical Significance

- The Corinthians' fleshly immaturity shows the already/not-yet tension: they possess the Spirit of the new age but must still put off old Adamic patterns (Romans 8:5-14; Galatians 5:16-25).
- God's field imagery continues the Old Testament picture of God cultivating His people, now fulfilled in the church as His new covenant planting in Christ (Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 24:6; Ezekiel 36:9-10).
- God's building imagery anticipates the church as His Spirit-indwelt temple, built on Christ and called to holy unity rather than worldly division (1 Corinthians 3:10-17; Ephesians 2:20-22).

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Sermon Notes

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Paul confronts the Corinthians with a diagnosis that cuts against their self-perception, telling them plainly, “you are still of the flesh” (v 3), because jealousy and strife reveal that, despite their gifts and confidence, they continue to think in merely human categories rather than according to the logic of the gospel. Though they see themselves as mature, their behavior shows that they are still spiritual “infants in Christ” (v 1), unable to digest solid food because they have not yet learned to locate growth where it truly comes from. Their factional slogans—“I follow Paul,” “I follow Apollos” (v 4)—expose how deeply Corinthian status instincts still shape their imagination, turning servants of God into competing sources of identity. Paul deliberately reframes ministry roles to dismantle this thinking: he planted, Apollos watered, “but God gave the growth” (v 6), insisting that neither the planter nor the waterer “is anything” (v 7) apart from God’s sovereign action. The point is not to belittle ministry but to restore proper perspective, for servants are “God’s fellow workers” (v 9), assigned roles within a work that belongs entirely to Him. Paul is not denying responsibility or effort but stripping away any notion that growth can be claimed, measured, or managed by human allegiance. Redemptive-historically, this passage echoes Scripture’s consistent witness that fruitfulness belongs to God alone, reminding the church that the new creation grows not by human ingenuity but by divine power at work

through appointed means. Hermeneutical nugget for Scripture and life: notice how Paul interprets visible division as evidence of misplaced trust, teaching us that Scripture evaluates maturity by dependence on God rather than attachment to leaders, so today, when we are tempted to equate growth with personalities, programs, or platforms, this passage calls us back to gospel realism, reminding us that true growth is God's work from beginning to end, and that learning to live as citizens of Christ's kingdom means trusting the King to do what only He can do.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Mon – Galatians 5:13-26
- Tue – James 3:13-18
- Wed – Psalm 127:1-2; John 15:1-8
- Thu – Isaiah 5:1-7; Ezekiel 36:9-10
- Fri – Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:4-5
- Sat – Mark 4:26-29
- Sun – 1 Corinthians 3:10-17 (“Let Each One Take Care How He Builds”)

Life Group Summary (Especially For Leaders)

In 1 Corinthians 3:1-9, Paul rebukes the Corinthians because their jealousy, strife, and leader-centered factions reveal fleshly immaturity. Though they truly belong to Christ and have received the Spirit, they are still behaving like the old city rather than citizens of Christ's kingdom. Paul reframes leaders like himself and Apollos as servants assigned by the Lord, not rivals worthy of allegiance. The church belongs to God: He assigns the workers, gives the growth, evaluates the labor, and owns the field and building. This passage calls us to repent of comparison, consumerism, and personality-driven faith, and to pursue humble unity under Christ.

Life Group Questions

- (1) What evidence does Paul give that the Corinthians are still “of the flesh” in verses 1-4?

- (2) Why are jealousy and strife such serious evidence of spiritual immaturity?
- (3) How does Paul reframe the roles of himself and Apollos in verses 5-7?
- (4) What does it mean practically that God alone “gave the growth”?
- (5) Where are Christians today tempted to treat leaders, churches, or ministries like status-markers?
- (6) Share one area where you need greater humility or unity, and pray for God to grow His church through us.

Kids Lessons

Early Childhood

Learn The Lesson: Paul told the church that fighting and jealousy showed they needed to grow up in Jesus. God’s people should not argue about who is best. God gives the growth, and the church belongs to Him.

Engage Your Child: Plant a seed in a cup or look at a plant outside. Talk about how people can water plants, but only God makes them grow.

Ask The Question: Who makes God's people grow?

Deposit The Word: 1 Corinthians 1:9 – “God [point upward] is faithful [nod firmly and place hand over heart], by whom you were called [beckon toward yourself] into the fellowship [link hands together] of his Son [point upward, then outward], Jesus Christ [make a small cross with your forearms or hands] our Lord [point upward with reverence].”

