

# 1 Corinthians 1 Commentary

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1 CORINTHIANS - PROBLEMS OF A LOCAL CHURCH  
Click chart to enlarge  
Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission

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**FROM CHART: Note 2 major divisions:**

- **FIRST DIVISION** - Chapters 1-6 = Problems of Congregation - Divisions & Depravities,
- **SECOND DIVISION** - Chapters 7-16 = Personal Problems, Worship Problems

**KEY VERSES** - 1 Corinthians 1:10 (divisions), 1 Corinthians 7:1 (personal and corporate problems), 1 Corinthians 15:57

[Ray Stedman](#) feels that 1 Corinthians 1:9+ is "the key verse of First Corinthians. The rest of the letter centers around it. It is a statement that God had called them to a very important relationship, and, by implication, here at the very beginning of this letter we learn that this is the reason for all of the problems in the Corinthian

church. They had not understood the implications of their **calling**, and the relationship they personally and individually had with Jesus Christ Himself."

**PURPOSE:** Paul's purposes for writing the Corinthians were several. (1) His first purpose was to deal with several moral problems and the divisions that had formed as people had divided into fan-clubs and were proclaiming themselves followers of Paul, Apollos, Peter or Christ (1 Cor 1:10). (2) His second reason was to deal with several questions that had been asked in a letter the Corinthians had sent to him (1 Cor 7:1). (3) A third purpose that appears throughout the book is Paul's defense of his apostolic authority. ([Paul Apple's Commentary](#) - 445 pages - recommended)

#### **OUTLINE of 1 Corinthians 1:1-2:5 - Thomas Constable**

- 1 Cor 1:1-9 Introduction
- 1 Cor 1:10-17 The manifestation of the problem

#### **THE GOSPEL AS CONTRACTION OF HUMAN WISDOM - 1 Cor 1:18-2:5**

- 1 Cor 1:18-25 The Folly of a Crucified Messiah
- 1 Cor 1:26-31 The Folly of the Corinthian Believers
- 1 Cor 2:1-5 The Folly of Paul's Preaching

[D Edmond Hiebert](#) - WE POSSESS more detailed information about the actual conditions within the church at Corinth than about any other church in the New Testament. The picture given us of this church shows that even apostolic churches were not perfect churches. Our picture of the Corinthian church is drawn, not by an enemy of the church, but by the founder of that church himself, as contained in his two epistles to that church which have been preserved for us....Corinth was a wicked city, even as large cities in the Empire went. The term "**a Corinthian**" meant a profligate, and "**to Corinthianize**" (*Korinthiazomai* lit., to act the Corinthian) meant to engage in prostitution (to practice fornication). In the Greek plays Corinthians were usually represented as drunkards.

**Carson** on 1 Cor 2:1-5 - Now comes an illustration of the insufficiency of secular rhetoric and wisdom. **And I**, in the original text links this passage with the last statement about boasting only in the Lord (1:31). Vs 1–2 and 3–4 both begin with '**and I**' and describe Paul's activities, in this case, his original entry to Corinth. Orators followed certain well-established conventions when they entered a city. They were expected to give flowery speeches in praise of the city and their own personal achievements. They did this in order to establish their reputation and reap financial rewards as political orators and teachers of the rich. ([New Bible Commentary](#))

**Henry Alford** (see his biography) in his introduction - "This Epistle ranks perhaps the foremost of all as to sublimity and earnest impassioned eloquence. Of the former, the description of the simplicity of the Gospel in 1 Cor 2:1-16.—the concluding apostrophe of 1 Cor 3:16 to the end—the same in 1 Cor. 4:9 to the end—the reminiscence of the shortness of the time 1 Cor 7:29–31—the whole argument in ch. 15 are examples unsurpassed in Scripture itself; and of the latter 1 Cor 4:8–15, and the whole of 1 Cor 9, while the [panegyric](#) of love in 1 Cor 13 stands a pure and perfect gem, perhaps the noblest assemblage of thoughts in beautiful language extant in this world. About the whole Epistle there is a character of lofty and sustained solemnity, an absence of tortuousness of construction, and an apologetic plainness, which contrast remarkably with the personal portions of the second Epistle." ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

[Word in Life Study Bible](#) entitles Corinthians "A Collection of Sinners" asking "Have you ever sighed, "I wish my church could be more like the church of the first century"? Perhaps you have in mind a small, closely knit community of believers who are radically committed to each other and, despite their number, are turning the community upside down with the gospel. What an exciting ideal! Unfortunately, the reality of the first churches probably wouldn't match it. The church at Corinth is a good case in point. It had several excellent teachers and leaders, yet it struggled with the same problems many churches face today. The Corinthian church was an example of what churches look like, made up as they are of sinners saved by grace. Depending on your expectations, the two Corinthian letters can make for encouraging reading. They point to the fact that there is no instant spirituality. Discipleship is a process. So if you and other believers around you sometimes seem less than Christlike, take heart! The Corinthians have walked this path before you. Despite their shortcomings, they held a special place in the heart of those who knew them best and helped them get started in the faith. To read 1 & 2 Corinthians is to read someone else's mail. In contrast to Romans, these letters of Paul are very personal, and perhaps for that reason, very enlightening."

**1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,**

Wuest - Paul, a divinely-summoned and divinely-appointed ambassador belonging to Christ Jesus, an

ambassador by reason of God's determining will, and Sosthenes our brother, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:1 From Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Sosthenes, our brother,

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:1 This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and from our brother Sosthenes.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes,

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:1 Πα λος κλητ ς π στολος Χριστο ησο δι θελ ματος θεο κα σωσθ νης δελφ ς

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, a called apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God, and Sosthenes the brother,

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, called as an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will, and Sosthenes our brother:

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and Sosthenes, our brother,

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:1 From Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and from Sosthenes, our brother in the Christian faith.

- **called:** Ro 1:1 Ga 2:7,8
- **an:** 1Co 3:9 1Cor 9:1-2 1Cor 15:9 Lu 6:13 Joh 20:21 Ac 1:2,25,26 22:21 Ro 1:5 2Co 11:5 12:12 Ga 1:1 Eph 4:11 1Ti 1:1 2:7
- **through:** 1Co 6:16,17 Joh 15:16 2Co 1:1 Ga 1:15,16 Eph 1:1 Col 1:1
- **Sosthenes:** Ac 18:17
- See background on this letter
- John MacArthur's [excellent introduction to 1 Corinthians](#)
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Corinthians 9:1-2+ Am I not free? Am I not an **apostle**? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? 2 If to others I am not an **apostle**, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my **apostleship** in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:9-10+ For I am the least of the **apostles**, and not fit to be called (not divine calling but simply being designated as) an **apostle**, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the [grace](#) of God I am what I am, and His [grace](#) toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the [grace](#) of God with me.

Ro 1:1+ Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, **called as an apostle**, set apart for the gospel of God,

2 Timothy 1:1+ Paul, an **apostle** of Christ Jesus **by the will of God**, according to the promise of life (cf 2 Ti 1:10+) in Christ Jesus,

Galatians 1:1+ Paul, an **apostle** (not sent from men nor through [dia](#) the agency of man, but through [dia](#) Jesus Christ and God the Father, Who raised Him from the dead)

Corinth was famous for its ornate architecture - Corinthians columns. The paganism and sensuality of the city led to the "coining" of a word (as noted above) that represented it all - "to Corinthianize," a word that closely resembles the contemporary expression "Let's Party!"

**Boyer:** If Paul were to write a letter to the evangelical, Bible-believing churches of late twentieth century America, I believe it would be much like I Corinthians. Their world was like our world: the same thirst for intellectualism, the same permissiveness toward moral standards, the same fascination for the spectacular. And their church was like our churches: proud, affluent, materialistic, fiercely eager for intellectual and social acceptance by the world, doctrinally orthodox but morally and practically conforming to the world.

An unusual way to "outline" 1 Corinthians is by the problems Paul addresses -- there is **a problem in almost every chapter!** One writer has entitled First Corinthians "Saints Gone Wild!"

1. The Problem of Divisions in the Church (1 Cor. 1:10-13)
2. The Problem of Worldly Wisdom (1 Cor. 1:17-2:16)
3. The Problem of Carnality (1 Cor. 3:1-4)
4. The Problem of Immorality in the Church (1 Cor. 5:1-13)
5. The Problem of Bringing a Fellow Believer to Court (1 Cor. 6:1-8)
6. The Problem of Fornication (1 Cor. 6:15-20)
7. The Problem of Marriage and Divorce (1 Cor. 7:1-40)
8. The Problem of Meats Offered to Idols (1 Cor. 8:1-13)
9. The Problem of the Role Men and Women Should Have in Christ's Church (1 Cor. 11:1-17)
10. The Problem of Abusing the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:20-34)
11. The Problem of Spiritual Gifts (1 Cor. 12:1-31)
12. The Problem of a Lack of Love (1 Cor. 13:1-13)
13. The Problem of Speaking in Tongues (1 Cor. 14:1-40)
14. The Problem of Wrong Teaching About the Resurrection of the Dead (1 Cor. 15:1-58)
15. The Problem of Collecting for the Saints (1 Cor. 16:1-3) (from [Middletown Bible](#))

Church at Corinth - between 2 Seas, Adrift and Drowning in Worldliness

## PAUL'S CREDENTIALS

**Paul - Paul** follows the usual convention for secular Greek letters which routinely opened with the identification of the one writing the letter.

**Paul** ([3972](#)) is from Latin, [Paulos](#) meaning "little, small". Before his Damascus Road experience he was known by his Hebrew name **Saul** (Greek [Saulos](#)) which means "desired" or "ask" (derived from Hebrew word for "[ask](#)"). **Vincent** on **Paul** - A transcript for the Latin paulus or paullus, meaning little. It was a favorite name among the Cilicians, and the nearest approach in sound to the Hebrew Saul. Paul in the letters to Corinth - 1 Co. 1:1, 12, 13; 1 Co. 3:4, 5, 22; 1 Co. 16:21; 2 Co. 1:1; 2 Co. 10:1.

### Related Resources:

- [Who was Paul in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- Excellent in depth article on [Paul the Apostle](#).- Ralph Yarborough

**Called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God-** (cf similar introductions in 2 Cor 1:1, Eph 1:1, Col 1:1, 2 Ti 1:1) - Literally the Greek reads "Paul, called apostle" this unique opening (only found elsewhere in Ro 1:1) likely reflecting the fact that some were questioning his apostleship (see 1 Cor 9:1-2+, cf 1 Cor 4:1-5, 2 Cor 10:10). "The most faithful and useful ministers are not secure from this contempt." (M. Henry) **Robertson** quips he does not say he is a "so-called apostle but one whose apostleship is due not to himself or to men (Gal 1:1+) but to God." Note the double emphasis on his apostleship, for **called** refers to the divine call and **by the will of God** substantiates his call. Paul did not seek to be an apostle of Jesus Christ and in fact was seeking to destroy the church of Jesus Christ (Acts 9:1-5+). Paul was commissioned directly, by the Lord Jesus Himself, after His Ascension (Acts 1:9-11+), to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 9:14-15+, Acts 26:16-18+, cf Gal 1:1-5, 11-15, 16+). This was a miraculous calling, a **heavenly calling** (Heb 3:1+), a holy calling (1 Pe 1:15+). Paul is not like those apostles Jesus mentioned in Ephesus, describing those "who call themselves **apostles** and they are not," but are false. (Rev 2:2+). Regarding the **will of God** **Augustine** said "Nothing, therefore, happens unless the Omnipotent wills it to happen: He either permits it to happen, or He brings it about Himself."

**THOUGHT** - Inherent in this word **called** is that it is an INVITATION – an invitation to join God in His magnificent work of redemption through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Have you accepted His glorious invitation?

*"We don't choose what we will do for God;*

*He **invites** us to join Him where He wants to involve us."*

— Henry T. Blackaby

**John Stevenson** - Paul's apostleship was not his own idea. He did not say to himself one day, "I think that I will become an apostle." He didn't take a course in apostleship or graduate from seminary with a degree in apostling. He became (BY DIVINE CALLING) an apostle **"by the will of God."** God chose Paul to be an apostle. God took him and set him apart from the rest of the human race for a special purpose. God singled him out and gave him a special spiritual gift and commissioned him to do a special job. Maybe you are thinking that it would be nice if God had singled you out and had given you a special commission and a special purpose to fulfill. I have news for you. He has done exactly that. If you are a believer, it is because the God of the universe said to you, "I have chosen you out from the rest of the human race to do a job that only you can do. You are my special person for this special job. I created you for just this purpose." (cf Eph 2:10+) Does that sound exciting? It certainly ought to. God has placed each believer into his own special place in the body of Christ, each with his own special gift (cf 1 Pe 4:10-11+, 1 Cor 12:7+).

**THOUGHT** - Are you using the supernatural gift God has given you so that the "machinery" of the Body you are attending is functioning at full efficiency? You are one of the "cogs" in the "gears" of your local church. See this illustration of what it looks like when one of the members of the body fails to function as they should.

**Wuest** - The name **"Christ"** is the English spelling of the Greek word [Christos](#), which in turn is the translation of the Hebrew word ([mashiach/masiyah](#)) meaning "Messiah." The word "Christ" means "The Anointed One." The name "Jesus" is the English spelling of the Greek [Iesous](#), which is in turn the Greek spelling of the Hebrew word [Yehoshua/Jehoshua](#) which means "Jehovah saves." We have therefore in these two names, the Messianic office of our Lord, His deity, and His substitutionary atonement. ([Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1](#), [Volume 2](#), [Volume 3](#))

**THOUGHT** - Paul did not earn the right to be an apostle, but received it as gift of God's [grace](#). God's unmerited favor. This is a good lesson for all believers. For example, I have seen many saints who were "aint's" when it came to teaching which was *their will* but not God's. The good news is that we all have a role to play in redemption (cf 1 Pe 4:10-11+), so our desire should be to seek His will for our role in His grand drama (cf Mt 6:33+, works "God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them" = Eph 2:10+, cf Ps 37:4+). When we discover it, it is like hitting a backhand in tennis in the ["sweet spot!"](#) "Some of us could write, "pastor by the will of God" or "evangelist by the will of God" or "pray-er by the will of God" or "encourager by the will of God" or "supporter by the will of God." We all have our role to play, and God wants us to walk in it!" (Guzik) We are all in ministry so the question should resound in our ears "Am I where I am in ministry by His will or my will?" It's a question worth pondering, for apart from Him we can do absolutely nothing of eternal value (Jn 15:5, cf fruit that remains in Jn 15:16). What a sad occurrence it will be if we stand before Jesus at the Bema and discover that all our works are burned up (1 Cor 3:10-14, 15+) because they are *our* works, not *His* works!

#### **Related Resources:**

- [The Will Of God](#)

**THOUGHT** - All uses of the phrase **"by the will of God"** - only used by Paul - Rom. 1:10; Rom. 15:32; 1 Co. 1:1; 2 Co. 1:1; 2 Co. 8:5; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1. This phrase ought to be the watchword of every Christian, the **"warp and the woof (weft)"** undergirding all our daily activities, all our goals and aspirations, etc. Life is short (1 Cor 7:29+ - "time is running out" - Redeem the Time), so we should daily, prayerfully, obediently seek His will in His Word. Paul was called by His Will and thereafter ordered his steps (and stops) by His Will! And he (Paul) calls us all to **IMITATE** him (1 Cor 4:16+, 1 Cor 11:1+ - **imitate** in both is [present imperative](#) - see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)). Paul imitated Jesus (1 Cor 11:1+), Whose very food was "to do the will" of His Father Who sent Him (Jn 4:34+) (even as He Jesus had sent Paul. And even as He sends you and I out as His light into the lost world! See Mt 5:14-16+, Php 2:15+) (See also [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#))

**Robertson** on the important preposition **by** (through) - The intermediate ([dia](#) = cf [duo](#) = two) agent between Paul's not being Christ's apostle and becoming one was God's will ([thelema](#), something willed of God), God's command (1 Ti 1:1). Paul knows that he is not one of the twelve apostles, but he is on a par with them because, like them, he is chosen by God. The refusal of the Judaizers to

recognize Paul as equal to the twelve made him the more careful to claim his position. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Don't miss one of Paul's major points of emphasis in chapter 1.** Did you see it? The Name of **Christ** is found 17x in 15v in this chapter (total of 59x in 52 verses in the entire epistle)! Paul is a Christ centered preacher (1 Cor 2:2+) as should be every preacher (and teacher) of God's Word! Paul knows that "Keeping in tune with Christ keeps harmony in the Church." The saints at Corinth were more self-centered than Christ centered, and were beginning to experience divisions, so Paul gives the "antidote" by repeatedly mentioning **Christ** and later in the chapter the **Cross of Christ**. Indeed, all saints should also be Christocentric and "Crosscentric"! - 1 Co. 1:1; 1 Co. 1:2; 1 Co. 1:3; 1 Co. 1:4; 1 Co. 1:6; 1 Co. 1:7; 1 Co. 1:8; 1 Co. 1:9; 1 Co. 1:10; 1 Co. 1:12; 1 Co. 1:13; 1 Co. 1:17; 1 Co. 1:23; 1 Co. 1:24; 1 Co. 1:30.

**Hodge** - The apostleship being an office, it could not be assumed at pleasure. Appointment by competent authority was absolutely indispensable....In calling himself an apostle Paul claims divine authority derived immediately from Christ.

**Called** (2822) (**kletos** from **kaleo** = basic meaning is to call - see amplification below. See study of related word **klesis**) is a "verbal adjective" which is sometimes used as a verb and sometimes used as a noun referring to believers. **Kletos** is a "key word" in 1 Cor 1 occurring 3 times - 1 Co. 1:1; 1 Co. 1:2; 1 Co. 1:24 and **kaleo** in 1 Cor 1:9, so that one of the primary themes or subjects in chapter 1 is **what it means to be called**. Literally **kletos** means invited or welcomed and was originally used to designate those invited to a banquet (**THOUGHT** - Believers as the **Bride of Christ** are in fact invited to a banquet called the **marriage supper of the Lamb** Rev 19:7-9+). In the NT **kletos** is generally used of one who has received a calling to become a member of a select group. Believers ("those who are the **called**" Jude 1:1+, "saints by calling" 1 Cor 1:2, cf Ro 1:6-7+) have been invited by God in the proclamation of the Gospel to obtain eternal salvation in the kingdom through Christ. And at Jesus' triumphant return we will come with Him, John writing "those who are with Him are the **called** and chosen and faithful." (These are the redeemed, not angels, who will likely also return with Him - Rev 17:14+, Rev 19:14+) Paul uses the words **kaleō** (29 times), **klēsis** (8 times) and **klētos** (7 times) almost always with the sense of divine calling. Exceptions are 1 Cor. 15:9, 1 Cor. 10:27 (invite), and three quotations from the LXX: Ro 9:7 (Ge 21:12); Ro 9:25 (Hos. 2:23); and Ro 9:26 (Hos 1:10 - Mt 2:1).

**Barclay** adds the root verb **Kaleo** "is the regular verb for 'summoning' or 'calling' a person. It may be that the person is 'summoned' to an office and an honour. Paul is 'called' to be an apostle (kletos) (Ro 1.1+; 1Co 1.1). It may be that the person is 'summoned' to be given a task." **Kletos** - 10x in 10v - Matt. 22:14 ( = this is a **general call**, not the **effectual call**); Ro 1:1; Ro 1:6; Ro 1:7; Ro 8:28; 1 Co. 1:1; 1 Co. 1:2; 1 Co. 1:24; Jude 1:1; Rev. 17:14

#### Related Resources:

- [What does it mean to be called by God? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the effectual calling/call? | GotQuestions.org](#) (EFFECTUAL CALL)
- [What does "Many are called but few are chosen" in Matthew 22:14 mean? | GotQuestions.org](#) (GENERAL CALL)
- [How can I find my spiritual calling? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How can I know if I am being called to serve as a missionary? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How can I know if I am being called to preach? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Apostle** (652) **apostolos** from **apo** = from + **stello** = send forth) describes one sent forth from (**apo-**) one's presence with a special commission to represent the sender and to accomplish his work. **Apostolos** was a technical word designating an individual sent from someone else with the sender's commission, the necessary credentials, the sender's authority and the implicit responsibility to accomplish a mission or assignment. In a word an apostle is a "sent one!" As **Barclay** rightly said " A man is not what he has made himself, but what God has made him."