Elementary

Learn The Lesson: The Corinthians thought they were spiritually mature, but their jealousy and arguments showed they were acting like spiritual babies. Paul reminded them that leaders are servants, the church belongs to God, and only God gives spiritual growth.

Engage Your Child: Draw a garden with workers planting and watering. Then write “God gives the growth” above it. Talk about pastors, teachers, and parents as servants God uses, while God alone changes hearts.

Ask The Questions:

1. What showed that the Corinthians were still immature?
2. Why should Christians not divide over favorite leaders?
3. What does Paul mean when he says God gives the growth?

Deposit The Word: See above.

Aug 9, 2026 – Week 8 – “Let Each One Take Care How He Builds” (1 Corinthians 3:10-17)

Main Passage: 1 Corinthians 3:10-17

10 According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. 11 For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— 13 each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. 16 Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

Exegetical Focus

- 1 Corinthians 3:10-11 establishes Christ alone as the covenantal foundation of the church, with Paul's architectural imagery emphasizing both apostolic stewardship and the impossibility of any alternative saving foundation.
- 1 Corinthians 3:12-15 contrasts enduring and combustible building materials to portray Christ's future evaluation of ministry quality, distinguishing eternal reward from justification while exposing shallow, worldly ministry methods.
- 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 identifies the gathered church corporately as God's holy temple, warning that those who corrupt Christ's church through division or false wisdom invite divine judgment.

Theological Principles

- Christ alone is the exclusive foundation of salvation and covenant identity; no human wisdom, personality, institution, or religious achievement can replace Him (Isaiah 28:16; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:20).

- God evaluates believers' works according to faithfulness and truth rather than worldly standards of success, requiring reverent stewardship in ministry and life (Psalm 127:1; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 22:12).
- The gathered church is holy because God dwells within His people by the Spirit, demanding unity, doctrinal fidelity, and covenantal holiness among believers (Ezekiel 37:27; Ephesians 2:21-22; 1 Peter 2:5).

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Redemptive-Historical Significance

- Temple theology progresses from Eden and the old covenant sanctuary structures to Christ and His Spirit-indwelt church as God's dwelling place among His redeemed people (Exodus 40:34-38; John 2:19-21; Revelation 21:3).
- The warning against corrupting the temple reflects covenant holiness themes seen throughout Scripture, now intensified because God's new covenant people collectively embody His dwelling place (Leviticus 10:1-3; 2 Corinthians 6:16).
- Christ fulfills the cornerstone and temple promises anticipated in the Old Testament, building one holy people from every nation through His gospel and Spirit (Isaiah 28:16; Zechariah 6:12-13; Ephesians 2:11-22).

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Sermon Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Paul presses the Corinthians to move beyond partisan thinking about leaders and to reckon with the seriousness of life and ministry built on Christ, warning, “Let each one take care how he builds upon it” (v 10), because while the foundation is fixed, the superstructure is not. Christ alone is “the foundation” (v 11), and no alternative can support God’s people, but what believers construct on that foundation—teaching, priorities, values, ministry labor—varies dramatically in quality and durability. Paul uses stark imagery to expose the difference: some build with “gold, silver, precious stones,” others with “wood, hay, straw” (v 12), and the distinction will not remain hidden, because “the Day will disclose it” when God’s purifying fire tests “what sort of work each one has done” (v 13). The issue is not whether a person belongs to Christ, but whether their labor aligns with the reality of Christ’s holiness and lordship, for careless building does real damage even if salvation itself is not lost (v 15). Paul then

intensifies the warning by reminding them of who they are together: “You are God’s temple, and God’s Spirit dwells in you” (v 16), meaning the church is not a neutral space for experimentation or ego-driven ministry. To corrupt God’s temple through destructive teaching or divisive ambition is no small matter, for “God will destroy” the one who persists in such ruinous work (v 17), language meant to sober the church, not to frighten tender consciences but to expose the gravity of undermining God’s dwelling place. Redemptive-historically, Paul situates the church as the fulfillment of God’s dwelling with His people, no longer localized in stone but embodied in a Spirit-indwelt community purchased by Christ, making the holiness of the church a covenantal concern. Hermeneutical nugget for Scripture and life: notice how Paul distinguishes foundation from faithfulness, teaching us that Scripture calls believers to evaluate not only what we believe but how we live and labor in light of that belief, so today, when ministry is treated casually or measured by visibility rather than faithfulness, this passage calls us to sober joy, reminding us that what we build on Christ truly matters, because God Himself will one day reveal the worth of every work done in His name.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Mon – Isaiah 28:14-17; Matthew 7:24-27
- Tue – 1 Corinthians 1:18-31
- Wed – Psalm 127:1-2; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10
- Thu – Ephesians 2:11-22; 1 Peter 2:4-8
- Fri – Ezekiel 37:24-28; Revelation 21:1-7
- Sat – 2 Timothy 2:19-21
- Sun – 1 Corinthians 3:18-4:5 (“Let No One Deceive Himself”)