In its broadest sense, **apostle** can refer to all believers, because every believer is sent into the world as a witness for Christ. But the term is primarily used as a technical term, a specific and unique title for the thirteen men (the Twelve, with **Matthias** replacing **Judas**, and Paul) whom Christ personally chose and commissioned to authoritatively proclaim the Gospel and lead the early church. The thirteen apostles not only were all called directly by Jesus but all were witnesses of His resurrection, Paul having encountered Him on the **Damascus Road** after His ascension (Acts 9:1-25+). Those thirteen apostles were given direct revelation of God's Word to proclaim the Gospel authoritatively, the gift of healing, and the power to cast out demons (cf Mt 10:1-4+). By these signs their teaching authority was verified (cf. 2Co 12:12). Their teachings became the foundation of the church (Ep 2:20+), and their authority extended beyond local bodies of believers to the entire believing world.



In the present context Paul uses **apostle** in its more common specialized or restricted meaning. The authority of Paul's message did not derive from the messenger but from the Sender.

**CBC** - Seventeen individuals are called apostles, adding Paul, James (Gal 1:19), Matthias (Acts 1:26), Barnabas (Acts 14:14), and Andronicus and Junia (Rom 16:7) to the original Twelve. Such people not only were eyewitnesses to the resurrection (Acts 1:22) but preached the gospel and founded Christian communities.

**Apostolos in 1-2 Cor** - Used by Paul in First Corinthians **more than any other letter** (11x in 9v) - 1 Co. 1:1; 1 Co. 4:9; 1 Co. 9:1; 1 Co. 9:2; 1 Co. 9:5; 1 Co. 12:28; 1 Co. 12:29; 1 Co. 15:7; 1 Co. 15:9; 2 Co. 1:1; 2 Co. 8:23; 2 Co. 11:5; 2 Co. 11:13; 2 Co. 12:11; 2 Co. 12:12;

#### Related Resources:

- Excellent in depth article on [Paul the Apostle](#). - Ralph Yarborough
- Multiple dictionary articles [Paul, the Apostle](#)
- [What is an apostle? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Is God restoring the offices of apostle and prophet in the church today? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Was the Apostle Paul actually a false prophet? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the difference between a disciple and apostle? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How can I know God's will for my life? What does the Bible say about knowing God's will? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [The Will Of God](#)

**By** (1223) (**dia**) is the Greek preposition **dia**, which means "through" and in this context describes that which "intervenes between the act of the will and the effect and through which the effect proceeds" (Zodhiates). Stated another way, **dia** describes the **channel** (God's will is the channel) of the **act** (Paul's appointment as an apostle). The will of God is the means by which Paul had become an apostle.

**Will** (2307) **thelema** from **thelo** = to will with the "-ma" suffix indicating the result of the will = "a thing willed") generally speaks of the result of what one has decided. One sees this root word in the feminine name "**Thelma**." In its most basic form, **thelema** refers to a wish, a strong desire, and the willing of some event. When it denotes God's will, it signifies His gracious disposition toward something. Used to designate what God Himself does of His own good pleasure. Most of the NT uses of **thelema** (over 3/4's) refer to God's will and signify His gracious disposition toward something. **Paul's uses of Thelema** - Rom. 1:10; Rom. 2:18; Rom. 12:2; Rom. 15:32; 1 Co. 1:1; 1 Co. 7:37; 1 Co. 16:12; 2 Co. 1:1; 2 Co. 8:5; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 1:1; Eph. 2:3; Eph. 5:17; Eph. 6:6; Col. 1:1; Col. 1:9; Col. 4:12; 1 Thess. 4:3; 1 Thess. 5:18; 2 Tim. 1:1; 2 Tim. 2:26;

Here is a great prayer is you desire to know **the will of God** for your life - Colossians 1:9+ "For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with (IDEA = "controlled by") **the knowledge** ([epignosis](#) - not just knowledge but FULL knowledge) **of His will** (thelema) in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. (Then add obeying by the power of the Spirit the two commands in Ro 12:2+ and it will aid knowing the will of God which is good, and acceptable and perfect.)

**And Sosthenes our brother** - Literally the Greek reads "the brother." Paul describes **Sosthenes** (means "safe in strength") as his **brother** in Christ by supernatural birth, not his brother by natural birth.

**Brother** (80) **adelphos** from **a** = denotes unity + **delphus** = a womb) literally means brother referring to a physical brother or figuratively can refer to a brother in the spiritual sense. **Adelphos** (translated **brother** or **brethren**) is used frequently in the Corinthian letters - 52x in 48 verses -

1 Co. 1:1; 1 Co. 1:10; 1 Co. 1:11; 1 Co. 1:26; 1 Co. 2:1; 1 Co. 3:1; 1 Co. 4:6; 1 Co. 5:11; 1 Co. 6:5; 1 Co. 6:6; 1 Co. 6:8; 1 Co. 7:12; 1 Co. 7:14; 1 Co. 7:15; 1 Co. 7:24; 1 Co. 7:29; 1 Co. 8:11; 1 Co. 8:12; 1 Co. 8:13; 1 Co. 9:5; 1 Co. 10:1; 1 Co. 11:33; 1 Co. 12:1; 1 Co. 14:6; 1 Co. 14:20; 1 Co. 14:26; 1 Co. 14:39; 1 Co. 15:1; 1 Co. 15:6; 1 Co. 15:31; 1 Co. 15:50; 1 Co. 15:58; 1 Co. 16:11; 1 Co. 16:12; 1 Co. 16:15; 1 Co. 16:20; 2 Co. 1:1; 2 Co. 1:8; 2 Co. 2:13; 2 Co. 8:1; 2 Co. 8:18; 2 Co. 8:22; 2 Co. 8:23; 2 Co. 9:3; 2 Co. 9:5; 2 Co. 11:9; 2 Co. 12:18; 2 Co. 13:11;

Why does Paul mention **Sosthenes** - **Matthew Henry** offers an interesting thought in a related comment on Paul's mention of Timothy in Col 1:1 -- "Though Paul was alone divinely inspired, he joins Timothy with himself, to express his own humility, and put honor upon Timothy. Those who are aged, and strong, and eminent, should pay respect to, and support the reputation of, those who are younger, and weaker, and of less note."

In another note **Matthew Henry** writes - Paul, and **Sosthenes** his **brother**, not a fellow-apostle, but a fellow-minister, once a ruler of the Jewish synagogue (Acts 18:17+), afterwards a convert to Christianity, a Corinthian by birth, as is most probable, and dear to this people, for which reason Paul, to ingratiate himself with them, joins them with himself in his first salutations. There is no reason to suppose he was made a partaker of the apostle's inspiration (THAT IS HE DID NOT HELP PAUL WRITE THIS EPISTLE), for which reasons he speaks, through the rest of the epistle, in his own name, and in the singular number.

**Guzik** - It was common in the ancient world to dictate a letter to a scribe who would write it all down. Probably, **Sosthenes** was Paul's scribe (or, more technically, his amanuensis). (ED: 1 Cor 16:21 = "The greeting is in my own hand—Paul." about which Ryrie says "Paul stopped dictating at this point and wrote the remainder himself.") ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** - Paul could never have sustained the great weight of responsibility and tribulation which fell upon him if he had not felt that he was "**called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God**" No man will ever be fit for the ministry of the Word unless he is **called** to it by God. This also will be your strength in every other station of life; if God has **called** you to your peculiar work and warfare, he will not send you at your own charges, but he will be at the back of you, and support you even to the end. I think it is for this reason that Paul so constantly dwells upon his own calling when he is about to write to the churches, that he may remind other believers that they have similar privileges in their spheres of labour....Note the humility of Paul in associating with himself an almost unknown brother, **Sosthenes**. Although the letter is written by Paul alone, yet, as if he did not care to stand in isolation even for a moment, he associates Sosthenes with himself in the salutation. **Sosthenes** had been put to great shame. He was beaten before the judgment-seat, if you remember, and now he has the great and lasting honour of being mentioned by the apostle with himself. God will honour those who bear dishonour for his name's sake. Be not ashamed even to be beaten for Christ; the stripes are stripes of glory.

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**Question:** [Who was Sosthenes in the Bible?](#)

**Answer:** Not much is known about the man named Sosthenes in the Bible. There is a quick mention of Sosthenes in Acts and possibly a second mention in 1 Corinthians. Whether these passages speak of one or two men is unknown. Both mentions of Sosthenes involve the [apostle Paul's missionary journeys](#).

In Acts 18+, Paul arrives in Corinth, where he meets fellow believers Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:2+). Being tentmakers as they are, Paul stays with them while he plies his trade and teaches in the synagogue (Acts 18:3–4). Sadly, the Jews reject Paul's message, and so he moves on to preaching to the Gentiles instead. Paul goes to stay with a Gentile Christian named Titius Justus, possibly due to the fact that Justus' home was next door to the synagogue (Acts 18:7). Paul's preaching is more effective here, and [Crispus](#), the ruler of the synagogue, along with many other Corinthians, become believers. It may have been that Crispus left his position at the synagogue at this time, for we see a few verses later that Sosthenes is named the leader of the synagogue.

After Paul had been in Corinth about 18 months, the Jews, led by Sosthenes, united in an attack on Paul, bringing him before the Roman proconsul, Gallio. As this city was under Roman rule, the Roman court was the ultimate authority in major disputes. The charge against Paul was that "this man . . . is persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law" (Acts 18:13+).

Gallio did not feel this particular issue was worth his time: "I will not be a judge of such things," he said, and he ejected the Jews from the court (Acts 18:15+). At that point, Sosthenes was seized and beaten as Gallio watched without interfering (verse 17). The text leaves it unclear as to who beat Sosthenes and why. Verse 17 simply says it was "the crowd there." Paul D. Gardner, author of *The New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters*, speculates that one of two things may have happened: 1) the Jews were angered that **Sosthenes** had been unable to persuade Gallio to try Paul and so made him the scapegoat; or 2) the Greeks outside the court beat **Sosthenes** because he was a Jew trying to stir up trouble in their city.

The second mention of a man named **Sosthenes** occurs in 1 Corinthians 1 as part of the salutation of Paul's letter to the Corinthians: "Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, to the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (verses 1–3). Here, **Sosthenes** is a brother in Christ and was either a voice in the crafting of the letter or its scribe. If this is the same Sosthenes as the man who opposed Paul in Acts 18+, it would be yet more evidence of the transforming power of the [gospel](#). Knowing the power of God and the fact that this Sosthenes was known to the people in Corinth, it is certainly a possibility that they are the same man; however, no one can say for sure. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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**THE VALUE OF A PERSONAL LETTER** - A 2011 survey by the United States Postal Service indicated that the typical American home receives a personal letter—not including greeting cards or invitations—once every seven weeks. It was once every two weeks as recently as 1987. A stream of advertisements still arrives; but personal letters have largely been replaced by email, Facebook,



and Twitter. Perhaps the Spirit might nudge you today to write a personal (hand-written, not email) letter to someone you know or someone from your past. Obey the nudge and be blessed to be a blessing (Acts 20:35+) Getting a personal letter in one's physical mailbox is a thrill. Consider taking time today to hunt down paper, an envelope, a stamp, and a pen and bless a fellow believer's life with a prayerful note. Perhaps you can write about a way in which your friend's faith has encouraged you. Or use this as an opportunity to testify about what God is doing in your life.

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**A SHOUT OR A SOFT REBUKE** - In October 2009, a spate of articles in publications like the New York Times and The New Republic as well as on numerous parenting blogs all debated the same question: Is shouting the “new” spanking? As the practice of spanking children has declined in segments of the American population, parents admitted that they resorted to yelling and shouting instead. Now they wondered if that was really better than corporal punishment. When children misbehaved or exasperated them, was it okay to scream at them? Every parent can relate to the occasional frustration caused by their child's actions and attitude—and as a spiritual father, Paul felt this toward his beloved church in Corinth (1 Cor 4:14,15). Yet in this letter to the Corinthians, which we'll study this month, Paul sent a message that is paternal and firm but never harsh or screeching. There was just cause for a tongue-lashing. The problems in the Corinthian church—including disunity, pride, misuse of spiritual gifts, and abuse of the Lord's Supper—were serious indeed.

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**ILLUSTRATION - Lowell Johnson** - Imagine this scene – You are a parent sending your child off on his own for the first time he is going away to college or the military or moving into his own home. The car is packed, the good-byes are said. You watch your child get into the car and drive away into adulthood. You did your best to raise him right. You taught him right from wrong. You took him to church. You kept a close watch on his decisions. Now his life is in his own hands. Now imagine a few months have gone by. You've heard from some of his friends that he has moved away from his moral and spiritual roots. He's somewhat abandoned the values you instilled in him. He's losing his testimony as a Christian. Let's say the only way you could communicate with him is to write a well-thought-out letter expressing your feelings as a parent. What would you say? How would you write such a letter? The Apostle Paul faced a similar task when he sat down to write the letter we know as 1 Corinthians. • Paul founded the church in Corinth during his second missionary journey. He spent 18 months in Corinth (Acts 18:1-18), teaching them and firmly grounding them in the faith. Yet, as time went by, Paul heard some distressing news. 1 Cor. 5:9 Paul talks about “my epistle” that he wrote to them. It has been called the “lost letter.” Actually, Paul wrote letters to many churches that did not make it into the Bible. God did not see fit to allow them into His divine word. • Usually, Paul's letters contain a rather lengthy doctrinal section followed by a section of practical application. But in this letter, he weaves his doctrine in with the practical application throughout the letter. The reason for this is that Paul is dealing with one problem after another.

**1 Corinthians 1:2 to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:**

Wuest ([Eerdmans Publishing](#)) - (paraphrase) - to the assembly of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been set apart for the worship and service of God, this act of setting apart having been accomplished by being placed in Christ Jesus and thus being in vital union with Him, consecrated ones, this consecration having been by divine appointment and summons, with all those who are calling upon the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, their Lord and ours. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

NET 1 Corinthians 1:2 to the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be saints, with all those in every place who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:2 I am writing to God's church in Corinth, to you who have been called by God to be his own holy people. He made you holy by means of Christ Jesus, just as he did for all people everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:2 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:

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:2 To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ--their Lord and ours:

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:2 τ κκλησ το θεο τ ο σ ν Κορ νθ , γιασμ νοις ν Χριστ ησο , κλητο ς γ οις, σ ν π σιν το ς πικαλουμ νοις τ νομα το κυρ ου μ ν ησο Χριστο ν παντ τ π , α τ ν κα μ ν·

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:2 to the assembly of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with all those calling upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place -- both theirs and ours:

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:2 unto the church of God which is at Corinth, even them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, their Lord and ours:

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:2 To God's church at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus and called as saints, with all those in every place who call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord-- both their Lord and ours.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:2 To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:2 to the church of God that is in Corinth, to you who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be holy, with all those everywhere who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.

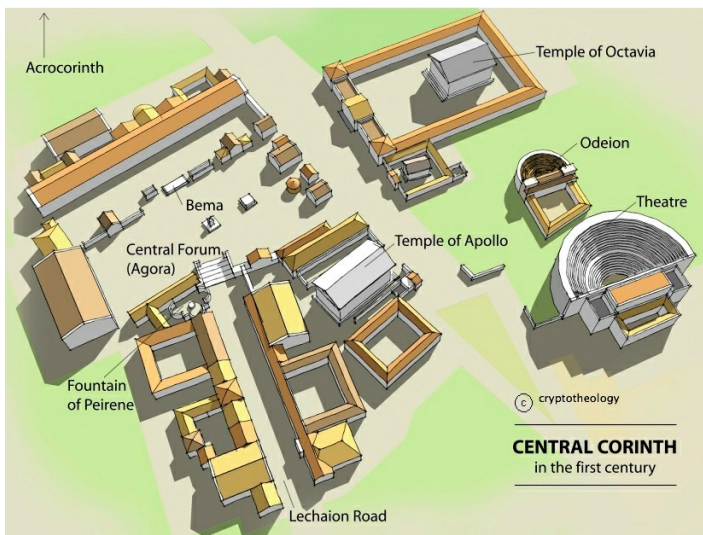
NJB 1 Corinthians 1:2 to the church of God in Corinth, to those who have been consecrated in Christ Jesus and called to be God's holy people, with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord as well as ours.

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:2 To God's church that was made holy by Christ Jesus and called to be God's holy people in the city of Corinth and to people everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- **the church:** Ac 18:1,8-11 2Co 1:1 Ga 1:2 1Th 1:1 2Th 1:1 1Ti 3:15
- **to those who have been sanctified:** Jude 1:1
- **sanctified:** 1Co 1:30 1Cor 6:9-11 Joh 17:17-19 Ac 15:9 26:18 Eph 5:26 Heb 2:11 10:10 Heb 13:12
- **called:** Ro 1:7 1Th 4:7 2Ti 1:9 1Pe 1:15,16
- **with:** Ac 7:59,60 9:14,21 22:16 2Th 2:16,17 2Ti 2:22
- **call:** Ge 4:26 12:8 13:4-7,8-13
- **our Lord:** 1Co 8:6 Ps 45:11 Ac 10:36 Ro 3:22 10:12 14:8,9 2Co 4:5 Php 2:9-11 Rev 19:16
- See background on the ancient City of Corinth
- John MacArthur's [excellent introduction to 1 Corinthians](#)
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

2 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints who are throughout Achaia:



Schematic of Ancient Corinth - click to enlarge (See [Acrocorinth](#) and [pix](#))  
(See [another reconstruction](#))

## THE CHURCH'S PLACE IN THE WORLD AND POSITION IN CHRIST

**To the church of God which is at Corinth**- Notice Whose church it is. Not the megachurch of pastor so-and-so, but the **church of God**. God "owns" the church, because He calls its members and "He purchased (it) with His own precious blood." (Acts 20:28-). Interestingly only Paul uses this phrase **church of God** and most uses are in the Corinthian letters (Acts 20:28; 1 Co. 1:2; 1 Co. 10:32; 1 Co. 11:22; 1 Co. 15:9; 2 Co. 1:1; Gal. 1:13; 1 Ti. 3:5)

### Related Resource:

- See Table Summarizing Paul's Ongoing Relationship with the Corinthians - 4 letters, 3 visits

Notice that in this passage Paul in essence gives us a good "*definition*" of a genuine believer in Jesus Christ, a true Christian -

1. A member of the church of God (the Body of Christ),
2. Sanctified in Christ Jesus
3. Saints by calling
4. Call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ (in prayer, in worship).

**Guzik** - we know more about the Christians at Corinth than we know about any other church in the New Testament....Because church was a secular term (referring to "the gatherings of the citizenry in a city-state to discuss and decide on matters of public interest" [Mare]), Paul calls the gathering of Christians in Corinth the **church of God**. This isn't the gathering of the world, but of God. Notice the contrast: The **church of God** (something good), which is at Corinth (someplace bad). Understanding the tension between the church and the city is important to understanding the letter of 1 Corinthians. The bottom line is this: is the church influencing the city, or is the city influencing the church? Morgan says well in his introduction to 1 Corinthians: "The measure of failure on the part of the Church is the measure in which she has allowed herself to be influenced by the spirit of the age ... We are sometimes told to-day that what the Church supremely needs is that she should catch the spirit of the age. A thousand times no. What the Church supremely needs is to correct the spirit of the age." ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Steve Armstrong** - Before reaching Corinth, Paul had spent some time preaching in Athens. But as you may know from Acts, Paul failed to gain much of a following in Athens. He must have left that city in a bit of despair and discouragement. But when he arrived in Corinth, he was met with an almost immediate Gentile response. In the 18 months Paul lived in Corinth, he saw many come to the Lord. This must have been a tremendous encouragement to Paul. Especially in a city of so much immorality. (**THOUGHT**) Paul's experience in moving from a fruitless Athens to a fruitful Corinth reminds us that our evangelism results lie entirely in God's hand. It's clear that Paul made equal effort in both cities. And in God's eternal purpose, it was necessary that Paul visit both places. Yet it's also clear that in God's eternal purpose, Paul was intended to see meager response in one city but great response in the other. (**THOUGHT** - Beloved, our job is to not grow weary in sowing the Gospel seed, regardless of the apparent results, and leave the growing to God's Spirit. All faithful sowers will one day be abundantly rewarded. cf Daniel 12:3+).

**John MacArthur** writes that "The most serious problem of the Corinthian church was **worldliness**, an unwillingness to divorce the culture around them. Most of the believers could not consistently separate themselves from their old, selfish, immoral, and pagan ways. It became necessary for Paul to write to correct

this, as well as to command the faithful Christians not only to break fellowship with the disobedient and unrepentant members, but to put those members out of the church (1 Cor 5:9–13). ([Introduction](#))

**Church** (assembly)(1577) **ekklesia** from **ek** = out + **klesis** = a calling, verb = **kaleo** = to call) literally means called out and as commonly used in the Greco-Roman vernacular referred to citizens who were *called out* from their homes to be publicly assembled or gathered to discuss or carry out affairs of state. Wuest [Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#)) writes that "The word **assembly** is a good one-word translation of **ekklesia**." **Louw-Nida** says "Though some persons have tried to see in the term **ekklesia** a more or less literal meaning of 'called-out ones,' this type of etymologizing is not warranted either by the meaning of **ekklesia** in NT times or even by its earlier usage. The term **ekklesia** was in common usage for several hundred years before the Christian era and was used to refer to an assembly of persons constituted by well-defined membership. In general Greek usage it was normally a socio-political entity based upon citizenship in a city-state and in this sense is parallel to *demos* (a group of citizens assembled for socio-political activities). For the NT, however, it is important to understand the meaning of **ekklesia** as '*an assembly of God's people*.'"

#### Related Resources:

- [What is the church? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the difference between the visible and invisible church? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [When did the church begin? GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the history and significance of the church in Corinth? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Wuest's paraphrase** - to the assembly of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been set apart for the worship and service of God, this act of setting apart having been accomplished by being placed in Christ Jesus and thus being in vital union with Him, consecrated ones, this consecration having been by divine appointment and summons, with all those who are calling upon the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, their Lord and ours. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

**To those who have been sanctified** (cf 1 Cor 6:11+) **in Christ Jesus** (cf Jn 17:19) - Here Paul elaborates on the nature of the **church of God**. The true church consisted of true believers, set apart (and rescued) from the kingdom of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of light in Christ Jesus (Col 1:12-14+, 1 Peter 2:9+, cf Acts 26:18+). They were set apart **in Christ**, "the sphere in which this act of consecration takes place." **Sanctified** is in the **perfect tense** which means the moment they repented and received Christ as their Savior they were "set apart" from the profane (unholy) to the holy (the possessions of the Holy One) and that is their (AND DEAR BELIEVER YOUR) permanent state forever and ever (Jn 10:27-29). Amen! Keep in mind that the believers in Corinth were in the midst of a moral and idolatrous cesspool (some actively engaged in the unholy deeds), and yet Paul graciously reminds them (AND US) of their exalted, privileged position as people who were holy in position (**in Christ Jesus**) and in name (**saints**). This description would be a challenge to the saints at Corinth at the very outset of this letter, because it would raise in their (AND OUR) conscience the question "Am I living according to my true spiritual status before God?"

MAY GOD'S SPIRIT USE THE TRUTHS IN THIS LETTER

TO MOTIVATE ALL OF US TO BE HOLY AS HE IS HOLY (cf 1 Pe 1:14-16+),

IN JESUS' NAME. AMEN.

**THOUGHT** - As stated above, practically speaking **sanctified** means we have been set apart from Satan's authority in the kingdom of darkness and transferred to God's kingdom (Col 1:12-14+, Acts 26:18+). But it does not stop there beloved. We are called out for a purpose, both generally (to declare the excellencies of Him - 1 Peter 2:9+) and specifically for a special use, for "we are His workmanship (**poiema**), created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." (Eph 2:10+) In other words God has a specific work (works) for each of us to accomplish during our brief stay on earth. Now ponder the sins of these saints at Corinth (causing divisions, allowing and practicing immorality, bringing lawsuits against one another, dishonoring the Lord's supper and some even questioning the resurrection) and yet Paul still calls them "holy ones!" This is amazing [grace](#) in action! The point is that your (my) **identity** (in Christ) is no longer rooted in your (my) **performance**! Beloved, if you are like me (and you are), your "performance" will always fall short of what God desires because we are still sinners (albeit saved sinners) and we live in a fallen, incessantly tempting world waging war against our souls (1 Pe 2:11+) and ruled by Satan (1 Jn 5:19+). And if we begin to focus on **our** performance, and **our** failures, we will become frustrated, discouraged and defeated. If that is where you are, then you are a perfect candidate for 2 Cor 12:9+. On the other hand you might try to

fake it even though you know you fall short so often. We call that person a hypocrite and the church is full of them, hiding behind a mask of pseudo-spirituality, good works, church attendance, etc, seeking the approval of others rather than the approval of God. Paul would remind us all that we are set apart from this world. Our new position in Christ is saints or holy ones. Now enabled by His Word and His Spirit, we need to practice our position for the glory of God. **This begs the question -- are you practicing your position? Do you realize you are God's masterpiece and He has a specific, special role for you in His great drama of redemption?** HE DOES! We all need the Spirit energized pattern of Paul "Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: **forgetting what lies behind** (THIS IS WHAT A LOT OF US NEED TO DO!) and (ENABLED BY THE SPIRIT) reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Php 3:13-14+)

**Hodge** says the verb **sanctify** "means to cleanse. And as sin is presented under the twofold aspect of guilt and pollution, to sanctify, or to cleanse from sin, may mean either to expiate guilt by an atonement, or to renew by the Holy Ghost. It is used for [expiation](#) by sacrifice in Heb. 2:11, 10:14, 13:12 and elsewhere. The word also means to render sacred by consecrating any person or thing to the service of God. In the present case all these ideas may be united. The church consists of those whose guilt is expiated, who are inwardly holy, and who are consecrated to God as His peculiar people." ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Hodge on in Christ Jesus** - that is, in virtue of union with him. It is only in Him that we are partakers of these inestimable blessings. It is because we are in Him as our Head and Representative, that we are justified by His righteousness; and it is because we are in Him as a branch is in the Vine, that we are purified by His Spirit. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**THOUGHT - In Christ Jesus** is the safest place a person can be in this world and that to come, for once you are **in Christ Jesus** nothing, absolutely nothing, can separate you from the love of God which **is in Christ Jesus** (Ro 8:39+)! To state it another way, once truly saved, you are saved forever! Eternal security is your possession now and forever. There are two truths in this one verse that substantiate the sound, sure doctrine of eternal security - (1) perfect tense of **sanctified** and (2) position **in Christ** (see discussion of "in Christ").

#### Related Resources:

- [Eternal security - is it biblical? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Is eternal security a "license" to sin? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Did Old Testament believers have eternal security? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**In Christ Jesus** - 51x in 50v - Acts 24:24; Rom. 3:24; Rom. 6:11; Rom. 6:23; Rom. 8:1; Rom. 8:2; Rom. 8:39; Rom. 15:17; Rom. 16:3; 1 Co. 1:2; 1 Co. 1:4; 1 Co. 1:30; 1 Co. 4:15; 1 Co. 15:31; 1 Co. 16:24; Gal. 2:4; Gal. 2:16; Gal. 3:14; Gal. 3:26; Gal. 3:28; Gal. 5:6; Eph. 1:1; Eph. 2:6; Eph. 2:7; Eph. 2:10; Eph. 2:13; Eph. 3:6; Eph. 3:11; Eph. 3:21; Phil. 1:1; Phil. 1:26; Phil. 2:5; Phil. 3:3; Phil. 3:14; Phil. 4:7; Phil. 4:19; Phil. 4:21; Col. 1:4; 1 Thess. 2:14; 1 Thess. 5:18; 1 Tim. 1:14; 1 Tim. 3:13; 2 Tim. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:9; 2 Tim. 1:13; 2 Tim. 2:1; 2 Tim. 2:10; 2 Tim. 3:12; 2 Tim. 3:15; Phlm. 1:23

**Have been sanctified** (perfect tense = their permanent state or condition; passive voice = set apart by God's supernatural act = divine passive) ([37](#)) ([hagiazō](#) from [hagios](#) = holy, set apart = "saint") means to set apart from the [profane](#) (godless world) and to the Perfect (God), to make a person or thing (OT altars, days, priests, etc) the opposite of [koinos](#), which means [profane](#) or common. While [hagiazō](#) means to consecrate, it also carries the thought of the resultant holiness of character in those who are consecrated! In other words, those who **have been sanctified** have been made holy inwardly have the potential (as empowered by the Holy Spirit) to live holy lives. Stated another way, their holy position makes possible holy practice. Before a person is saved he has no holy nature and no capacity for holy living, wholly unable to live in a manner pleasing to God. But **in Christ** we are a new creation with a new [kainos](#) nature (2 Cor 5:17+) and are given God's precious and magnificent promises to enable us to become (experientially, in our daily practice) partakers (sharers - [koinonos](#)) of His divine nature (2 Pe 1:4+). Sin's dominion is broken (Ro 6:11+, Ro 6:22+) and is replaced by a Spirit enabled desire (Php 2:13NLT+) for holiness, a life pleasing to the Lord. This begs the question, does my daily **practice** match my eternal **position**? We are not speaking of "perfection," but of "direction," a journey of progressively increasing Christlikeness.

**Saints by calling** - Sanctified sinners who are now **saints** bestowed with amazing [grace](#) and supernatural gifts should live holy lives so that their **practice** matches their **position**. This might have a touch of Pauline sarcasm, for though they were set apart ones in position before God because of their position **in Christ** into which they had been supernaturally called, many of these saints by "position," were far from being saints by their "practice." What a sad oxymoronic picture of "unsaintly (unholy) saints!" They were positionally **saints** who were practically **"ain't's!"** That is, the saints at Corinth **"ain't"** living (bad grammar but good



theology) according to their high **calling!** Are you (and I) beloved? Peter links our **calling** with God's holiness, commanding us "but like the Holy One who **called** you, **be** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) **holy** ([hagios](#)) yourselves also in **ALL** your behavior because (TERM OF EXPLANATION - EXPLAINING WHY WE SHOULD STRIVE TO BE HOLY) it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." ;;" (1 Peter 1:15-16+) In summary, Peter is commanding us to **BE** in **practice** what we **ARE** in **position!**

**THOUGHT** - So at the risk of being too repetitive, these great truths beg the question - Does my *daily* PRACTICE match my *eternal* POSITION [in Christ](#)?

**Saints** are now to live in this present evil age (Gal 1:4+) in a manner which reflects what we were redeemed and "re-created" to be (1Pe 2:24, 25+; cp 2 Cor 7:1+) --- **holy ones** in **character** (character is what God knows we are; reputation is who other people think we are) and **conduct**, set apart by God to be exclusively His possession (1 Cor 6:19, 20+, Titus 2:14+) manifesting holiness of heart. Contrary to some religious teachings, the Bible itself never uses the word **hagios** or **saint** to refer to a "special class" of believers who are a "notch above" the rest. We are all equal at the foot of His Cross! (cp 2 Cor 3:5,6+, saints have "a faith of the same kind" as Peter! - 2Pe 1:1+) Those who are **holy** in position (in Christ) now have the responsibility (and the Holy Spirit power) to live **holy** in their experience (Christlike). **Positional holiness** is tantamount to justification, while **experiential holiness** represents progressive sanctification (growth in holiness or Christ likeness). (See [Three Tenses of Salvation](#))

It is interesting to consider the **saints** ([hagios](#)) at Corinth in light of common secular uses of **hagios** - The Greeks used **hagios** to describe that which had been set apart and consecrated to their false gods, including their idolatrous temples, altars and offerings. **Herodotus** wrote that the shrine of the false God Aphrodite at Corinth was *set apart* ([hagios](#)) to the worship of that goddess. This same word [hagios](#) was used to describe the pagan offering given at the temple. Money that was given would now be *set apart* for the use of the priesthood of that temple. The money itself had not undergone a physical change, but it was now set apart for a special purpose.

**THOUGHT** - The religious world gives the designation "**Saint**" to certain people they feel are "worthy," whereas the Bible teaches that **everyone** who believes in the only One truly Worthy (Rev 5:12+) is a **saint**.

**John MacArthur** adds that "They were **saints** because they had **been sanctified** ([hagiazō](#)), set apart from sin, made holy in Christ Jesus. According to Scripture, every true believer in Jesus Christ—whether faithful or unfaithful, well known or unknown, leader or follower—is a set apart person, a holy person, a **saint**. In the biblical sense, the most obscure believer today is just as much **a saint** as the apostle Paul. This is the believer's position in Christ. Holiness, in that **positional** sense (**Ed note:** Synonymous with "positional sanctification" in contrast to progressive sanctification), is not a matter of good works, of holy living. As Christians we should live holy lives, but holy living does not make us holy. To the extent our living is holy, it is because, in Christ, we already are holy and have the counsel and power of His Holy Spirit. We are holy because the Sanctifier (the One who makes holy) has already sanctified us in response to our trust in Him (Heb. 2:11). Christ's work, not our own, makes us holy. We are "saints by calling." That refers to the [efficacious call of God](#) to salvation (1 Cor 1:24, 26). ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#) (Bolding added))

**Guzik** - There is much in 1 Corinthians that is unflattering to the Christians of Corinth. They are shown to have, at times, morality problems, doctrine problems, church government problems, spiritual gift problems, church service problems, and authority problems. It might be easy for us to think they weren't even saved! But they were. They were called **saints**. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Hodge on saints** - The original word ( [ἅγιος](#) ) sometimes signifies sacred, set apart to a holy use. In this sense the temple, the altar, the priests, the prophets, and the whole theocratic people, are called holy. In the New Testament the word is commonly expressive of inward purity, or consecration of the soul to God. Believers are saints in both senses of the word; they are inwardly renewed, and outwardly consecrated. It is not to be inferred from the fact that the apostle addresses all the nominal Christians in Corinth as saints and as sanctified in Christ Jesus, that they were all true believers, or that those terms express nothing more than external consecration. Men are uniformly addressed in Scripture according to their profession. If they profess to be saints, they are called saints; if they profess to be believers, they are called believers; and if they profess to be members of the church, they are addressed as really belonging to it. This passage teaches also, as Calvin remarks, the useful lesson that a body may be very corrupt both as to doctrine and practice, as such corruptions undoubtedly prevailed even in Corinth, and yet it may be properly recognized as a church of God. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon on saints by calling** - Called to sacred uses, set apart unto God. That is the call of all believers; they are like those vessels of the sanctuary which were not to be used by any but the priests of God, and by them only for God's service (cf "sanctified" in 2 Ti 2:21+). So this is a message to us also who "*call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord*".

"The reality is that the Lord never calls the qualified; He qualifies the called."  
— Henry Blackaby



**Saints** ("holy ones")(40)(**hagios**; or [here](#) from **hagos** = an "awful thing" in the sense of religious awe or possibly from hazo = to venerate) is literally set apart and thus distinct, holy, different (NOT WEIRD but DIFFERENT!). **Hagios** is the very word used to describe the Eternal God (1 Pe 1:16+). It means separated from sin and unto the sacred! Here Paul uses **hagios** to describe a sinner who has been sanctified or set apart by God's Spirit for God's good pleasure (and possession - cf 1 Cor 6:19+) and who can come into God's holy presence (cf Ro 5:2+, Heb 4:16+, Heb 10:19-22+). The Greeks used **hagios** to describe one dedicated to the so-called Gods (Satan is ever the master counterfeiter)! "This sainthood is **not an attainment**, it is a state into which God in [grace](#) calls men; yet believers are called to sanctify themselves (Heb 12:14NET+, cf Php 3:12+, 2 Cor 6:17, 1 Th 4:7NET+), cleansing themselves from all defilement, forsaking sin, living a holy manner of life, 1 Pe 1:14-16+; 2 Pe 3:11+, and experiencing fellowship with God in His holiness." (W E Vine) **Hagios** is Paul's favorite description of believers and designates the believer's **position** in Christ (see [in Christ](#) and [in Christ Jesus](#)) as **holy** or **set apart from** that which is secular, profane, and evil and **dedicated unto** God, His worship and His service (note order - worship before service, cp Mary and Martha - Lk 10:38-42+).

Paul's uses of **saint** or **saints** - Ro 1:7; Ro 8:27; Ro 12:13; Ro 15:25; Ro 15:26; Ro 15:31; Ro 16:2; Ro 16:15; 1 Co. 1:2; 1 Co. 6:1; 1 Co. 6:2; 1 Co. 14:33; 1 Co. 16:1; 1 Co. 16:15; 2 Co. 1:1; 2 Co. 8:4; 2 Co. 9:1; 2 Co. 9:12; 2 Co. 13:13; Eph. 1:1; Eph. 1:15; Eph. 1:18; Eph. 2:19; Eph. 3:8; Eph. 3:18; Eph. 4:12; Eph. 5:3; Eph. 6:18; Phil. 1:1; Phil. 4:21; Phil. 4:22; Col. 1:2; Col. 1:4; Col. 1:12; Col. 1:26; 1 Th 3:13; 2 Th. 1:10; 1 Tim. 5:10; Philemon 1:5; Philemon 1:7;

#### Related Resource:

- [What are Christian saints according to the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**ILLUSTRATION** - A **saint** is like a **boat** -- the boat's purpose is fulfilled when it is in the water, but it's function and usefulness deteriorates when water gets in the boat. So too for saints when too much of the world gets into them. Saints must keep their "vessels" in the water of this word but not let the water of the world get into their "vessel"! Paul has a parallel thought writing to young Timothy to take of the truth that "if a man cleanses himself from these (things, people that have an unholy influence), he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified (**hagiazō** - verb form of **saint**), useful to the Master, prepared for every good work." (2 Ti 2:21+)

A Chinese proverb speaks to those saints trying to live in the world and of the world "One foot cannot stand on two boats!"

**Calling** (2822) see note above on [kletos](#)

God's strength always accompanies God's call.

## WORSHIP OF THE LORD

**With all who in every place call on the name of our Lord**(see [kurios](#)) **Jesus** (see [Iesous](#)) **Christ** (see [Christos](#)) **their Lord and ours** - Here Paul alludes to the sanctified saints in the church worldwide whereas the phrase **church of God...at Corinth** clearly referred to the local church body in Corinth. Paul could have said "**and** all who..." but he used a significant preposition **with** ([sun/syn](#)) which speaks of the indivisible, intimate union between the saints in Corinth and the saints throughout the world. Indeed, all who are in Christ are in covenant with Him, one with Him and thus one with each other. In truth, saved persons are more closely tied than blood ties between unsaved relatives.

We see men first **"began to call upon the Name of the LORD,"** in Genesis 4:26 (cf Abram Ge 12:8+, Ge 13:4, Ge 21:33, Ps 116:4+) implying a definite action of prayer and worship.

In summary, to **call on the Name of our Lord** has a two-fold significance - (1) it speaks of becoming a believer (Joel 2:32-, Acts 2:21+; Acts 22:16+; Ro 10:9-13+) and (2) it speaks of worship (see especially Ge 12:8+, cf Acts 9:14+, Acts 9:21+ cf. Ge 4:26; Ge 26:25).

Note that **call upon** is a present tense describing a continuing dependent relationship on Christ.

**Call upon** (1941) [epikaleomai](#) = middle voice of [epikaleo](#) from **epí** = upon + **kaléo** = call) literally means to call upon and was often used in secular Greek to refer to calling upon deity for any purpose, especially for aid. It also means to invoke (to petition for help or support, make earnest request) a deity for something as in Peter's quote from Joel 2:32+ "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."

It describes "Stephen as he **called on** the Lord ([kurios](#)) and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" (Acts 7:59+). It was also used in the sense of referring to what one was name - Mt 10:25, Acts 1:23, Acts 4:36, Acts 10:5, Acts 10:18.

**Utley on with all who in every place**" - Paul uses this phrase to remind the Corinthian believers that they are part of a larger church family. They do not have the right to uniqueness or special treatment. They must conform to the whole body of Christ in doctrine and practice (cf. 1 Cor 4:17; 7:17; 11:16; 14:33) ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Lord Jesus Christ** - 12x in letters to the Corinthians and 5 times in this first chapter - 1 Cor 1:2 1 Cor 1:3 1 Cor 1:7 1 Cor 1:8 1 Cor 1:10 1 Cor 6:11 1 Cor 8:6 1 Cor 15:57 2 Cor 1:2 2 Cor 1:3 2 Cor 8:9 2 Cor 13:14. The designation of **LORD** is used 8x in 7v in 1 Corinthians -- Paul clearly wants the backsliding saints at Corinth to grasp the Lordship of Jesus Christ and understand they are not their own to do whatever they wish, but that they have been bought with a price and their purpose is now to glorify God (1 Cor 6:19-20+).