Life Group Summary (Especially For Leaders)

1 Corinthians 3:10-17 teaches that Christ alone is the foundation of God’s church, and every believer and leader must take care how they build upon Him. Paul distinguishes the security of salvation from the seriousness of faithful service: God will test the quality of each person’s work on the Day. The church is not a human platform or ministry experiment; it is God’s holy temple, where His Spirit dwells. The key emphasis for your Life Group should be that gospel ministry and church life must be built with

reverence, truth, holiness, and unity, because God cares deeply about what is built on Christ and how His church is treated.

Life Group Questions

- (1) What does Paul mean when he says no foundation can be laid except Jesus Christ?

- (2) Why does Paul contrast lasting materials with wood, hay, and straw when describing work built on Christ?

- (3) How should the coming “Day of testing” shape the way Christians serve and lead today?

- (4) What does it mean that the gathered church is now God’s temple?

- (5) Where do you see modern churches tempted toward worldly wisdom or personality-driven ministry?

- (6) What is one specific way you can pursue unity, holiness, and faithful gospel-centered building this week, and how can this group pray for you?

Kids Lessons

Early Childhood

Learn The Lesson: The church belongs to Jesus, and Jesus wants His people to build their lives on Him like a strong foundation for a house.

Engage Your Child: Build two small towers—one on a firm surface and one on a soft pillow or blanket. Show how the weak foundation falls easily while the strong one stands firm.

Ask The Question: Who is the strong foundation for our lives?

Deposit The Word: 1 Corinthians 1:9 – “God [point upward] is faithful [nod firmly and place hand over heart], by whom you were called [beckon toward yourself] into the fellowship [link hands together] of his Son [point upward, then outward], Jesus Christ [make a small cross with your forearms or hands] our Lord [point upward with reverence].”

Elementary

Learn The Lesson: Paul teaches that Jesus Christ is the only true foundation for God’s church. God cares how we build our lives and serve others because His people together are His holy temple.

Engage Your Child: Gather different materials (blocks, paper, straw, tape, rocks) and discuss which would last longest in a storm or fire. Talk about how faithfulness, truth, and obedience last forever with God.

Ask The Questions:

1. Why is Jesus called the church's foundation?
2. What kinds of things does God want us to build into our lives?
3. Why should Christians treat the church and one another as holy?

Deposit The Word: See above.

Aug 16, 2026 – Week 9 – “Let No One Deceive Himself” (1 Corinthians 3:18-4:5)

Main Passage: 1 Corinthians 3:18-4:5

18 Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, “He catches the wise in their craftiness,” 20 and again, “The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.” 21 So let no one boast in men. For 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 Christ's, and Christ is God's. ... 1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. 4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. 5 Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

Exegetical Focus

- Paul's opening command, “Let no one deceive himself” (3:18), shows that Corinth's problem is not only wrong behavior but wrong self-assessment. They think they are wise, but their standards are still shaped by “this age.”
- “All things are yours” (3:21) reverses the insecurity behind factionalism. The Corinthians do not need leaders as identity markers because they already belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God (3:21-23).
- In 4:1-5, Paul reframes leadership as stewardship. Apostles are “servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God” (4:1), and the central requirement is faithfulness before the Lord, not public impressiveness.

Theological Principles

- Antithesis/Noetic Effects Of Sin: Worldly wisdom distorts spiritual self-understanding, so believers must not evaluate maturity, ministry, or worth according to the fallen standards of “this age.”
- Union With Christ/Communion Of Saints: Boasting in leaders reflects insecurity and forgetfulness of what believers already possess in Christ; because the church belongs to Christ, leaders are gifts for service, not identity markers.
- Divine Judgment/Coram Deo: God alone is qualified to judge the heart and give final commendation, because only He can disclose hidden motives (4:5); the church lives before His face, not before the final court of human opinion.

Redemptive-Historical Significance

- God has always opposed false wisdom and exposed human pride, and Paul shows this by citing the Old Testament’s witness against worldly cleverness (cf Job 5:13; Psalm 94:11).
- Final judgment belongs to the Lord, so the church must resist living for premature human verdicts and wait for God’s true assessment (cf Ecclesiastes 12:14; Romans 14:10-12).
- This passage advances the biblical movement from human boasting to Christ-centered belonging: believers do not need status through leaders because they belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

Sermon Notes

[illegible]

Hermeneutical-Devotional Commentary

Paul now targets the engine driving Corinthian status-thinking—self-deception—warning, “Let no one deceive himself” (3:18), because it is possible to belong to Christ and still think according to the patterns of the old city. In a culture that prizes being “wise in this age” (3:18), Paul issues a shocking reversal: the path to true wisdom is to “become a fool,” not by abandoning reason but by surrendering the pride that resists the cross-shaped wisdom of God. Scripture itself testifies that “the wisdom of this world is folly with God” (3:19), for God “catches the wise in their craftiness” and knows that “the thoughts of the wise are futile” (3:19-20), exposing how human cleverness cannot secure standing before Him. The practical outcome is decisive:

“Let no one boast in men” (3:21), because party spirit is simply pride redirected through admired leaders. Paul then widens their vision with a breathtaking gospel reframe—“all things are yours” (3:21), whether leaders, life, death, present, or future (3:22)—not because the church is powerful, but because “you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s” (3:23). From there Paul explains how leaders are rightly viewed, not as status figures but “as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God” (4:1), whose defining requirement is faithfulness rather than flair (4:2). This also reshapes judgment itself: Paul minimizes human verdicts, even his own self-assessment, because the final evaluation belongs to the Lord alone, and the church is commanded, “do not pronounce judgment before the time” (4:5), until Christ returns to “bring to light the things now hidden” and reveal true motives.

Redemptive-historically, Paul trains the church to live between Christ’s reign already inaugurated and His judgment not yet publicly revealed, resisting Corinth’s hunger for immediate recognition and learning instead to endure faithfully under God’s gaze. Hermeneutical nugget for Scripture and life: notice how Paul unmask pride by exposing the standards by which we measure worth, teaching us that Scripture diagnoses misplaced judgment before correcting behavior, so today, when we feel the pull to be seen as wise, impressive, or right, this passage calls us to repent of self-deception and to live for the only verdict that finally matters—the Lord’s.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Mon – Job 5:8-16
- Tue – Psalm 94:8-15
- Wed – Jeremiah 9:23-24
- Thu – Matthew 7:1-5
- Fri – Romans 14:10-12
- Sat – Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24
- Sun – 1 Corinthians 4:6-21 (“The Kingdom Of God Does Not Consist In Talk”)

Life Group Summary (Especially For Leaders)

1 Corinthians 3:18-4:5 confronts the self-deception that happens when believers evaluate themselves, their leaders, and their church by worldly standards of wisdom, status, and approval.

Paul calls the Corinthians to abandon the desire to appear “wise in this age” and to become fools according to the world so they may become truly wise before God. Their boasting in leaders makes no sense because all things are theirs only because they belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God. Paul then reframes Christian leadership: apostles are not celebrities or factional figureheads, but “servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God,” required above all to be faithful. The passage pushes the church away from premature judgment and toward humble patience, because the Lord alone will expose hidden motives and give true commendation at the proper time.

Life Group Questions

- (1) What kinds of “wisdom of this world” are most tempting for Christians to admire, imitate, or use as a measure of maturity?

- (2) Why does Paul say a person must “become a fool” in order to become wise? How does that connect back to the word of the cross?

- (3) How does “all things are yours... and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s” challenge the insecurity that leads people to boast in leaders?

- (4) What is the difference between honoring faithful leaders and treating leaders as identity markers or status symbols?

- (5) Why is it dangerous to “pronounce judgment before the time,” especially when we cannot see the hidden motives of the heart?
- (6) Where are you most tempted to live for present approval rather than the Lord’s final commendation, and how can your group pray for you this week?