JESUS IS LORD!

**Lord** (master, owner) ([2962](#)) ([kurios/kyrios](#) from **kuros** = might or power, related to **kuroo** = to give authority) primarily means the possessor, owner, master, the supreme one, one who is sovereign (e.g., Roman emperors - Acts 25:26+) and possesses absolute authority, absolute ownership rights and uncontested power. **Kurios** is used of the one to whom a person or thing belonged, over which he has the power of deciding, the one who is the master or disposer of a thing (Mk 7:28+) **Lord** is used 139 times in the NT of the Godhead (or particularly of God the Father), and 489 times directly of Jesus, the most common title given to Jesus! Therefore it behooves us to understand the truth concerning Jesus as **Lord** and not allow ourselves to become side tracked in debate over so-called "[Lordship salvation](#)". The indisputable Biblical facts are that faith in Jesus saves and Jesus is **Lord**. (Ro 10:9-10+) This confession of "**Jesus is Lord**" became a direct affront to the practice of emperor worship (and is also an affront to our fallen flesh which seeks "reign in our mortal body." (Ro 6:12-13+). Certain cities even built temples for Caesar-worship as was the case in Smyrna (see comments Rev 2:8) where the command was to honor the emperor by confessing "Caesar is Lord". To declare "**Jesus is Lord**" became a crime punishable by death, resulting in the martyrdom. I think the first century believers understood "Lordship" in a way modern believers would find it difficult to comprehend! (cp Jesus' "prophetic" warning in Mt 10:22-25+ where "master" is **kurios**) **Lord** is not merely a name that composes a title, but signifies a call to action so that every saint should willingly, reverently bow down to Jesus Christ. If Christ is our **Lord**, we are to live under Him, consciously, continually submitting our wills to him as His loyal, loving bondservants ("love slaves"), always seeking first His Kingdom and His righteousness (Mt 6:33+).

**Kurios** is used frequently in the Corinthian letters - 1 Co. 1:2; 1 Co. 1:3; 1 Co. 1:7; 1 Co. 1:8; 1 Co. 1:9; 1 Co. 1:10; 1 Co. 1:31; 1 Co. 2:8; 1 Co. 2:16; 1 Co. 3:5; 1 Co. 3:20; 1 Co. 4:4; 1 Co. 4:5; 1 Co. 4:17; 1 Co. 4:19; 1 Co. 5:4; 1 Co. 5:5; 1 Co. 6:11; 1 Co. 6:13; 1 Co. 6:14; 1 Co. 6:17; 1 Co. 7:10; 1 Co. 7:12; 1 Co. 7:17; 1 Co. 7:22; 1 Co. 7:25; 1 Co. 7:32; 1 Co. 7:34; 1 Co. 7:35; 1 Co. 7:39; 1 Co. 8:5; 1 Co. 8:6; 1 Co. 9:1; 1 Co. 9:2; 1 Co. 9:5; 1 Co. 9:14; 1 Co. 10:9; 1 Co. 10:21; 1 Co. 10:22; 1 Co. 10:26; 1 Co. 11:11; 1 Co. 11:23; 1 Co. 11:26; 1 Co. 11:27; 1 Co. 11:32; 1 Co. 12:3; 1 Co. 12:5; 1 Co. 14:21; 1 Co. 14:37; 1 Co. 15:31; 1 Co. 15:57; 1 Co. 15:58; 1 Co. 16:7; 1 Co. 16:10; 1 Co. 16:19; 1 Co. 16:22; 1 Co. 16:23; 2 Co. 1:2; 2 Co. 1:3; 2 Co. 1:14; 2 Co. 2:12; 2 Co. 3:16; 2 Co. 3:17; 2 Co. 3:18; 2 Co. 4:5; 2 Co. 4:14; 2 Co. 5:6; 2 Co. 5:8; 2 Co. 5:11; 2 Co. 6:17; 2 Co. 6:18; 2 Co. 8:5; 2 Co. 8:9; 2 Co. 8:19; 2 Co. 8:21; 2 Co. 10:8; 2 Co. 10:17; 2 Co. 10:18; 2 Co. 11:17; 2 Co. 11:31; 2 Co. 12:1; 2 Co. 12:8; 2 Co. 13:10; 2 Co. 13:14;

**THOUGHT** - According to this practical working "definition" beloved we all need to ask ourselves **Is Jesus Christ my Lord?**" "Do I arise each day, acknowledging that this is the day the Lord hath made?" (Ps 118:24) "Do I surrender my will to His will as I begin each day?" (Mt 6:10+, cp Ro 12:1+, Ro 12:2+, Ro 6:12-14+) Beloved, don't misunderstand. None of us have "arrived" in this area of **Jesus as Lord** of our lives. And it is precisely for that reason that Peter commands us to continually "**grow** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) in the [grace](#) (unmerited favor, power to live the supernatural, abundant life in Christ) and knowledge (not just intellectual but transformational) of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." (2Pe 3:18+) So do not be discouraged. Don't "[throw in the towel](#)" as they say. Keep on keeping on, pressing (continually = [present tense](#) enabled by [the Holy Spirit](#)) "on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Php 3:14+)

**Boice** adds that "Citizens of the empire were required to burn a pinch of incense to the reigning Caesar

and utter the words *Kyrios Kaisar* ("Caesar is Lord!" [kurios/kyrios](#)). It is this that the early Christians refused to do and for which they were themselves thrown to the wild lions or crucified. It was not that Christians were forbidden to worship God. They were free to worship any god they chose so long as they also acknowledged Caesar. Romans were tolerant. But when Christians denied to Caesar the allegiance that they believed belonged to the true God only, they were executed. (Daniel: An Expository Commentary)

**Robertson** adds that Paul's uses of "[sun/syn](#)" rather than **kai** (and), (makes the) close connection with "**saints**" just (mentioned)...giving the Corinthian Christians a picture of their close unity with the brotherhood everywhere through the common bond of faith." ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**THOUGHT** - Do saints in America understand and sense our special bond with our brethren in other countries? One way is to pray for them, especially for the many are experiencing intense persecution for their faith in Jesus. (see [Voice of the Martyrs](#))

**Vincent on call on the Name** - Compare Ro 10:12; Acts 2:21. The formula is from the Septuagint. See Zech. 13:9; Gen. 12:8; 13:4; Ps. 115:17. It is used of worship, and here implies prayer to Christ. The first Christian prayer recorded as heard by Saul of Tarsus, was Stephen's prayer to Christ, Acts 7:59+.

**Hodge on call on the Name** - To **call upon the name** of any one is to invoke his aid. It is properly used for religious invocation. Compare Acts 9:14, 21, Acts 22:16; Ro 10:12, 13; 2 Ti 2:22. To **call upon the name** of Jesus Christ our Lord, is to invoke his aid as Christ, the Messiah predicted by the prophets, and as our almighty and sovereign possessor and ruler. It is in that sense Jesus is LORD ([kurios](#)). All power in heaven and earth has been committed unto Him; and He died and rose again that He might be the **Lord** of the dead and of the living (cf 2 Ti 4:1+); that is, that He might acquire that peculiar right of possession in His people which arises from His having purchased them with his blood (Rev 5:9+, Acts 20:28+). To **call upon the name** of Jesus as **Lord** is therefore to worship Him. It is to look to Him for that help which God only can give. All Christians, therefore, are the worshippers of Christ. And every sincere worshipper of Christ is a true Christian. **The phrase expresses not so much an individual act of invocation, as an habitual state of mind and its appropriate expression.** ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#)) (Bold added)

**Spurgeon** - A church should be made up of sanctified persons, those who have been set apart in Christ from before the foundation of the world, those who have been called by the Spirit of God to holiness of life. We sometimes sing, — "With them number'd may we be Now, and through eternity;"-- but if we are not holy, if we are not truly sanctified, how can we expect to be numbered with the Church of Christ? Where there is no true holiness, there is no work of the Holy Spirit of God. For all the holy ones Paul desires **grace and peace**, for they still need these blessings. The holiest of men still have spots about them, and they need that **grace and peace** should be given to them from day to day through Jesus Christ our Lord....The epistles were written to distinct churches, but they have a bearing upon all Christians; hence the apostle says, "**With all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.**" Let us thank God no Scripture is of private interpretation; every promise belongs to all the seed. If you are a believer, you may freely appropriate to yourselves whatever was said of old to any individual believer, or to any congregation of believers. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Robertson** says **their Lord and ours** is "an afterthought and expansion (epanorthōsis) of the previous "our," (**our Lord Jesus Christ**) showing the universality of Christ." ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Uttley on their Lord and ours** - This is another phrase that implies the unity of all believers and churches. Jesus is Lord of all the Christian congregations, which includes Corinth. Paul identifies himself and Sosthenes with the believers at Corinth in this phrase. They need to be reminded that (1) they are one of many congregations and (2) that Paul is one of them and for them! ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** - That is a very happy phrase, "**their and ours**". There are multitudes of saints whose faces we never saw yet Christ is theirs, there are some with whom we might not agree in all particulars, yet Christ is theirs just as much as He is ours. All Christ is theirs, and all Christ is ours, and here is the grand bond of union between believers of different nationalities and different tongues.

**The called of Jesus Christ** - see **Spurgeon's** sermons related to **calling**...

- [Effectual Calling - Luke 19:5](#)
  - [Personal and Effectual Calling - John 10:3](#)
  - [Effectual Calling - His Personal Testimony](#)
  - [Effectual Calling Illustrated by the Call Of Abraham - Genesis 12:5](#)
  - [The Call Of Abraham - Hebrews 11:8](#)
  - [The Call Of Today - Hebrews 3:7](#)
-

**The called** are those who have been summoned by God, **called**...

1. according to His purpose (kletos- Ro 8:28+)
2. to salvation (kaleo- Ro 8:30+)
3. saints by calling (kletos- 1Co 1:2+)
4. both Jews and Greeks (kletos- 1Co 1:24+)
5. having been called (kaleo) "with a holy" calling (klesis) (2Ti 1:9+)
6. heavenly calling (klesis) (Heb 3:1+)
7. out of darkness into His marvelous light (kaleo- 1Pe 2:9+)
8. to walk worthy (kaleo- Ep 4:1+)
9. by grace (kaleo- Gal 1:6+)
10. not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles (kaleo- Ro 9:24+)
11. through the "gospel" that we "may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (kaleo- 2Th 2:14+)
12. and be brought "into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (kaleo- 1Co 1:9+)
13. and return in triumph "with Him" at the end of this age (kaleo- Re 17:14+).

These magnificent truths on "**called**" should cause all the "**called of Jesus Christ**" to cry out "**Glory!**" Thank You Father for calling me into Christ Jesus my Lord!

**Who are the CALLED?** As this term is used by Paul (and Jude and John) "the called" are those who have heard the good news and responded to it by exercising saving faith. In this understanding "the called" are virtually synonymous with "the elect" (Matthew's use discussed below is an exception).

The Lord Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me." (Jn 10:27).

If you are following someone or something else, you haven't heard Jesus and you are not one of His sheep. The ones who hear and respond and follow Him are **the called**.

As someone has well said, let's not get in an argument about who the elect are, because it is as simple as this: God **calls** and you answer. If you have answered, you are among the elect, one of "the called of Jesus Christ."

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**I WANT TO BE A SAINT** - AT a British university, a group of students asked one another, "What do you want to be?"

Among the answers were these: champion athlete, influential politician, noted scholar. Shyly, yet definitely, one student said something that brought silence: "You may laugh at me, but I want to be a saint."

Imagine—a saint! What an eccentric ambition. Yet for Christians, that ought to be our primary goal. To be a saint means to be like Jesus. Paul declared that the overarching purpose of God the Father is to make us like His Son (Romans 8:29). That's the essence of sainthood.

Of course, every believer is guaranteed conformity to Christ in the world to come. But God does not want us to wait passively until we enter eternity to begin that supernatural transformation (1 John 3:2-3+). We are to cooperate now with the Holy Spirit and become more and more like Christ "in this world" (1 John 4:17).

Just as natural birth entitles infants to be called by their parents' name, spiritual birth entitles us to be called saints (Philippians 1:1). But we still have a lot of maturing to do to before we become saintly, just as children must mature before they become like their parents.—Vernon Grounds

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**Barton - FROM GOD TO US** - As we read the opening words of Paul's letter, we may wonder: How do these ancient words apply today? We are distanced from the original readers by time, space, culture, and language. But we do share five striking similarities with the Corinthian Christians:

1. We are people equally needing God's truthful instruction.
2. We live in a similar aggressively pluralistic society that denies absolutes and makes personal rights absolute.
3. This claim to personal rights challenges the lordship of Jesus Christ within the church today, even as it did then.
4. The ancient philosophy that might and money make right continues to divide churches and destroy people's lives.
5. The resurrection of Jesus Christ remains the solid fact upon which our faith rests. To some, it will always be a stumbling block. So, in spite of the obvious differences between ourselves and the Corinthians, the points of similarity make it crucial that we read this letter as God's Word for our day (Life Application Commentary)

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**Spurgeon** - Morning and Evening - “**Sanctified** by God the Father.” —Jude 1:1 “**Sanctified** in Christ Jesus.” —1 Corinthians 1:2 “Through **sanctification** of the Spirit.”—1 Peter 1:2

Mark the union of the Three Divine Persons in all their gracious acts. How unwisely do those believers talk who make preferences in the Persons of the Trinity; who think of Jesus as if he were the embodiment of everything lovely and gracious, while the Father they regard as severely just, but destitute of kindness. Equally wrong are those who magnify the decree of the Father, and the atonement of the Son, so as to depreciate the work of the Spirit. In deeds of grace none of the Persons of the Trinity act apart from the rest. They are as united in their deeds as in their essence. In their love towards the chosen they are one, and in the actions which flow from that great central source they are still undivided. Specially notice this in the matter of sanctification. While we may without mistake speak of sanctification as the work of the Spirit, yet we must take heed that we do not view it as if the Father and the Son had no part therein. It is correct to speak of sanctification as the work of the Father, of the Son, and of the Spirit. Still doth Jehovah say, “Let us make man in our own image after our likeness,” and thus we are “his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” See the value which God sets upon real holiness, since the Three Persons in the Trinity are represented as co-working to produce a Church without “spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” And you, believer, as the follower of Christ, must also set a high value on holiness—upon purity of life and godliness of conversation. Value the blood of Christ as the foundation of your hope, but never speak disparagingly of the work of the Spirit which is your meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. This day let us so live as to manifest the work of the Triune God in us.

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**Oswald Chambers** - The vision and the verity Called to be saints. 1 Cor. 1:2. Thank God for the sight of all you have never yet been. You have had the vision, but you are not there yet by any means. It is when we are in the valley, where we prove whether we will be the choice ones, that most of us turn back. We are not quite prepared for the blows which must come if we are going to be turned into the shape of the vision. We have seen what we are not, and what God wants us to be, but are we willing to have the vision “batter’d to shape and use” by God? The batterings always come in commonplace ways and through commonplace people.

There are times when we do know what God’s purpose is; whether we will let the vision be turned into actual character depends upon us, not upon God. If we prefer to loll on the mount and live in the memory of the vision, we will be of no use actually in the ordinary stuff of which human life is made up. We have to learn to live in reliance on what we saw in the vision, not in ecstasies and conscious contemplation of God, but to live in actualities in the light of the vision until we get to the veritable reality. Every bit of our training is in that direction. Learn to thank God for making known His demands.

The little ‘I am’ always sulks when God says do. Let the little ‘I am’ be shrivelled up in God’s indignation—“I AM THAT I AM hath sent thee.” He must dominate. Is it not penetrating to realize that God knows where we live, and the kennels we crawl into! He will hunt us up like a lightning flash. No human being knows human beings as God does.

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## **The Power Of Affirmation**

September 10, 2013

Read: 1 Corinthians 1:4-9

I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus. —1 Corinthians 1:4

During a recent study, 200,000 employees were interviewed to discover the missing ingredient in their productivity. The study concluded that appreciation and affirmation topped the list of what they wanted most from their superiors. This research implies that receiving affirmation is a basic human need.

The apostle Paul seemed to realize this basic need in the Corinthian believers, so before he peppered them with firm words of discipline, he showered them with affirmation. As their spiritual leader, Paul began his letter with thanksgiving to God for the grace being displayed in their lives.

Once far from God, these believers were now participating in His grace through the death and resurrection of Christ. United with Jesus, they were drawing their spiritual life from Him, and the fruit of this union was their spiritual growth in godliness (1 Cor. 1:4-7). Paul deliberately and continually thanked God for His work in the Corinthian believers’ lives. I imagine that they were better able to bear firm criticism from Paul because of his tender affirmation.

When we see people who are obeying God, let’s take time to affirm them and to thank God for what He’s doing through them.

Lord, You are at work in so many ways in my life and in the people around me. Help me to encourage my brothers and sisters in Christ by telling them how I am blessed to see Your work in them.

**Praise loudly—correct softly.**

## **1 Corinthians 1:3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

NET 1 Corinthians 1:3 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:3 May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:3 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:3 χ ρ ις μ ν κα ε ρ ν η π θεο πατρ ς μ ν κα κυρ ου η σο Χριστο .

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:3 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:3 Good will and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are yours!

- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **Related Passages: Grace and Peace**

Romans 1:7 to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 1:2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Galatians 1:3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,

Ephesians 1:2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

1 Thes 1:1 Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

2 Thes 1:2 Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Ti 1:2 To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

2 Ti 1:2 To Timothy, my beloved son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Titus 1:4 To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Philemon 1:3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**A PRAYER FOR  
GRACE AND PEACE**



There is no verb in this verse and it functions in effect as Paul's prayer for the saints at Corinth. The NLT in my opinion rightly paraphrases it as a prayer - "*May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.*" (1Co 1:3NLT) So Paul prayed for the saints at Corinth to lay hold of and experience the transforming power of **grace** in their lives, because as we walk through the letter we see they were desperate need of God's **grace**. They had been saved by **grace** but now they needed to be transformed by that same **grace**! (AS WE ALL DO BELOVED!) **Grace** does not just get you in the door of salvation (which it of course does - Eph 2:8-9+), but God's **grace** is needed for the rest of our journey of salvation as long as we are in these fleshly bodies (cf Paul's testimony of the role of grace in his life in 1 Cor 15:10+ = *grace* mentioned three times!)! And even in eternity future God's grace will abound Paul writing "that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His **grace** in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." (Eph 2:7+)

**Grace to you** - **Grace** is first, because without **grace** transforming hearts which are naturally at enmity with God, there can be no supernatural peace with God. "God first reconciles sinners to Himself, before He bestows His peace upon them." (M. Henry) **Grace** prepares the way for the "peace treaty" so to speak. One cannot experience the peace **OF** God (Php 4:7+) until he has experienced peace **WITH** God, the peace that comes when we have "been justified by faith, (AND THEN) we have **peace WITH** God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Ro 5:1+) The personal reception and experience of **grace** and **peace** are dependent on the new covenant relationship with the Giver which is itself by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9+).

Since Paul is addressing those who have already been saved by **grace** (Eph 2:8-9+), and thus had been brought into a relation of **peace** with God (Ro 5:1+), the grace and peace for which he prays takes on a different significance ([see note below](#)).