Kids Lessons

Early Childhood

Learn The Lesson: Paul warned the church not to trick themselves by thinking like the world. The world often thinks pride and showing off are wise, but God’s wisdom teaches us to be humble, trust Christ, and remember that God sees our hearts.

Engage Your Child: Hold up a mirror and ask, “Can this mirror show what is in your heart?” Then explain that people can see the outside, but God sees the heart.

Ask The Question: Who is the only Judge who can see our hearts?

Deposit The Word: 1 Corinthians 1:9 – “God [point upward] is faithful [nod firmly and place hand over heart], by whom you were called [beckon toward yourself] into the fellowship [link hands together] of his Son [point upward, then outward], Jesus Christ [make a small cross with your forearms or hands] our Lord [point upward with reverence].”

Elementary

Learn The Lesson: The Corinthians were tempted to think they were wise because they followed impressive leaders and cared too much about what people thought. Paul reminds them that

worldly wisdom is foolish before God, leaders are only servants of Christ, and the Lord alone gives the final judgment.

Engage Your Child: Make two columns labeled “What People See” and “What God Sees.” List things people notice, like clothes, words, grades, or talents, and then talk about how God also sees motives, faith, pride, humility, and love.

Ask The Questions:

1. What does Paul mean when he says not to deceive ourselves?
2. Why should we not boast in people, leaders, or ourselves?
3. Why is it comforting and sobering that the Lord will reveal the hidden things of the heart?

Deposit The Word: See above.

Aug 23, 2026 – Week 10 – “The Kingdom Of God Does Not Consist In Talk” (1 Corinthians 4:6-21)

Main Passage: 1 Corinthians 4:6-21

6 I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another. 7 For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? 8 Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings! And would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you! 9 For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. 10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. 11 To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, 12 and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; 13 when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things. 14 I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. 15 For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. 16 I urge you, then, be imitators of me. 17 That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church. 18 Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. 19 But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. 20 For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. 21 What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?

Exegetical Focus

- Paul's question, "What do you have that you did not receive?" (v 7), exposes boasting as theological forgetfulness. Every gift

has been received from God, so grace cannot become a platform for superiority.

- Paul's irony in verse 8 exposes the Corinthians' false sense of arrival. They are acting as though they are already full, rich, and reigning, while Paul insists that life in the present age still bears the marks of the cross.
- The apostolic suffering described in verses 9-13 and the final contrast between "talk" and "power" (vv 19-20) show that true kingdom ministry follows the crucified Christ rather than Corinthian triumphalism.

Theological Principles

- Sola Gratia/Gift And Grace: Grace received must kill boasting, not feed it; every gift, ability, and spiritual advantage is received from God and must be used with gratitude rather than superiority.
- Theology Of The Cross/Already-Not Yet: Kingdom power is demonstrated through transformed character, not verbal confidence, rhetorical impressiveness, or public dominance; believers truly belong to Christ's kingdom now, but they still follow the crucified King through humility and endurance.
- Cruciform Authority/Pastoral Admonition: True spiritual authority is expressed through suffering service, loving correction, and humble endurance rather than status-display; faithful leaders admonish as fathers, not as performers protecting a platform.

Redemptive-Historical Significance

- God's servants have often appeared weak and dishonored by worldly standards, a pattern fulfilled climactically in Christ and continued in apostolic ministry (cf Isaiah 53:3; 2 Corinthians 4:7-12).
- Entrance into God's kingdom comes through suffering and endurance, not immediate triumph, so the Corinthians must not confuse present hardship with absence of kingdom power (cf Acts 14:22).
- This passage prepares for the next section by showing that arrogance in theology eventually becomes arrogance in morality; the same pride that boasts in status and gifts will soon tolerate scandalous sin in the church.

Sermon Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Hermeneutical-Devotional Commentary

Paul presses his argument home by exposing how deeply Corinthian triumphalism has infected the church's imagination, applying everything he has said "to myself and Apollos" (v 6) so that they might learn "not to go beyond what is written," that is, not to evaluate leaders or themselves by standards foreign to Scripture. Their arrogance is unmasked by one devastating question: "What do you have that you did not receive?" (v 7), because boasting always forgets grace and treats gifts as achievements. With biting irony, Paul mirrors their self-perception—"Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich!" (v 8)—exposing how they are acting as if the kingdom has fully arrived and suffering is no longer part of faithful discipleship. He then contrasts this imagined glory with the lived reality of apostolic ministry, where God has put His servants "on display," hungry, weak, dishonored, persecuted, and treated "like the scum of the world" (vv 9-13), revealing that gospel power does not look like Corinthian success but like cruciform endurance. Yet Paul's tone is pastoral, not punitive; he writes "not to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children" (v 14), reminding them that while they may have many instructors, they have one spiritual father who brought them the gospel (v 15). His call, "Be imitators of me" (v 16), is not a bid for personal loyalty but an invitation to embrace a cross-shaped pattern of life that reflects Christ Himself. Paul closes with a sober reminder that the kingdom of God "does not consist in talk but in power" (v 20), a power revealed not in rhetorical dominance or social prestige but in transformed lives shaped by humility, suffering, and obedience. Redemptive-historically, Paul is recalibrating the church to live in the overlap of the ages, where Christ reigns but His people still bear the marks of the cross, refusing the illusion that glory can be separated from suffering. Hermeneutical nugget for Scripture and life: notice how Paul uses irony and contrast to expose false narratives of success, teaching us that Scripture redefines power by the pattern of Christ's own life, so today, when Christianity is tempted to present itself as impressive, dominant, or culturally victorious, this passage calls us back to gospel realism, reminding us that

true power is displayed where grace produces humility, endurance, and faithful love.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Mon – Isaiah 53:1-12
- Tue – Matthew 20:20-28
- Wed – Acts 14:19-23
- Thu – 2 Corinthians 4:7-12
- Fri – Philippians 2:1-11
- Sat – 2 Corinthians 12:7-10
- Sun – Psalm 67 (“Let All The Peoples Praise You”)

Life Group Summary (Especially For Leaders)

1 Corinthians 4:6-21 brings Section 1 to its climax by exposing the Corinthians’ arrogance and false sense of spiritual arrival. They are acting as if they are already rich, already reigning, and already beyond the weakness of the cross. Paul answers with sharp irony, reminding them that everything they have was received as a gift, so boasting is irrational and ungrateful. He then contrasts their triumphal self-image with the apostolic pattern of suffering, dishonor, endurance, and humility. Paul does not write as a detached critic but as a spiritual father who loves them enough to warn them. His call to “be imitators of me” is not a call to personality loyalty but to cruciform discipleship. The kingdom of God is not proved by impressive talk, spiritual swagger, or public dominance, but by God’s power producing humility, endurance, holiness, and obedience.

Life Group Questions

- (1) How does Paul’s question, “What do you have that you did not receive?” expose the foolishness of pride and boasting?
- (2) Why does Paul use irony when he says, “Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich!” What false story is he confronting?

- (3) How does Paul's description of apostolic suffering challenge worldly assumptions about power, success, and spiritual maturity?
- (4) What does Paul mean when he tells the Corinthians to imitate him? What is he calling them to imitate?
- (5) Where do Christians today confuse impressive talk, strong opinions, or public confidence with real kingdom power?
- (6) What would it look like for our church or group to display the power of God through humility, endurance, love, and obedience this week?

Kids Lessons

Early Childhood

Learn The Lesson: Some people in Corinth thought being important meant talking big and looking strong. Paul showed them that God's power looks like following Jesus with humility, love, and obedience.

Engage Your Child: Have your child say, "I can help!" Then have them actually help with a simple task. Talk about how God wants more than big words; He wants hearts that obey Him.

Ask The Question: Does God's kingdom consist in talk or in power?

Deposit The Word: 1 Corinthians 1:9 – “God [point upward] is faithful [nod firmly and place hand over heart], by whom you were called [beckon toward yourself] into the fellowship [link hands together] of his Son [point upward, then outward], Jesus Christ [make a small cross with your forearms or hands] our Lord [point upward with reverence].”

Elementary

Learn The Lesson: The Corinthians thought they were strong, wise, and important, but Paul showed them that real kingdom power does not look like showing off. Paul's life looked weak to the world, but it showed the pattern of Jesus: humility, suffering, love, endurance, and obedience.

Engage Your Child: Make two lists: “Big Talk” and “God's Power.” Under “Big Talk,” list things like bragging, showing off, or trying to look important. Under “God's Power,” list things like serving, forgiving, obeying, enduring, and loving others.

Ask The Questions:

1. Why does Paul ask, “What do you have that you did not receive?”
2. How did Paul's weakness and suffering show the way of Jesus?
3. What is one way you can show God's power through obedience instead of just words?

Deposit The Word: See above.



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