**Utley** - Paul has changed the normal term for opening a Greek letter, "greetings" (charein), to a uniquely Christian one which sounds similar, charis ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Hodge** - "**Grace** is favour, and **peace** its fruits. The former includes all that is comprehended in the love of God as exercised towards sinners; and the latter all the benefits which flow from that love. All good, therefore, whether providential or spiritual, whether temporal or eternal, is comprehended in these terms: justification, adoption and sanctification, with all the benefits which either accompany or flow from them. These infinite blessings suppose an infinite Source; and as they are sought no less from Christ than from God the Father, Christ must be a divine person. It is to be remarked that God is called our Father, and Christ our Lord. God as God has not only created us, but renewed and adopted us. God in Christ has redeemed us. He is our owner and sovereign, to Whom our allegiance is immediately due; Who reigns in and rules over us, defending us from all His and our enemies. This is the peculiar form which piety assumes under the Gospel. All Christians regard God as their Father and Christ as their Lord. His person they love, His voice they obey, and in His protection they trust. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Vincent** - **Grace** is the Greek salutation, **peace** the Jewish. Both in the spiritual sense. Compare Nu. 6:25, 26+. This form of salutation is common to all Paul's epistles to the churches. In Timothy and Titus, mercy is added. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Ray Stedman** on **grace** - The interesting thing in this letter is there is no problem or wrestling with the matter of legalism. These people were not all caught up with wrong rituals (you have that in the letter to the Colossians); they were not involved with disputes over circumcision (you get that in Galatians); and there was no resting upon dead works (you get that in Philippians). Here in Corinthians the problem was **license**. They had accepted the **grace** of God to such a degree that they did not think it made any difference how they behaved, and that is what was causing the problem. Now, the apostle admits that they understood the grace of God. There are no questions raised in this letter on the deity of Christ, or the virgin birth, or the substitutionary atonement, or the incarnation of Jesus. They all understand that they were set free from their sins by the gift of God through Jesus Christ. Their entrance, therefore, is clearly based upon God's grace ([The Corinthian Crisis](#))

**Grace** (favor) ([5485](#)) **charis** from from **chairo** = to rejoice. Eng = charity. Beggars need "*charity*" just as sinners need *grace*, for we are all spiritual paupers outside of Christ, but "*God gives where he finds empty hands*"- Augustine [cp Mt 5:3+] defies a simple definition but at its core conveys the sense of favor. **Grace** in simple terms is God's unmerited favor and supernatural enablement and empowerment for salvation and for daily sanctification. Grace is everything for nothing to those who don't deserve anything. Grace is what every man needs, what none can earn and what God Alone can and does freely give (see Ro 8:32+ where "freely give" is [charizomai](#) from **charis** = a grace gift!). **Grace** addresses man's sin, while mercy addresses man's misery.

The **grace of God** is described as **Glorious** (Ep 1:6+), **Abundant** (Acts 4:33+), **Rich** (Ep 1:7+), **Manifold** (many-sided, multi-colored, variegated) (1Pe 4:10+), **Sufficient** (sufficing, enough, adequate - there is never a shortage) (2Cor 12:9+).

[Noah Webster's original definition of grace](#) is unmerited love and favor of God which is the spring and source of all benefits men receive from Him, including especially His assistance given man for his regeneration or

sanctification. (Grace is) a virtue from God influencing man, renewing his heart and restraining him from sin.

**John Newton** - "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound / That saved a wretch like me. / I once was lost, but now am found / was blind, but now I see." The words of this famous hymn were penned by John Newton. In the mid-1700s, Newton worked on a slave vessel and was described as the most profane man the captain had ever met. During a storm, Newton advised his fellow sailors to tie themselves to the ship to avoid being washed overboard. He begged God for mercy. God found him in his wretched state and redeemed him. Newton experienced the gift of God's grace.

**Grace** in the letters to **Corinth** - 1 Co. 1:3; 1 Co. 1:4; 1 Co. 3:10; 1 Co. 10:30; 1 Co. 15:10; 1 Co. 15:57; 1 Co. 16:3; 1 Co. 16:23; 2 Co. 1:2; 2 Co. 1:12; 2 Co. 1:15; 2 Co. 2:14; 2 Co. 4:15; 2 Co. 6:1; 2 Co. 8:1; 2 Co. 8:4; 2 Co. 8:6; 2 Co. 8:7; 2 Co. 8:9; 2 Co. 8:16; 2 Co. 8:19; 2 Co. 9:8; 2 Co. 9:14; 2 Co. 9:15; 2 Co. 12:9; 2 Co. 13:14;

**And peace** - Paul is praying for these saints who are experiencing *unpeaceful* circumstances of divisions, lawsuits, immorality, etc, that they would experience supernatural **peace**, the fruit of God's Spirit (Gal 5:22+). Paul knew that to experience **peace** with one's fellow man, they had to first experience the supernatural peace from God. The root of **peace** (*eirene*) is the verb *eiro* which means to join or bind together that which has been separated or divided, which is what was happening to believers in Corinth (1 Cor 1:10-11+).

In sum, the **church of God at Corinth** was in desperate need of God's **grace** (supernatural enablement and empowerment for daily sanctification) and **peace** (binding or joining together again of that which had been separated or divided and thus setting at one again). Thus Paul prayed for them to experience **grace and peace**!

Given that **grace** (*charis*) was a Greek greeting it is reasonable to consider that **peace** (*eirene*) reflects the Hebrew greeting **shalom** (which was also used as a farewell), *shalom* including the sense of health and well-being, as well as the absence of strife. One recalls the Aaronic blessing in Numbers 6:26+ which says "The LORD lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace (*shalom*)."

**Robertson on peace** - **Peace** (*eirēnē*) is more than the Hebrew so common in salutations. One recalls the "**peace**" that Christ leaves to us (John 14:27) and the **peace** of God that passes all understanding (Phil. 4:7). ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Peace** ([1515](#))(*eirene* from verb *eiro* = to join or bind together that which has been separated) literally pictures the binding or joining together again of that which had been separated or divided and thus setting at one again, a meaning conveyed by the common expression of one "having it all together". It follows that **peace** is the opposite of division or dissension. **Peace** as a state of concord and harmony is the opposite of war. **Peace** is a condition of freedom from disturbance, whether outwardly, as between church members or inwardly within the soul. **Eirene** can convey the sense of an inner rest, well being and harmony. The ultimate peace is the state of reconciliation with God, brought about by placing one's faith in the Gospel (Ro 5:1+, Ro 5:10+).

**Barclay** - "When Paul put together these two great words, **grace and peace**, (*charis* and *eirene*), he was doing something very wonderful. He was taking the normal greeting phrases of two great nations and molding them into one. *Charis* is the greeting with which Greek letters always began and *eirene* the greeting with which Jews met each other. Each of these words had its own flavor and each was deepened by the new meaning which Christianity poured into it. **Charis** is a lovely word; the basic ideas in it are joy and pleasure, brightness and beauty; it is, in fact, connected with the English word charm. But with Jesus Christ there comes a new beauty to add to the beauty that was there. And that beauty is born of a new relationship to God. With Christ life becomes lovely because man is no longer the victim of God's law but the child of his love. **Eirene** is a comprehensive word. We translate it **peace**; but it never means a negative peace, never simply the absence of trouble. It means total well-being, everything that makes for a man's highest good. It may well be connected with the Greek word *eirein*, which means to join, to weave together. And this peace has always got to do with personal relationships, a man's relationship to himself, to his fellow-men, and to God. It is always the peace that is born of reconciliation. So, when Paul prays for **grace and peace** on his people he is praying that they should have the joy of knowing God as Father and the peace of being reconciled to God, to men, and to themselves--and that grace and peace can come only through Jesus Christ. ([Philippians 1](#))

**ILLUSTRATION OF BIBLICAL PEACE** - Missionary **Jim Walton** who was translating the New Testament for the [Muinane](#) people of La Sabana in the jungles of Colombia. However, Jim was having trouble translating the word PEACE. About this same time (don't you love the PROVIDENCE of God!), Fernando, the village chief, was promised a 20-minute plane ride to a location that would have taken him 3 days to

travel by walking. The plane was delayed in arriving at La Sabana, so Fernando departed on foot. When the plane finally came, a runner took off to bring Fernando back. But by the time he had returned, the plane had left. Fernando was furious (loss of peace) because of the mix-up. He went to Jim and launched into an angry tirade. Fortunately, Walton taped the chief's diatribe and later when he translated it, he discovered that the chief kept repeating the phrase, "I don't have ONE HEART." Jim asked other villagers what having "ONE HEART" meant, and he found that it was like saying, "There is nothing between you and the other person." Walton realized that God had just given him the picture he needed to translate the word PEACE into their language! To have peace with God means that there is nothing—no sin, no guilt, no condemnation—that separates us from God, PEACE possible only through Christ, Paul writing "having been justified (declared eternally in right standing before God) by faith, we have PEACE WITH GOD through our Lord Jesus Christ." **Do you have "ONE HEART" with God today? Outside of Christ there is no peace. Only those who truly know Christ know true peace!**

**Related Resource:**

- Biblical Peace - Part 1 and Part 2

**From God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ-** The gifts of **grace** and **peace** are from the Father and the Son. They are the divine Source and this truth is important theologically because we clearly see the Lord Jesus Christ placed on a par with God the Father. How many times we hear someone say that Jesus is not truly God. Even passages like this refute that bogus argument!

**Uteley** adds that "The Father and Jesus are linked grammatically as one unit (one PREPOSITION, but two OBJECTS). This is a common way for NT authors to assert Jesus' deity (cf. 1 Thess. 1:1; 3:11; 2 Thess. 1:2, 12; 2:16). The application of the OT titles of God to Jesus is another way to assert the same truth (LORD); it is also an OT event, "Day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (cf. v. 8), now attributed to Jesus. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon - Grace** first, for that is the fountain; then **peace** comes, for that is the fitting stream to flow from the fountain of grace. Seek not peace first, for there is no peace for unregenerate man; grace first, then peace, and both must come "from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." Paul was going to blame them for some things that were not right, but he began by commending whatever good was in them by God's grace....Paul is a great preacher of grace, and therefore he is a great giver of thanks. Grace should be followed with thankfulness. "I thank my God." What a beautiful expression! Not only "I thank God," but "I thank my God." He has God in possession, he has taken him to be his own for ever and ever. Beloved, have we all done the same? Can we say, "I thank my God"? You notice how often Paul in the first ten verses mentions the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I think it is eleven times. He was full of Christ. Not only did he love Christ in his heart, but he had Christ's name continually on his tongue, for he was not ashamed of the sweet name of Jesus Christ. Honey in the mouth, music in the ear, heaven in the heart, is that sweet name of Jesus.

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**Lowell Johnson** - There are a lot of different kinds of grace in the Bible:

- There is **Saving Grace** Ephesians 2:8+
- There is **Standing Grace** Romans 5:2+ It allows us the privilege of standing up for Christ
- There is **Singing Grace** Colossians 3:16+ We sing about grace: - "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound" "Wonderful grace of Jesus, reaching the most defiled, By its transforming power, making me God's dear child." Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace. Grace that is greater than all our sin
- There is **Service Grace** Hebrews 12:28+
- There is **Sufficient (or Suffering) Grace** 2 Cor. 12:9+

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**Norman Geisler** - 1 CORINTHIANS 1:3—Does this verse prove that Jesus is God the Father, as [Oneness Pentecostals](#) believe?

**MISINTERPRETATION:** In 1 Corinthians 1:3 we read the salutation, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (NASB). [Oneness Pentecostals](#) argue that the word and (Greek: kai) in the phrase "God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" should be translated "even." It should thus read, "God our Father, even the Lord Jesus Christ." Translated this way, Jesus and the Father are seen to be one and the same person (Graves, 1977, 50–51; cf. Bernard, 1983, 207–11).

**CORRECTING THE MISINTERPRETATION:** See comments on Romans 1:7. Note that the verse immediately after 1 Corinthians 1:3 points to the distinction between the Father and Jesus Christ (see 1 Cor 1:4). ([When Cultists Ask](#))

Wuest (paraphrase) - I am thanking my God always concerning you, the cause of my thanksgiving being the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:4 I always thank my God for you because of the grace of God that was given to you in Christ Jesus.

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:4 I always thank my God for you and for the gracious gifts he has given you, now that you belong to Christ Jesus.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:4 I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus,

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:4 I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus.

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:4 Εχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ ἰησοῦ,

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:4 I give thanks to my God always concerning you for the grace of God that was given to you in Christ Jesus,

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:4 I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus;

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:4 I always thank my God for you because of God's grace given to you in Christ Jesus,

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:4 I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus,

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:4 I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus,

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:4 I give thanks to my God always on your account for the grace of God bestowed on you in Christ Jesus,

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:4 I am continually thanking God about you, for the grace of God which you have been given in Christ Jesus;

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:4 I always thank God for you because Christ Jesus has shown you God's good will.

- **thank:** Ro 1:8 6:17 Ac 11:23 21:20
- **the grace:** 1Co 1:3 Joh 10:30 Jn 14:14,16,26 Jn 15:26 1Ti 1:14
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GRATITUDE TO GOD FOR HIS GRACE

This verse continues the prayer begun in 1 Cor 1:7 and extends through 1 Cor 1:8. Some would add it includes verse 9.

I (continually) **thank my God** (my God in Ro 1:8+, Php 1:3+, Philemon 1:4) **always concerning you** - Paul does not say "I thank God for your faithfulness and your good behavior and that you are such nice people." The NET version tells us why he thanks God = "I always thank my God for you **because of the grace of God** that was given to you in Christ Jesus." (1Co 1:4NET) **Thank** is from two words meaning "good grace," and here Paul expresses "good grace" to God for His grace which (1) is a gift and (2) is found in Christ Jesus.

Paul is possessive of God (**my God**, cf Jesus' words - Jn 20:17) and so too should we be beloved. Paul will expand on the things he is thankful for in the Corinthians in 1 Cor 1:4-9. **Thank** is in the present tense so that Paul is saying (despite [all the problems](#) in the Corinthian church) that he is continually thankful to God for them! In addition the adverb **always** ([pantote](#)) means without exception, in all times and in all circumstances! Paul practiced what he preached when he commanded believers "in everything **give thanks** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)); for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Th 5:18+).

**THOUGHT - MY GOD** shows us the intensely personal relationship Paul had with God. God was not at a

distance for Paul; He was close, He was his Father and his Friend. Not only does the believer have a right to offer prayers to God because of Jesus Christ, but also he has a right to claim God as "MY GOD" because of Jesus Christ. There is an expression "**Possession** is nine-tenths of the **law** which means that ownership is easier to maintain if one has **possession** of something. However because of the Gospel Paul's possession of God was 10/10th's and not of the law but of grace. Because you are in Christ Jesus Who Himself declared "My God," (Mt 27:46, Mk 15:34, John 20:17), you can rightfully and boldly speak of "my God." If this does not boggle our mind, I don't know what will!

As an aside there is no thanksgiving in the introductions of 2 Corinthians or Galatians. As another aside, Paul's continual attitude of gratitude is another manifestation that he is continually filled with/controlled by the Holy Spirit because in Eph 5:20+ he describes gratitude as one manifestation of being filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18+) Who energizes one to be "always giving thanks ([eucharisteo](#) - present tense) for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father."

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, by Paul's "descriptive definition" of a Spirit filled believer (a continual attitude of gratitude), would you say that you are Spirit filled today? If not go to God for an "attitude check" (pray Ps 139:23-24+) and confess any shortfall (Eph 4:30+, 1 Th 5:19+, 1 Jn 1:9+, Pr 28:13+) and be filled with supernaturally empowered gratitude even in the face of the adverse circumstances and/or "adverse" people! (cf Jas 1:2-4+)

**Thank** (2168) ([eucharisteo](#) from **eucháristos** = thankful, grateful, well-pleasing - Indicates the obligation of being thankful to someone for a favor done <> in turn from **eú** = well + **charizomai** = to grant, give.; English - Eucharist) means to show that one is under obligation by being thankful. To show oneself as grateful (most often to God in the NT). **Eucharisteo** is a word that at its very core (**eu** = good + **charis** = grace) means to acknowledge how **good grace** is! **Eucharisteo** describes a person who is depending on God's grace moment by moment. Most of the NT uses are by Paul and most uses rightly refer to gratitude to God! The [present tense](#) in 1 Cor 1:4 pictures this as Paul's lifestyle, a life only possible under the control of the Spirit (see comments above).

**Eucharisteo** is also a significant word in the spiritual declension of mankind, Paul writing "For even though they knew God (NOTE - ALL MEN KNOW GOD EXISTS WHETHER THEY ACKNOWLEDGE IT OR NOT! THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A TRUE ATHEIST!), they did not honor Him as God or **GIVE THANKS** ([eucharisteo](#)), (NOTICE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR FAILURE TO GIVE HONOR AND THANKS!) but **they became futile in their speculations**, and their **foolish heart was darkened**." (Ro 1:21+)

Uses of **eucharisteo** in Corinthians - 1 Co. 1:4; 1 Co. 1:14; 1 Co. 10:30; 1 Co. 11:24; 1 Co. 14:17; 1 Co. 14:18; 2 Co. 1:11

#### **Related Resource:**

- Special Topic - [Thanksgiving](#) (Bob Utley)
- God's will for believers - 1 Thes 5:18+

**Leon Morris** - Merely human achievement means little to Paul; in the flesh 'nothing good lives' (Ro 7:18+). He gives thanks, not for what the Corinthians have done of themselves, but for what God's grace given ... in Christ Jesus has accomplished in them. ([Full text of 1 Corinthians TNTC Leon Morris](#))

**Spurgeon on I thank my God always** - Not only, "I thank God," but "**I thank MY God**." Paul had God in possession. He had taken Him to be his own forever and ever. Notice how often Paul, in the first ten verses, mentions the name of the **Lord Jesus Christ**—at least ten times. He was full of Christ. Not only did he love Christ in his heart, but he had Christ's Name continually on his tongue, for he was not ashamed of the sweet Name of Jesus Christ. "**I always thank my God for you**." That was wisely written, for Paul was about to rebuke these Corinthians for many serious faults, yet he began by acknowledging that they had certain excellences. Such an approach gives one ground to stand on if a person is willing to see all that is good in those who have to be rebuked. But Paul did not merely use this as a polite way of commencing his letter. He really did **thank God** every day (present tense) for the divine **grace** these Corinthians had. How seldom do we thank God for the grace he has given other people, especially if they outshine us. It was not so with Paul. (Are you as convicted as I am?) ([CSB Spurgeon Study Bible](#))

**THOUGHT** - Paul will later spend most of this letter rebuking sin and correcting error, yet he is still sincerely thankful for God's work in the Corinthian Christians. Those who feel called to rebuke sin and correct error in the church today should follow Paul's example. Unfortunately, many of them never communicate any encouragement with their correction and advice. (David Guzik [1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**THOUGHT** - As a young man in theological training I was deeply impressed by the counsel of Joe Blinco of the



Billy Graham Evangelistic Association regarding how to criticize constructively, avoiding the cynical type of criticism often leveled at Billy Graham. "First of all," he said, "stand back in awe of the working of God. Then, offer suggestions on how certain things should be changed." This seems to be Paul's approach. Before he administers his somewhat harsh words of correction, he genuinely compliments them "so that the Corinthians may willingly accept and drink down the cup of saving medicine, its rim being coated with sugar" (Colet 1985:75). (Alan Johnson - 1 Corinthians)

**Gordon Fee** says "What is remarkable here is the apostle's ability to thank God for the very things in the church that, because of the abuses, are also causing him grief." ([The First Epistle to the Corinthians](#))

**Robertson** - The grounds of Paul's thanksgivings in his Epistles are worthy of study. Even in the church in Corinth he finds something to thank God for, though in 2 Corinthians there is no expression of thanksgiving because of the acute crisis in Corinth nor is there any in Galatians. But Paul is gracious here and allows his general attitude (always, [[pantote](#)]) concerning ([peri], around) the Corinthians to override the specific causes of irritation. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Always** ([3842](#))([pantote](#) from **pás** = all, every + **tóte** = when, then) an adverb which literally is "every when" means always, at all times, ever (more), on all occasions. In **English** **always** is defined - invariably, forever, perpetually, on every occasion, throughout all time, without variation. The Greek word means continually, regularly, repeatedly or constantly during a certain period, or regularly at stated intervals; Without exception. Every time. **Only a Spirit empowered person can be thankful ALWAYS! This is another marker that Paul was continually a Spirit filled man!**

#### Related Resources:

- [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)
- [Filled with His Spirit/Richly Indwelt with His Word](#) - Chart Comparing

**For the grace** (see [charis](#)) **of God which was given** (divine passive) **you in Christ Jesus** - Everything good in the Corinthians (and in us beloved) flowed from God's fountain of amazing, infinite, matchless **grace!** **Was given** is past tense, this aspect of grace being dispensed the moment they believed in Jesus Christ. Paul identifies the Source of their **grace** as from **God** and **in Christ Jesus**. Here we see the "classic definition" of **grace** as a gift from God with no evidence that such a gift is earned. This **grace** is **in Christ Jesus** which means "in the sphere of" **Christ Jesus** (see [locative of sphere](#) below). John wrote "For of His fullness we have all received, and **grace upon grace**." (John 1:16+, cf "be strong in the **grace** that is **in Christ Jesus**" - 2 Ti 2:1+). As Paul said in Acts 17:28+ "**in Him** we live and move and exist." Since we are **in Christ**, this **grace** is always accessible, but we have to lay hold of it just as you do with any gift.

**THOUGHT** - The gift of **the grace of God in Christ Jesus** is laid hold of (so to speak) by **faith** -- by *believing* and by *obeying* God's instructions, enabled by that same grace (ultimately dispensed by the Spirit of Grace - Heb 10:29+ Who gives us the *desire* and *power* to obey [Php 2:13NLT+]). And since it is **in Christ Jesus**, this divine grace is available to us in infinite supply as He Himself testified declaring "My **grace** is sufficient, for power ([dunamis](#)) is perfected in weakness." (2 Cor 12:9+). The corollary is if you think you are strong, you will blunt the flow of grace (grace flows in a "downward direction" for God is "opposed ([antitasso](#) in present tense) to the proud, but gives **grace** to the humble" where humble [[tapeinos](#)] means "low down," near the ground, like the Nile River at low ebb - James 4:6+, cf 1 Cor 15:10+)

**Bob Utley** adds that "Believers live and move and have their being **in Christ**. (IN CHRIST JESUS EXPRESSES) this intimate union, this **sphere** of fellowship, this vine and branch relationship (cf Jn 15:5). Believers identify with and join with Christ in His death, in His resurrection, in His obedience and service to God, and in His Kingdom!" ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Grace** (favor) ([5485](#)) see preceding discussion of [charis](#)

**Of God** - 72x in 61v in letters to Corinth - 1 Co. 1:1; 1 Co. 1:2; 1 Co. 1:4; 1 Co. 1:18; 1 Co. 1:21; 1 Co. 1:24; 1 Co. 1:25; 1 Co. 2:1; 1 Co. 2:5; 1 Co. 2:10; 1 Co. 2:11; 1 Co. 2:14; 1 Co. 3:10; 1 Co. 3:16; 1 Co. 3:17; 1 Co. 4:1; 1 Co. 4:20; 1 Co. 6:9; 1 Co. 6:10; 1 Co. 7:19; 1 Co. 7:40; 1 Co. 9:21; 1 Co. 10:31; 1 Co. 10:32; 1 Co. 11:7; 1 Co. 11:16; 1 Co. 11:22; 1 Co. 12:3; 1 Co. 14:36; 1 Co. 15:9; 1 Co. 15:10; 1 Co. 15:15; 1 Co. 15:34; 1 Co. 15:50; 2 Co. 1:1; 2 Co. 1:12; 2 Co. 1:19; 2 Co. 1:20; 2 Co. 2:17; 2 Co. 4:2; 2 Co. 4:4; 2 Co. 4:6; 2 Co. 4:7; 2 Co. 4:15; 2 Co. 5:21; 2 Co. 6:1; 2 Co. 6:4; 2 Co. 6:7; 2 Co. 6:16; 2 Co. 7:1; 2 Co. 7:9; 2 Co. 7:10; 2 Co. 7:12; 2 Co. 8:1; 2 Co. 8:5; 2 Co. 9:14; 2 Co. 10:5; 2 Co. 11:7; 2 Co. 12:19; 2 Co. 13:4; 2 Co. 13:14

**Grace of God** - 21x in 20v in the NT (8 uses in the Corinthian letters) - Lk. 2:40; Acts 11:23; Acts 13:43;



Acts 14:26; Acts 20:24; Rom. 5:15; 1 Co. 1:4; 1 Co. 3:10; 1 Co. 15:10 (twice); 2 Co. 1:12; 2 Co. 6:1; 2 Co. 8:1; 2 Co. 9:14; Gal. 2:21; Col. 1:6; Tit. 2:11; Heb. 2:9; Heb. 12:15; 1 Pet. 4:10; 1 Pet. 5:12

**Spurgeon** - That is wisely written, for Paul was about to upbraid these Corinthians for many serious faults, yet he begins by acknowledging that they had certain excellences. It gives you a ground to stand upon if you are willing to see all that is good in those whom you have to rebuke. But Paul did not merely use this as a polite way of commencing his epistle, but he did really every day thank God for the grace which these Corinthians had; yet how seldom do we thank God for the grace that he has given to other people, especially if they outshine us, if they do more for the cause of God than we do; then, we half regret that they have so much grace, but it was not so with Paul....It is something to be thankful for God's goodness to yourself, but it is a higher virtue to be thankful for God's goodness to others. How grateful we might be all day long if we had a quick eye to see the grace of God in our fellow-Christians, and if we blessed God for it whenever we saw it! There are some whose eye is much more quick to see imperfections than to see graces; it is a pity to have such a jaundiced eye as that; may we have a good, sound, clear, gracious eye, which will see all the good there is in our fellow-believers; and may we then ascribe it all to God, and bless and praise him for it!

**James Smith** - "I THANK MY GOD." (1 Cor. 1:4). It is delightfully easy to thank God for the grace we ourselves have received, but it requires great grace to thank God always for the grace which is given to others. Even Christians are apt to be jealous and envious, thinking themselves better fitted to serve God than their neighbours. Such selfishness can never walk in the fellowship of the Spirit. "In honour preferring one another." We are unfit to be used of God as long as we are unwilling to acknowledge and thank God for the grace and gifts He has bestowed on others for the edifying of the Body, the Church. This readiness to thank God always for the grace given to others shows a spirit in full and sweetest fellowship with the mind and purposes of God. (Handfuls of Purpose)

## LOCATIVE OF SPHERE: MEANING & SIGNIFICANCE

- See more detailed discussion with additional examples at [Locative of Sphere](#)

**Wuest** (commenting on Ro 12:7 "if service, **in** his serving; or he who teaches, **in** his teaching;") has this informative note (specifically commenting on the preposition "**en**" = "**in**" in Ro 12:7 - "*en te diakonia...en te didaskalia*" = "**in** his serving...**in** his teaching"): The word "**ministry**" is in the **locative of sphere**. The exhortation is that the one who renders service should render service **in the realm or sphere in which God placed him and for which He gave him that gift**. Moule says of this word, "Almost any work other than that of inspired utterance or miracle-working may be included in it here." Godet says; "An activity of the practical nature exerted in action, not in word." As to teaching, it is aimed at the understanding, with reference to exhortation, at the heart and will (Vincent). Both words are in the **locative of sphere**, the idea being that the one who is given a teaching gift **should remain within the exercise of that gift**, and the one who has been given the gift of exhortation, **within the exercise of that gift**. It is a wise man who **stays within the sphere of service** for which God the Holy Spirit has fitted him, and does not invade some other field of service for which he is not fitted. ([Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1](#), [Volume 2](#), [Volume 3](#)) (Bolding added)

**Wuest** in another note on Jude 1:20 - The words, "**praying in the Holy Ghost**" show how the saints are to build themselves up on their most holy faith. That is, prayer is the vital factor in the Christian life which activates all the other departments of the Christian experience. "Ghost" is the translation of *pneuma* (πνεῦμα), the word in other places rendered "Spirit." "Ghost" is obsolete English as used here for the word "spirit." "In the Holy Ghost" is **locative of sphere**. That is, all true prayer is exercised **in the sphere of the Holy Spirit, motivated and empowered by Him. That means that if the saint expects to really pray, he must be Spirit-filled or Spirit-controlled. The fullness of the Holy Spirit is the prerequisite to effectual praying.** (READ THAT AGAIN BELOVED!) The Spirit, when yielded to, leads us in our petitions and generates within us the faith necessary to acceptable and answered prayer. The expression "praying in the Holy Ghost" is also instrumental of means. We pray by means of the Holy Spirit, in dependence upon Him. ([Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1](#), [Volume 2](#), [Volume 3](#))

**Wuest** on Eph 1:6 - The words "**in the Beloved**" are **locative of sphere**. That is, God the Father freely bestowed on us the grace which saved us, and did so in the sphere of the Lord Jesus, His Person and His work on the Cross. ([Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1](#), [Volume 2](#), [Volume 3](#))

**Wuest** on Eph 2:1-2 - "trespasses and sins, **IN** which you formerly walked" - We have here the **locative of sphere**. The unsaved order their behavior, regulate their lives **within the sphere of trespasses and sins**. All their thoughts, words, and deeds are ensphered by sin. Not one of their acts ever gets outside this circle of sin. That is what is meant by total depravity. The word "walked" is in the aorist tense, the classification, constative, a construction which looks at a thing or an action as a complete unit, looks at it in a panoramic view. The whole life of the unsaved person is nothing but sin. ([Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing](#))

**Bob Utley** on 1 Th 2:14 - "**in Christ Jesus**" This phrase takes the LOCATIVE OF SPHERE CASE, which means "in" or "surrounded by"—an atmosphere, like a fish in water. A very common Pauline expression, it speaks of our union with Jesus. We live and move and have our being in Him. For an example of Paul's use of this form notice Eph. 1:3–14: (1) "in Christ" Eph 1:3, 10, 12; (2) "in Him" Eph 1:4, 7, 9, 10, 13 (twice); (3) "in the Beloved" Eph 1:6....."In Christ" (a LOCATIVE of sphere) is Paul's most common way of identifying believers. For life, true life, abundant life, believers must remain in vital union with Christ by faith (cf. Jn 15). (**ED**: The idea of "**remain**" speaks of our practice, for we are positionally in Christ forever. Sadly our practice often does not match our position!) ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Alan Carr** adds this note on **locative of sphere** in the phrase "**in Christ**" - In the Greek, this phrase is known as a "locative of sphere." A "**locative**" tells us where something is. The "**sphere**" speaks of a things location in relationship to other things. So, when the Bible says that we are "**in Christ**," it means that we live within the sphere of Christ. In other words, Jesus Christ is that which surrounds us. No matter where we go, we cannot step out of Jesus. You can step out of a circle, but you cannot step out of a sphere. A sphere surrounds all that is within it. In like manner, Jesus Christ totally surrounds all those who are in Him. When you consider our location with regards too the area of our security, we are eternally safe because we cannot step out of the sphere of Christ. No matter where we run we still within His sphere and we cannot escape from Him. When we consider our position within the sphere of Christ with regards to our daily walk, it reminds us that every step occurs within the sphere of our relationship to Jesus Christ. Every action, every thought, every deed should be considered in the light of who we are, Whose we are and where we are. Because we are "in Christ," that is ever within the sphere of His presence, His influence and His will, we conform every area of our lives to His will. Simply stated, because we are "in Him," we should live like we are "in Him."

**Rod Mattoon** - The expression in 1 Th 1:1, "The church of the Thessalonians **IN** God," has in it the same idea, for the Greek case is **locative of sphere** which means it is in the sphere of God, circumscribed by God, surrounded by Him. We are under God's care and He will bring us home to Glory when it is our time. Until then we are under His care. Paul rested in this truth.

Jude 1:21 we read "keep yourselves in the love of God" where **IN** is **locative of sphere**, indicating as Wuest translates it "**within the sphere of God's love**." Let love be the "atmosphere" you breathe and in which you obey Jude's command to watch over yourselves. The expression in 1 Thessalonians 1:1, "The church of the Thessalonians in God," has in it the same idea, for the Greek case is **locative of sphere**. That is, it is in the sphere of God, circumscribed by God, surrounded by Him.

**Wuest** on Galatians 5:16+ - The Christian is exhorted to walk in the Spirit. The word "walk" is used in an early Greek manuscript in the sentence, "I am going about in a disgraceful state." The writer of this sentence was commenting upon the kind of life he was living, how he was conducting himself. The form in the Greek shows that it is a command to be constantly obeyed. "Be constantly conducting yourselves in the Spirit." The word "Spirit," referring here to the Holy Spirit, is in the **locative of sphere**, and could be charted by a dot within a circle. The dot is ensphered within the circle. The exhortation therefore is, "**Be constantly conducting yourselves in the sphere of the Spirit**." That is, determine every thought, word, and deed by the leading of the Spirit through the Word, and think every thought, speak every word, and do every deed, in an attitude of entire dependence upon the Holy Spirit's empowering energy, "Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5+).([Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1](#), [Volume 2](#), [Volume 3](#))

**Wuest** on Php 2:1 - "**to all the saints in Christ Jesus**" - The phrase "**in Christ Jesus**" was necessary in defining just who these saints were. The Greek word "saint" was used in Philippi as a name for individual worshippers in the pagan Greek religions. Paul wished to differentiate the saints of God from the "saints" in the Greek mystery religions. The word "in" is used with the **locative of sphere**. These saints were saints in the sphere of Christ. That is, Christ is the sphere in which the believer has his new life and all his interests and activities. The believer's new existence is circumscribed by Christ. Paul put this in other words in the expression, "For to me to live is Christ." That is, the new life Paul has is Christ, which issues in a Christ-like life. Here again we have separation, for that which surrounds the believer, namely, Christ in whom he is ensphered, separates him from all else. ([Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1](#), [Volume 2](#), [Volume 3](#))

**Wuest** on 1 Jn 1:6 "and yet walk **IN** the darkness" - The case of the noun is **locative of sphere**. He walks, that is, orders his behavior, conducts himself (peripateō - present tense) in the sphere of the darkness of sin. His actions and words are ensphered by sin. Nothing of God's righteousness or goodness ever enters that circle of sin which surrounds this person. The individual making this claim of fellowship with God while at the same time ordering his behavior within the sphere of sin, is an unsaved person. John says that in making that claim, he is lying, and he is not doing the truth. ([Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1](#), [Volume 2](#), [Volume 3](#))

**MacArthur** has a negative example in Col 2:13 - Like all of sinful mankind, the Colossians were dead in their transgressions before their salvation (cf. Eph. 2:1). The Greek construction is a **locative of sphere**. Unbelievers exist **in the sphere or realm of spiritual death**. To be spiritually dead means to be devoid of any sense, unable to respond to spiritual stimuli, just as to be physically dead

means to be unable to respond to physical stimuli. It is to be so locked in sin's grasp that one is unable to respond to God. The Bible and spiritual truth make no sense to one in such a state. Those who are spiritually dead are dominated by the world, the flesh, and Satan and possess no spiritual, eternal life.

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## **James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - THE CALL OF GOD. 1 Corinthians 1:4-9**

All true Christian experience has its origin in the call of God: "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." "Whom He called, them He also justified" (Romans 8:30). We shall note some precious things inherent in this call. It is—

### **I. The Call of Grace.**

"The grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ" (v. 4). This grace by Jesus Christ could never come as a response to human merit. "By grace are you saved, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8+). In grace He calls, because that, while "we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Ro 5:8+)

### **II. A Call to Enrichment.**

"**In everything you are** enriched by Him, in all utterance and all knowledge" (v. 5). The new life in Christ is enriched with a new value and a new power. There is a deeper knowledge of God, a clear vision of the treasure of His Word, and fuller expression of all these in the life. Truly he is a rich man. Rich in faith, rich toward God.

### **III. A Call to Patient Waiting.**

"You came behind in no gift. Waiting for the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is to be feared that many do come behind in their gift of looking for the Coming of the Lord. The Christians at Thessalonica had this gift (1 Thessalonians 1:9, 10). We should be thankful that this gift is being freely bestowed on God's people in these days.

### **IV. A Call to a Blameless Life.**

"That you may be blameless in the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 8) Herein lies the practical use of this "Blessed Hope," which is often questioned by the unbelieving. Our lives must be affected by our prospects. "Every man that has this hope in him purifies himself" (1 John 3:3). How say you then that there is no good in looking for His Coming?

### **V. A Call to Fellowship.**

"You were called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (v. 9). Brethren, what a high calling this is! Called into partnership with God's Son in seeking to save the lost and in the building up of His Church, and in the hastening of His Kingdom. In all this we are to be—not sleeping partners, but—active "co-workers together with Him." We are called into fellowship with Him, but the "capital" is all His own in this great business. "For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). And from this fullness have we all received.

### **VI. A Call by a Faithful God.**

"God is faithful by whom you were called" (v. 9). This holy calling does imply serious responsibility. We might well tremble when we think of our own poverty and ignorance and weakness. But then, it was by the God who is ever true to His promise that you were called. Hear what the apostle says to the merciful Philippians: "**My God**, (so great in His wealth in Christ Jesus) will supply **ALL** your needs according to His riches in glory in IN CHRIST JESUS" (Philippians 4:19+). Only believe!

**1 Corinthians 1:5 that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge,**

Wuest (paraphrase) - I mean that in everything you were made rich in Him, this wealth being in the form of every exuberant aptitude in proclaiming the Word and in the form of every kind of experiential knowledge, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:5 For you were made rich in every way in him, in all your speech and in every kind of knowledge—

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:5 Through him, God has enriched your church in every way-- with all of your eloquent words and all of your knowledge.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:5 that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge--

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:5 For in him you have been enriched in every way--in all your speaking and in all your knowledge--

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:5 τι ν παντ πλουτ σθητε ν α τ , ν παντ λ γ κα π σ γν σει,

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:5 That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge;

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:5 that in every thing ye were enriched in him, in all discourse and all knowledge,

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:5 that in everything ye were enriched in him, in all utterance and all knowledge;

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:5 that by Him you were enriched in everything-- in all speech and all knowledge.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:5 that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge,

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:5 for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind--

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:5 that in him you were enriched in every way, with all discourse and all knowledge,

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:5 in him you have been richly endowed in every kind of utterance and knowledge;

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:5 Through Christ Jesus you have become rich in every way-in speech and knowledge of every kind.

BBE 1 Corinthians 1:5 So that in him you have wealth in all things, in word and in knowledge of every sort;

- **in everything you were enriched** 1Co 4:7-10 Ro 11:12 2Co 9:11 Eph 2:6-7 3:8
- **in all speech** 1Co 12:8,10 14:5,6,26 Ac 2:4 2Co 8:7 Eph 6:19 Col 4:3,4
- **and in:** 1Co 8:11 13:2,8 Ro 15:4 2Co 4:6 Eph 1:17 Php 1:9 Col 1:9,10 2:3 Col 3:10 Jas 3:13 2Pe 3:18
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Corinthians 4:7-10 For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? 8You are already filled, you have already become rich, you have become kings without us; and indeed, I wish that you had become kings so that we also might reign with you. 9For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. 10We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are prudent in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are distinguished, but we are without honor.

### YOU ARE RICH IN CHRIST

**That in everything you were enriched in Him** - Not just some things, but **everything! Everything** (note Paul's 3 uses of "all" in one verse) refers not to material, worldly riches, but the more precious, invaluable, spiritual, eternal riches found only **in Him**, in Christ, our all in all. **Hodge** adds "in every respect they were richly endowed with **the gifts of the Spirit**" In short **everything...in Him!** This verse explains the **grace of God** which was given to the saints at Corinth pointing out the grace gifts (charisma) that God had bestowed on the church (**speech...knowledge**, etc). As **Robertson** says "Paul points out in detail the unusual spiritual gifts which were their glory and became their peril (1 Cor 12-14)." So here Paul thanks God for their spiritual giftedness, but later he will **take them to task** for their abuses of their gifts!

The poorest saint is richer than the richest pagan!

Paul elaborates on **in everything** in 2 Corinthians 8:7 and calls for them to practice their privileged position...

But just as you abound in **everything**, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, **see that you abound in this gracious work also.**

**Wiersbe** - The Greek word ([ploutizo](#)) translated "**enriched**" gives us our English word **plutocrat**, "a very wealthy person." The Corinthians were especially rich in spiritual gifts (2 Cor. 8:7), but were not using these gifts in a spiritual manner. The fact that God has called us, set us apart, and enriched us ought to encourage us to live holy lives. ([The Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

They were rendered [plutocrats](#), spiritually. They had a wealth of enrichment.

**Smith** - The new life in Christ is **enriched** with a new value and a new power. There is a deeper knowledge of God, a clear vision of the treasure of His Word, and fuller expression of all these in the life. Truly he is a rich man. Rich in faith, rich toward God.

**MacArthur on in everything...in Him** - We have **everything** that Christ has to give, and He gives **everything** we need—though many times not **everything** we want. God's "divine power has granted (**ED**: perfect tense = a permanent gift!) to us **everything** pertaining to life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3+), which is all a believer needs and should be all he wants. In Jesus Christ we "have been made complete" (Col. 2:10+). "All things belong to [us]" (1 Cor. 3:21+). ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Utley** - Notice Paul's use in this verse of three **pas** ("all" or "everything"). God is a complete provider. He does not need the ingenuity, intellect, or social standing of human beings. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**In all speech and all knowledge (gnosis) - Wuest** = "this wealth being in the form of every exuberant aptitude in proclaiming the Word and in the form of every kind of experiential knowledge." **Phillips** paraphrases it "from the words on your lips to the understanding in your hearts." ([Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#)) God was the Source of it all! These were both attributes the culture at Corinth held in high esteem (cf 1 Cor 12:8, 13:1-2, 2 Cor 8:7) **Speech** is the outward expression of their **knowledge**. Paul is saying they are fully "equipped" for God honoring ministry. Sadly he will go on to say they are not using their gifts in a God honoring way. For example, Paul uses **gnosis** in 1 Cor 8:1+ writing "Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have **knowledge (gnosis)** . **Knowledge (gnosis)** makes arrogant, but love edifies." And in 1 Cor 13:2+ he writes "If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all **Knowledge (gnosis)** ; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing."

**Morris** - He singles out two points, speaking, the telling forth of the truth, and knowledge, the grasp of the truth (Robertson points out that it is important to have something worth saying and not mere fluency). '**He selects the gifts of which the Corinthians were especially proud**' (Parry). He later combines the two in 'the word of knowledge' (1 Cor 12:8). (Ibid) (bold added)

**MacArthur on the practical implication of all...all** - We have **all** the **speech and knowledge** necessary to accomplish **all** God wants us to do. We will always be able to say everything God wants us to say and to know everything He wants us to know His will is concurrent with His enablement. The particular speech in mind here is that of telling God's truth. God gives every believer the capacity to speak for Him. We do not all have eloquence, an impressive vocabulary, or a captivating personality. But we all have the necessary God-given ability, the same capability and the same capacity, to speak for Him in the unique way that He wants us to speak. **Besides lack of holiness, I believe the most common failure of Christians is in not speaking for their Lord.** The most frequent excuses are "I don't know what to say" or "I don't know how to say it" or "I just don't think I can do it" (**ED**: See [Related Note below](#)). ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**THOUGHT** - All believers have received "**all speech**" and thus we are fully equipped to speak forth the mystery of the Gospel to those who are lost and perishing all around us! Not only do we have the speech or words, we have the power for Jesus promised in Acts 1:8+ "you will receive **power (dunamis)** when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and **you shall be My witnesses.**" And what does the **power** of the Spirit give us? Acts 4:31+ explains "when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the Word of God (THE GOSPEL) with boldness." (And pray Acts 4:29+) If we are filled with the Word (**all speech** - cp Col 3:16+) and filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18+), we are supernaturally prepared to speak boldly of Christ and the salvation found only in Him (Acts 4:12+). When was the last time you spoke boldly of Christ to a soul that is daily in danger of dying and being eternally separated from God? (See also [Filled with His Spirit/Richly Indwelt with His Word](#))

**Robertson** - "The outward expression (**speech** [logōi]) here is put before the inward **knowledge** ([gnōsei]) which should precede all **speech**. But we get at one's **knowledge** by means of his **speech**. 1 Cor 12–14 throw much light on this element in the spiritual gifts of the Corinthians (the gift of tongues, interpreting tongues, discernment) as summed up in 1 Cor. 13:1, 2, the greater gifts of 1 Cor 12:31. It was a marvellously endowed church in spite of their perversions." ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Vincent on speech** - aptitude in speech. Paul gives thanks for speech as a means of testifying for Christ. "The saints have never been silent" (Pascal).

**S Lewis Johnson on speech** - probably includes more than the gift of tongues (cf. 1 Cor 12:8-10, 28-30). The Corinthians had a wide assortment of utterance gifts (see 1 Cor 14:26).

**Utley on speech and knowledge** - These were two aspects of the Greek-oriented (later Gnostic) spiritual pride which was developing in the Corinthian church (cf. 1 Cor 13:1–3). They were glorying in their gifts and performance instead of in Christ and in the God Who gave them these very gifts. There was/is no room for human pride (cf. Eph. 2:9). The knowledge Paul is alluding to is



not theoretical or academic knowledge, but Christian truth and its application to life (cf. 8–10; Ro. 14:1–15:13). Human knowledge builds up, but God's knowledge edifies and leads to peace and harmony in the Christian fellowship. Oh how we need God's gift of knowledge in the church today! ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Telford on knowledge** - They knew "Truth from Error." They knew the errors of Paganism and the essentials of Christianity. They couldn't plead ignorance or inability.

**Spurgeon** - The church at Corinth was an important church, with more than the usual number of speaking men among the members. This led to mischief, but had they known how to use this talent aright, the church at Corinth might have been of great service; instead of watch, it split itself up into little parties, and became one of the worst churches that then existed, as certain communities which imitate them in this present day, have also done....t was very wise of Paul thus to praise these Corinthians where they could be praised, for he was about to upbraid them and reprove them for many things which were not pleasing to God. If you have the unpleasant duty of rebuking those who deserve it, always take care that you begin by saying all that you can, and all that you ought, in their favor; it will prepare the way for what you have to say to them afterwards. The Corinthians were a highly-gifted church; they probably had more knowledge and more of the gifts of utterance than any other church of their day; but, alas! they fell into greater sin than did their sister churches. Great gifts are not great graces; but great gifts require great graces to go with them, or else they become a temptation and a snare. Yet Paul felt quite sure that God would keep even these Corinthians with all their imperfections, and confirm them unto the end; and that which was true of them, is also true of all the Lord's people, God will preserve them to the very end.

**Constable** - By "speech" (NASB) or "speaking" (NIV; Gr. *logos*) the apostle meant eloquence, the ability to express their "knowledge" (Gr. *gnosis*) fluently and effectively. As we shall see, knowledge and eloquence were two things the Corinthians valued very highly. Paul had to put them in their proper place among the other gifts. These appear by their usage in this letter and in 2 Corinthians to have been common buzzwords in Corinth. **Logos** occurs 26 times (see below) in 1 and 2 Corinthians compared to 58 times in Paul's other epistles, and **gnosis** appears 16 times in these two epistles (see below) but only seven times in all of Paul's other writings. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Speech** (3056)(**logos** from *légō* = to speak with words) means something said and describes a communication whereby the mind (the thought in one's mind) finds expression in words. This is the meaning in classic Greek = "the word or outward form by which the inward thought is expressed and made known." **Logos** was not used in classical Greek to describe a word in the grammatical sense as the mere name of a thing, but rather the thing referred to, the material, not the formal part. In other words **logos** had the double meaning of thought (thus it gives us our English logic and logical) and speech.

**Logos** in letters to Corinth - 1 Co. 1:5; 1 Co. 1:17; 1 Co. 1:18; 1 Co. 2:1; 1 Co. 2:4; 1 Co. 2:13; 1 Co. 4:19; 1 Co. 4:20; 1 Co. 12:8; 1 Co. 14:9; 1 Co. 14:19; 1 Co. 14:36; 1 Co. 15:2; 1 Co. 15:54; 2 Co. 1:18; 2 Co. 2:17; 2 Co. 4:2; 2 Co. 5:19; 2 Co. 6:7; 2 Co. 8:7; 2 Co. 10:10; 2 Co. 10:11; 2 Co. 11:6

**Knowledge** (1108)(**gnosis** from *ginosko* = to know especially experientially) in simple terms is the possession of information of what is known. **Gnosis** describes the comprehension or intellectual grasp of something. **Gnosis** refers to knowledge gained by experience in contrast to intuitive knowledge. **Gnosis** is an "experiential knowledge," and not a mere passing acquaintance. **Gnosis** is not simply an intellectual (head) knowledge of Christ, but refers to a more intimate, experiential knowledge. The difference between knowledge and wisdom is said to be that **knowledge** is the understanding of truth, whereas **wisdom** is the ability to apply what truth has been learned.

**Gnosis** in letters to Corinth - 1 Co. 1:5; 1 Co. 8:1; 1 Co. 8:7; 1 Co. 8:10; 1 Co. 8:11; 1 Co. 12:8; 1 Co. 13:2; 1 Co. 13:8; 1 Co. 14:6; 2 Co. 2:14; 2 Co. 4:6; 2 Co. 6:6; 2 Co. 8:7; 2 Co. 10:5; 2 Co. 11:6;

**Enriched** (4148)(**ploutizo** from *ploutos* = riches, wealth) means literally to make someone materially rich, but here used of spiritual riches. Used only 3x in NT - 1 Co. 1:5; 2 Co. 6:10; 2 Co. 9:11. **Ploutizo** is used 8x in the Septuagint - Gen. 14:23; 1 Sam. 2:7; Job 15:29; Ps. 65:9; Prov. 10:4; Prov. 10:22; Prov. 13:7; Ezek. 27:33;

It is the blessing of the LORD that makes rich (Lxx - *ploutizo*),  
And He adds no sorrow to it.  
--Proverbs 10:22

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**Streams in the Desert** - "In everything ye are enriched by him." (1 Cor. 1:5)

HAVE you ever seen men and women whom some disaster drove to a great act of prayer, and by and by the disaster was forgotten, but the sweetness of religion remained and warmed their souls?



So have I seen a storm in later spring; and all was black, save where the lightning tore the cloud with thundering rent.

The winds blew and the rains fell, as though heaven had opened its windows. What a devastation there was! Not a spider's web that was out of doors escaped the storm, which tore up even the strong-branched oak.

But ere long the lightning had gone by, the thunder was spent and silent, the rain was over, the western wind came up with its sweet breath, the clouds were chased away, and the retreating storm threw a scarf of rainbows over her fair shoulders and resplendent neck, and looked back and smiled, and so withdrew and passed out of sight.

But for weeks long the fields held up their hands full of ambrosial flowers, and all the summer through the grass was greener, the brooks were fuller, and the trees cast a more umbrageous shade, because the storm passed by—though all the rest of the earth had long ago forgotten the storm, its rainbows and its rain.—Theodore Parker.

God may not give us an easy journey to the Promised Land, but He will give us a safe one.—Bonar.

It was a storm that occasioned the discovery of the gold mines of India. Hath not a storm driven some to the discovery of the richer mines of the love of God in Christ?

Is it raining, little flower?

Be glad of rain;

Too much sun would wither thee;

'Twill shine again.

The clouds are very black, 'tis true;

But just behind them shines the blue.

Art thou weary, tender heart?

Be glad of pain:

In sorrow sweetest virtues grow,

As flowers in rain.

God watches, and thou wilt have sun,

When clouds their perfect work have done.

—Lucy Larcom.

## 1 Corinthians 1:6 even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you,

Wuest (paraphrase) - inasmuch as the testimony concerning the Christ was proved to be divinely-revealed truth and its reality was verified among you ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:6 just as the testimony about Christ has been confirmed among you—

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:6 This confirms that what I told you about Christ is true.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:6 even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you--

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:6 because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you.

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:6 καθ ὡς τὸ μαρτυριὸν τοῦ Χριστοῦ βεβαιήθη ἐν ὑμῖν,

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:6 Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you:

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:6 according as the testimony of the Christ was confirmed in you,

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:6 even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you:

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:6 In this way, the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you,

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:6 even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you,

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:6 just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you--

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:6 as the testimony to Christ was confirmed among you,

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:6 so firmly has witness to Christ taken root in you.

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:6 Our message about Christ has been verified among you.

- **the testimony:** 1Co 2:1,2 Ac 18:5 20:21,24 22:18 23:11 28:23 1Ti 2:6 2Ti 1:8 1Jn 5:11-13 Rev 1:2,9 6:9 12:11,17 19:10
- **was confirmed:** Mk 16:20 Ac 11:17,21 Ro 15:19 2Co 12:12 Ga 3:5 Heb 2:3,4
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE GOSPEL IS THE TESTIMONY CONCERNING CHRIST

**Even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you** - "Our message about Christ has been verified among you." (1Co 1:6 GWN) **The testimony concerning Christ** refers to Paul's preaching of Christ ("the Gospel") to the Corinthians. **Was confirmed** refers to the message of Christ which was proven real by the changed lives of the Corinthians. In context it specifically refers to the spiritual gifts manifest in the saints at Corinth. As **Robertson** says "These special gifts of the Holy Spirit which they had so lavishly received (1 Cor 12) were for that very purpose." The Living Bible has "what I told you Christ could do for you has happened!" In short...

Their gifts confirmed their reception and power of the Gospel.

**Barnett** has a good word on **the testimony concerning Christ** - That 'testimony' was the Gospel which he had preached in the city of Corinth. 'Testimony' was a witness' sworn evidence in a court, based on what he or she had seen and heard. In Paul's case it referred to the gospel which had come to him so personally on the road to Damascus. But the same principle applies to us. The gospel we give to others, whether as preachers or as individuals, must always be our testimony, words about things that are deeply true in our own experience. The light of the word of God must have shone in our hearts before we are able to shine it into the hearts of others (2 Cor. 4:5-6+). ([1 Corinthians: Holiness and Hope of a Rescued People](#))

What was **confirmed**? Paul's **testimony concerning Christ** is what was **confirmed** and this most likely refers to the Gospel of Christ, the One Paul preached (1 Cor 2:2+). How was it **confirmed** in them? The previous passage described **speech** and **knowledge** and the following passage describes **gift**, so that one way the **testimony concerning Christ**, the Gospel, was **confirmed** was by the supernatural gifts which were manifest in the saints in Corinth. And of course the Gospel would also have been **confirmed** by the fact that they were now new creatures in Christ, having come out of the darkness of paganism and idolatry and into a brand new way of life in the kingdom of light in Christ (cf 2 Cor 5:17+). Sadly, they were not living up to their potential as new creatures in Christ (BUT THEN THIS COULD BE SAID OF MOST OF US, AT LEAST FROM TIME TO TIME!)

John uses a similar description in the opening words of the Revelation writing that he "testified to the word of God and to the **testimony of Jesus Christ**, even to all that he saw." (Rev 1:2+)

**Constable** on **confirmed** - The Corinthians' reception of these gifts had corroborated the truthfulness of the gospel. Giving these gifts was one of the ways God validated the gospel message in the early history of the church (cf. Gal. 3:2-5; Heb. 2:3-4). ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Schreiner** points out that "The relationship between verses 5 and 6 is as follows. The enrichment of the Corinthians indicates that the **testimony** about **Christ** was established among them." ([1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

**Hodge** on **the testimony concerning Christ** - Christ is called the True Witness; and is said to have borne witness of the truth. Compare John 3:11, 32, 33, 8:13, 14. On the other hand, the apostles are frequently called the witnesses of Christ, and are said to have borne testimony concerning him. The Gospel, therefore, is, in one view, the **testimony** which **Christ** bore; and, in another, the **testimony** which the apostles bore concerning Him. The former is the higher, and therefore, the better sense. It is good to contemplate the Gospel as that system of truth which the eternal Logos, or Revealer, has made known. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Confirmed** (establish) (950)(**bebaioo** from **bébaios** = sure, fixed) is a verb which means to make sure or certain, to prove valid or reliable or to verify and (in legal language) to guarantee. "The passive of the verb 'was confirmed' (CSB) demonstrates again that God's work among the Corinthians is featured so that all the glory and praise belong to Him." (Schreiner). 8x in NT - Mk. 16:20; Ro 15:8; 1 Co. 1:6; 1 Co. 1:8; 2 Co. 1:21; Col. 2:7; Heb. 2:3; Heb. 13:9

Wuest (paraphrase) with the result that you are not feeling that you are trailing behind others in even one spiritual enablement for service while you are assiduously and patiently waiting for the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:7 so that you do not lack any spiritual gift as you wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:7 Now you have every spiritual gift you need as you eagerly wait for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:7 so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ,

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:7 Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:7 στε μ ζ μ στερε σθαι ν μηδεν χαρ σματι πεκδεχομ νους τ ν ποκ λυψιν το κυρ ου μ ν ησο Χριστο ·

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:7 so that ye are not behind in any gift, waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:7 so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ;

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:7 so that you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:7 so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:7 so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:7 so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:7 And so you are not lacking in any gift as you wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed;

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:7 Therefore, you don't lack any gift as you wait eagerly for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.

BBE 1 Corinthians 1:7 So that having every grace you are living in the hope of the revelation of our Lord Jesus Chris

- **you are not lacking:** 2Co 12:13
- **awaiting eagerly :** 1Co 4:5 Ge 49:18 Mt 25:1 Lu 12:36 Ro 8:19 Php 3:20 1Th 1:10 2Ti 4:8 Tit 2:13 Heb 9:28 10:36,37 Jas 5:7,8 2Pe 3:12 Jude 1:21
- **revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,** Lu 17:30 Col 3:4 2Th 1:7 1Ti 6:14,15 1Pe 1:13 4:13 5:4 1Jn 3:2
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## COPIOUS CHARISMATA AT CORINTH

This church was fully equipped with spiritual gifts so they had no excuses for "sloppy spirituality."

**So that you are not lacking in any gift-** "The thought of verse 6 is continued. Since the 'testimony about Christ' was confirmed among the Corinthians, it follows that they do not lack any spiritual gift." (Schreiner) In other words they had every spiritual gift in their local body! This church had every spiritual gift to enable them to be "spiritually successful." **Gift is charisma** which is literally a gift of grace, which should put an end to any pride or boasting, because they did nothing to merit these gifts (AND NEITHER DO WE BELOVED!)! And while they were not lacking these divine provisions to enable them to live a supernatural life, as the rest of this epistle demonstrates these saints were sorely lacking in spiritual maturity and moral character. They had fallen far short of their potential! It is one thing to have these gifts, but it is quite another thing to apply them in one's life. And in chapter 14 we see that they are even so perverted that they are seeking gifts they did not have! The saints had Corinth had no lack of gifts, but only a lack

of willingness to use them in a God honoring manner!

**Wiersbe** - Yet with all their gifts and knowledge, they lacked love (1 Cor 13:1–3+) and could not get along with each other. Spiritual gifts do not take the place of spiritual graces. ([Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament](#))

**David Garland** adds "The gifts come from God for the upbuilding of the community. They can take no credit for them, and their gifts do not lift them above others. All Christians are gifted, and no one gift makes one greater than another." ([First Corinthians](#))

**Lowell Johnson** - Since they are a gift, they must be viewed as a trust also. To not know your gift is a tragedy; to not use your gift is a travesty! The purpose of these gifts are to Enrich the church ...to Affirm the gospel ... and to Confirm the Saints.

**Life Application Study note** - The Corinthian church members had all the spiritual gifts they needed to live the Christian life, to witness for Christ, and to stand against the paganism and immorality of Corinth. But instead of using what God had given them, they were arguing over which gifts were more important. Paul addresses this issue in depth in chapters 12-14.

**Ray Stedman** - In my study of the New Testament, I have listed at least 21 different spiritual gifts that are referred to, and, according to Paul, there in Corinth every one of them was manifested. They had the gifts of miracles, the gifts of healings, the gifts of teachings, the gifts of tongues and interpretation of tongues, the gifts of knowledge, and leadership. There was not a single one of the gifts of the Spirit that was lacking in this church. Can you imagine what kind of fascinating meetings they must have had when they all got together? No one wanted to miss church in Corinth! They never knew whether somebody would be healed, or some miracle would be demonstrated, or some remarkable prophetic utterance would come forth, or somebody would speak in a language they had never learned and someone else would interpret. It was an ecstatic time in the church there. ([1 Corinthians 1:1-9 The Corinthian Crisis](#))

**Hodge on gift** - The word (χάρισμα) **gift**, is used both for the ordinary and extraordinary gifts of the Spirit; most frequently for the latter. Here it includes both classes. The Corinthians had not only the inward gifts of repentance, faith and knowledge, but also those of miracles, of healing, of speaking with tongues, of prophecy, in rich abundance. No church was superior to them in these respects. The extraordinary gifts, however, seem to be principally intended. Paul's commendation has reference to their wisdom, knowledge and miraculous gifts, rather than to their spiritual graces. Much as he found to censure in their state and conduct, he freely acknowledged their flourishing condition in many points of view. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Lacking** (be inferior) ([5302](#)) **hustereo** from **hústeros** = last, latter, terminal, hindmost) has the basic meaning of come to late (in time) or to come after (in terms of space) and thus it means to fail in something, come short of, miss, not to reach. **Hustereo** has the basic meaning of being last or inferior. It means to be left behind in the race and so fail to reach the goal, to fall short of the end, to lack. It means to come late or too tardily.

**Hustereo in the Corinthians letters** - 1 Co. 1:7; 1 Co. 8:8; 1 Co. 12:24; 2 Co. 11:5; 2 Co. 11:9; 2 Co. 12:11;

**Spurgeon** - Paul continues to recognize the abundance of their endowments, and to express for them the utmost of affection, and then he adds his full conviction that God would prove the power of his grace by keeping them unto the end, and then presenting them "blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

**MacArthur** - Many of us, like the Corinthians (1 Cor. 12:1), are ignorant of our spiritual gifts and even of the fact that we possess them. We need to recognize that we have spiritual gifts and we need to identify them and use them. We need to know whether we have the gift of teaching, preaching, exhortation, administration, helps, giving, or whatever it may be. And we then must be responsive to the Spirit as He uses us to minister with the gifts He has given us. ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Guzik** - The Corinthian Christians were indeed gifted, yet carnal. "Should it not show us that gifts are nothing, unless they are laid on the altar of God; that it is nothing to have the gift of oratory; that it is nothing to have the power of eloquence; that it is nothing to have learning; that it is nothing to have influence, unless they all be dedicated to God, and consecrated to his service?" (Spurgeon) ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Gift** ([5486](#)) (**charisma** from **charis** = **grace** + **--ma** = the result of something in this case the result of grace) literally means a **gift of grace** or a free gift not based on merit. **Charisma** "does not refer to the endowment of special, extraordinary gifts to those who are supposedly more spiritual or more advanced in the faith" (Macarthur) Stated another way, whatever spiritual gift a man has comes from God, and should be no cause for personal pride or praise, a truth that the saints at Corinth had sorely missed! God is the Giver of the free gift in 16/17 uses specifically bestowed by the Spirit (1 Cor 12:7) according to His will for the profit of the body of Christ and the work of the ministry in turn to enable believers to fulfill their assigned functions in the body. **Each and every believer** has received at least one spiritual gift from the Spirit (1 Cor 12:1-11). All NT uses - Ro 1:11; Ro 5:15; Ro 5:16; Ro 6:23; Ro 11:29; Ro 12:6; 1 Co. 1:7; 1 Co. 7:7; 1Co. 12:4; 1Co. 12:9;

## THE BEST IS YET TO COME: LIVE EXPECTANTLY!

(Continually - [present tense](#)) **Awaiting eagerly** ([apekdechomai](#)) **the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ**- While salvation and gifts speak of manifestations of past and present grace (respectively), here Paul speaks about future grace as described by Peter "Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, **fix your hope** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) completely on **the grace** to be brought to you at the **revelation** ([apokalupsis](#)) of Jesus Christ." (1 Pe 1:13+). They were "waiting with desire" (Hodge) As **MacArthur** says "The faithful believer cannot help being eschatological. We are grateful for past grace, we seek to be responsible in using present grace, but our greatest joy is looking forward to future grace. We watch, we wait, and we hope for (AND PRAY FOR) the Lord's next coming, His final coming....The **revelation** refers to His manifestation without the veil of humanity He wore in His incarnation. At His next coming He will be fully revealed in blazing splendor." ([MNTC-1 Cor](#))

**THOUGHT** - This statement puzzles me! There were **looking** for Jesus, but were not **living** for Jesus. **Looking** for Jesus should have motivated **living** for Him, but there was clearly a disconnect in the lives of these immature saints. If we are living *expectantly*, this theoretically should serve as a strong impediment against sinning against God, especially in view of the fact that we think we might see Him at any moment! Father, by Thy Spirit, please enable in our hearts [expectant](#) looking which in turn supernaturally energizes [expedient](#) living for Jesus and in His Name. Amen

The first century Christians believed not only that Jesus Christ had died for their sins and risen from the dead, but that He would soon return in glory. And so surprisingly Paul is saying that the saints at Corinth seem to have been maintaining a "Maranatha Mindset," despite their numerous spiritual problems (cf 1 Cor 16:22+) . **Awaiting eagerly** is in the [present tense](#) indicating their mindset was one of continual eager anticipation. The verb **awaiting eagerly** is in the [middle voice](#) which pictures the subject (the one waiting) as the beneficiary of the waiting. We could paraphrase it this way -- they were "**eagerly awaiting to welcome** the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, **and to receive Him to themselves**" where "to themselves" is [reflexive](#) which reflects the middle voice. What a beautiful picture of the Bride, His Church, waiting to receive Him to herself! A waiting, welcoming mindset should motivate the Bride to keep herself pure and holy (read 1 Jn 3:2+ and 1 Jn 3:3+), but in Corinth this expectation was clearly not having its beneficial effect.

**James Montgomery Boice** wrote that "the expectation of the Lord's personal and imminent return gave joy and power to the early Christians and to the Christian communities

**ESVSB** has an interesting note - As you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ implies that spiritual gifts are given as temporary provisions until Christ returns.

**Spurgeon** on **awaiting eagerly** - This is a fine trait in their character, they did look to the Second Advent; it operated upon them, it helped them in many ways. We cannot now mention all the holy uses which is in the **awaiting** for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but it ought to be a good description of all Christian men.

**Hodge** - Why is it that this longing for the coming of Christ is awakened in the hearts of his people? The apostle answers this question by saying that the "first fruits of the Spirit" enjoyed by believers in this life are an earnest, that is, a foretaste and pledge, of those blessings which they are to receive in their fullness at the second advent. The Spirit, therefore, awakens desire for that event. See Ro 8:23+; Eph. 1:14+. The same truth is here implied. The Corinthians had received largely the gifts of the Spirit: the consequence was they waited with patience and desire for the revelation of Christ, when they should enter on that inheritance of which those gifts are the foretaste and pledge ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Lowell Johnson** - Paul speaks of the future life that awaits each believer. This life is not all there is. One day Jesus will come. This ought to stir our hearts. Knowing He is coming soon ought to encourage us to live **blameless** lives (compare 1 Jn 3:2+ with 1 Jn 3:3+)

**Constable** - The early Christians awaited His return eagerly. This is another indication that the apostles taught the **imminent (i.e., any moment) return of the Lord for His own** (cf. 1 Cor 4:5; 15:51–52; 16:22; Phil. 3:20; 4:5; 1 Thess. 1:10; 2 Thess. 3:10–12; Titus 2:13; James 5:7–9; 1 John 2:28; Rev. 3:11; 22:7, 12, 17, 20). See [Wayne A. Brindle, "Biblical Evidence for the Imminence of the Rapture," Bibliotheca Sacra 158:630 \(April-June 2001\):138-151.](#)

**THOUGHT** - Who you are looking for should impact Who you are living for and specifically HOW you are living! How frequently do you ponder the thought that you might see Jesus face to face today (by death or rapture)?



Little wonder that 1 in 20-25 NT verses alludes directly or indirectly to the Second Coming! John gives a sobering command in 1 John 2:28+ "Now, little children, **abide** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming." This sure hope of our future glorification should keep before us our desperate need for daily purification by the Spirit and the Word.

**Awaiting eagerly** (553)([apekdechomai](#) from **apó** = intensifier [see Vincent below] + **ekdechomai** = expect, look for <> from **ek** = out + **dechomai** = receive kindly, accept deliberately and readily) means waiting in great anticipation but with patience (compare our English expression "wait it out"). To expect fully. To look (wait) for assiduously (marked by careful unremitting attention) and patiently. **Wuest** explains that **apekdechomai** is "a Greek word made up of three words put together, the word, "to receive," ([dechomai](#)) which speaks of a welcoming or appropriating reception such as is tendered to a friend who comes to visit one; the word "off," ([apo](#)) speaking here of the withdrawal of one's attention from other objects, and the word "out," ([ek](#)) used here in a perfective sense which intensifies the already existing meaning of the word. The composite word speaks of an attitude of intense yearning and eager waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus into the air to take His Bride to heaven with Him, the attention being withdrawn from all else and concentrated upon the Lord Jesus." ([Philippians Commentary Online](#)) **Vincent** adds that "the compounded preposition **apo** denotes the **withdrawal of attention from inferior objects**. (ED: SEE LINE IN HYMN BELOW = '**Have done with lesser things**.'") The word is habitually used in the New Testament with reference to a future manifestation of the glory of Christ or of His people."Used 8x in NT - Ro 8:19; Ro 8:23; Ro 8:25; 1 Co. 1:7; Gal. 5:5; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 9:28; 1 Pe 3:20

### **Rise up O men of God.**

Have done with lesser things.  
Give heart and soul and mind and strength,  
To serve the King of Kings,  
To serve the King of Kings.

Rise up O men of God,  
His Kingdom tarries long,  
Bring in the day of brotherhood,  
And end the night of wrong,  
And end the night of wrong.

Rise up O men of God,  
The Church for you doth wait.  
Send forth to serve the needs of men  
In Christ our strength is great,  
In Christ our strength is great.

Lift high the Cross of Christ,  
Tread where His feet have trod,  
As brothers of the Son of Man,  
Rise up O men of God,  
Rise up O men of God.

Rise up O men of God,  
**Have done with lesser things.**  
Give heart and soul and mind and strength,  
To serve the King of Kings,  
To serve the King of Kings

**Revelation** (602)([apokalupsis](#) from **apó** = from + **kalúpto** = cover, conceal, English = apocalypse) literally means cover from and so the idea is to remove that which conceals something, "taking the lid off" and exposing to open view that which was heretofore not visible, known or disclosed, making manifest something (HERE = SOMEONE!) previously unknown and/or unseen and now made fully known. **Apokalupsis** in the Corinthian letters - 1 Co. 1:7; 1Co. 14:6; 1Co. 14:26; 2Co. 12:1; 2Co. 12:7

**THOUGHT** - They were not to wait for the coming of the antichrist. They were not to wait for the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom to every creature. They were not to wait for wars and rumors of wars. They were not to wait for the apostasy of the Church. They were to wait for the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, The

Second Coming of Christ is the Blessed Hope of saints (Titus 2:13+). We are to live looking for Him to come. We are to be watching and waiting for Him as one who waits for the morning. We are to pray, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." (Rev 22:20+) We are to be robed and ready for His Return (Lk 12:40+, 2 Peter 3:11-12+, Rev 19:7+). We are to expectantly abide the day of His Coming. We wonder, as we pen these words, just how much the blessed, the comforting, the pacifying, the inspiring hope of the Coming of Christ means to the people who peruse these pages? God forbid that that hour should take us unaware! God forbid that at His Coming any of us should seem to draw back from Him! AMEN! (1 Jn 2:28+) (Robert Neighbour)

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**DUAL CITIZENSHIP** - One of the terms used often during the 1992 Summer Olympics by television sports commentators was dual citizenship. One athlete with dual citizenship was a swimmer named Martin Zubero. He was born in the United States, where he has lived nearly all of his life. He attended the University of Florida and trained for competition in the U.S. However, he was swimming under the colors of Spain. Why? His father is a citizen of Spain and so Martin is too. At the Olympics, he chose to represent his father's nation, to which he felt greater allegiance. Christians too have dual citizenship. We are citizens of this world, no matter what nation we live in, and as followers of Christ we are also citizens of heaven. We have all the rights and privileges that accompany being a child of God. He is not only our heavenly Father but our King, and our first loyalty must be to His kingdom. (ED: WE MUST DAILY CHOOSE TO "WEAR HIS COLORS" SO TO SPEAK FOR WE ARE HIS AMBASSADORS OF RECONCILIATION!)—D. C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

WE LIVE IN THIS WORLD, BUT OUR ALLEGIANCE IS TO HEAVEN...

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ

--Philippians 3:20+

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The great preacher F. B. Meyer once asked D. L. Moody, "What is the secret of your success?" Moody replied, "For many years I have never given an address without the consciousness that the Lord may come before I have finished." This may well explain the intensity of his service and the zeal of his ministry for Christ.

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**Fuller** - The Scripture gives four names to Christians, taken from the four cardinal graces so essential to man's salvation: Saints for their holiness, believers for their faith, brethren for their love, disciples for their knowledge.

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### 1 Corinthians 1:8 Who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Amplified - And He will establish you to the end [keep you steadfast, give you strength, and guarantee your vindication; He will be your warrant against all accusation or indictment so that you will be] guiltless and irreproachable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah).

Wuest (paraphrase) - who also will make you steadfast and constant even to the end, in character such that you cannot be called to account in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:8 He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:8 He will keep you strong to the end so that you will be free from all blame on the day when our Lord Jesus Christ returns.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:8 who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:8 He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:8 ὁ καὶ βεβαιήσει με ἄσπεκτους ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου μὴ ἡσο [Χριστο].

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:8 who also shall confirm you unto the end -- unblamable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ;

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:8 who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye be unproveable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:8 He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you will be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:8 who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:8 He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:8 He will keep you firm to the end, irreproachable on the day of our Lord Jesus (Christ).

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:8 he will continue to give you strength till the very end, so that you will be irreproachable on the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:8 He will continue to give you strength until the end so that no one can accuse you of anything on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- **confirm:** Ps 37:17,28 Ro 14:4 16:25 2Co 1:21 1Th 3:13 5:24 2Th 3:3 1Pe 5:10
- **blameless:** Eph 5:27 Php 2:15 Col 1:22 1Th 3:13 5:23,24 2Pe 3:14 Jude 1:24,25
- **the day:** Php 1:6,10 2:16 2Pe 3:10
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Hebrews 6:11+ And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until **the end** ([telos](#)),

### SAINTS BLAMELESS BEFORE GOD

**Who will also confirm you to the end** - NET = "He will also strengthen you to the end." **Wuest** = "Who also will make you steadfast and constant even to the end" **Will also confirm** is a divine promise. So in spite of their sinful conduct, the Corinthians would be saved ([GLORIFIED](#)) either when they died or when Christ returned. Notice the preceding context -- some feel it is Jesus **Who** will confirm us but others feel that it is God **Who** will confirm us because in the next verse God is mentioned as the One Who is faithful! The eager waiting described in 1 Cor 1:7 will come to an end for all believers when our faith becomes sight, and our Blessed Hope is revealed in the Person of Jesus (1 Ti 1:1), at "the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." (Titus 2:13+).

**To the end** ([telos](#)) refers to either the end of our life or the end of this present age (whichever comes first). The point Paul is making is that their salvation will be preserved **to the end**. The word for **end** ([telos](#)) was used by Jesus in Mt 24:13+ when He declared "But the one who endures **to the end** ([telos](#)), he will be saved." The writer of Hebrews reiterated this truth writing "Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until **the end** ([telos](#)). (Heb 3:6+, cf Heb 3:14+). What Paul is saying to these saints is that you are going to make it! You are going to endure to the end! You will be saved (future tense - [glorified](#)). You will be part of "His house" because you will hold fast to the end. Why (or How)? Not because of their power but because of the promise of God **Who will also confirm you to the end**. In essence Paul's words are another passage which underscores the truth often referred to as the [perseverance of the saints](#). Here is a summary of that important doctrine...

[The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints](#) does accurately represent what the Bible teaches on this important subject. If someone is truly saved, he has been made alive by the Holy Spirit and has a new heart with new desires. There is no way that one that has been "born again" can later be "unborn." Because of His unique love for His children, God will keep all of His children safe from harm, and Jesus has promised that He would lose none of His sheep (Jn 10:27-30, Jn 6:39, Jn 17:12). The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints recognizes that true Christians will always persevere and are [eternally secure](#) because God keeps them that way (**ED: READ THAT AGAIN! THIS IS WHAT PAUL IS SAYING TO THE SAINTS AT CORINTH**). It is based on the fact that Jesus, the "Author and Perfecter of faith" (Hebrews 12:2+), is able to completely save those whom the Father has given Him (Hebrews 7:25+) and to keep them saved through all eternity (**ED: AND ALL GOD'S PEOPLE SHOUT "HALLELUJAH! THANK YOU LORD!"**). ([See complete note](#))

**Wiersbe on will...confirm** - The work of God was confirmed **IN** them (1 Cor. 1:6), but it was also confirmed **TO** them in the Word. This ([bebaioo](#)) is a legal term that refers to the guarantee that settles a transaction. We have the witness of the Spirit within us and the witness of the Word before us, guaranteeing that God will keep His "contract" with us and save us **to the very end**. This

guarantee is certainly not an excuse for sin! Rather, it is the basis for a growing relationship of love, trust, and obedience. ([The Wiersbe Bible Commentary](#))

**Robertson on to the end** - End of the age till Jesus comes, final preservation of the saints. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Confirmed** (establish) ([950](#)) see note above on [bebaioo](#).

**End** (outcome) ([5056](#)) ([telos](#) means an end, a completion, a [consummation](#). The word [termination](#) is close but misses the **essence** of the meaning, because a process can be terminated without reaching completion or consummation, which is the essence of the meaning of **telos**. Accordingly "Christ is *the end* (consummation or telos) of the Law" (Ro 10:4), for Christ brought all the components of the OT to their complete fulfillment by His perfect life and death, and yet the law was not terminated (e.g., it is written on the hearts of believers (Heb 8:10<sup>+</sup>, Heb 10:16<sup>+</sup>). And so **Telos** refers to a goal achieved, a result attained, a realization, an end-goal, a purpose fulfilled. The root **tel-** means reaching the end (aim) and is illustrated by an old pirate's telescope ([pictures](#)) which unfolds or extends one stage at a time to reach full-capacity (effectiveness). All uses of **telos** in the letters to **Corinth** - 1 Co. 1:8; 1 Co. 10:11; 1 Co. 15:24; 2 Co. 1:13; 2 Co. 3:13; 2 Co. 11:15

**Blameless** ([anegkletos](#)) **in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ**- Amplified = "He will be your warrant against all accusation or indictment so that you will be] guiltless and irreproachable." **Blameless** is one of the most encouraging descriptions of saints in the Bible (in my opinion). It is a legal term meaning that no accusation or charge could be successfully brought against those in Christ. (As an aside do you ever feel accused? Satan is "the accuser of the brethren" - Rev 12:10<sup>+</sup>) **Blameless** speaks primarily of our eternal position in Christ, so that when He appears, **our position will become our eternal reality**. Lenski describes it "*as not to be accused*." No accusation can even be brought against them is the idea. Few of us would consider ourselves **blameless** in these mortal bodies of sin, which continually fall into sin. But praise be to God that He sees us in Christ the "Blameless One!" and that will be out "[raiment](#)" (so to speak) for all eternity. When we believed on Christ, we exchanged our "*grave clothes*" for His "*grace clothes*," which we will put on permanently when we see our blessed Lord (1 Jn 3:2<sup>+</sup>)! Hallelujah! Amen!

What is **the day of our Lord Jesus Christ**?- In context Paul has just described the **revelation** of our Lord Jesus Christ, so this clearly is the Second Coming of Christ. It should be noted that some writers see this not just as a single day (the day of Christ's Return), but the beginning of a new "day," for His return will be accompanied by the establishment of **His earthly Messianic Kingdom** which will last 1000 years.

**Constable** (a dispensationalist) has an interesting comment - This coming day is referred to as **the day of the Lord Jesus** (1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14), 'the day of Jesus Christ' (Phil 1:6), and 'the day of Christ' (Phil. 1:10; 2:16). ('The day of Christ' in 2 Th. 2:2 should be rendered the [Day of the Lord](#).) 'The day of Christ' in all six references in the N.T. is described as relating to the reward and blessing of the Church at the rapture and in contrast with the expression 'the day of the Lord' (cp. Isa. 2:12, marg.; Joel 1:15, note; Rev. 19:19, note), which is related to judgment upon unbelieving Jews and Gentiles, and blessing on millennial saints (Zeph. 3:8-20<sup>+</sup>). ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

#### **Related Resource:**

- See the chart [Comparison of 3 Divine Days](#)

**Robertson on blameless** - "[Unimpeachable](#), for none will have the right to impeach" (Robertson and Plummer) as Paul shows in Rom. 8:33; Col. 1:22, 28. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Hodge** rightly comments that "When we remember on the one hand how great is our guilt, and on the other, how great is our danger from without and from within, we feel that nothing but the righteousness of Christ and the power of God can secure our being preserved and presented blameless in the day of the Lord Jesus." ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

How will believers be enabled to stand **blameless** in the **day of our Lord Jesus Christ**? "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the LORD of hosts." (Zech 4:6)

Compare the assurance God gives us in Jude that we will be **blameless** in the end...

Now to Him Who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory **blameless** ([amomos](#)) with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. (Jude 24, 25<sup>+</sup>)

Paul uses this same word [amomos](#) for **blameless** in Col 1:22<sup>+</sup> writing

Yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and **blameless** ([amomos](#)) and **beyond reproach** ([anegkletos](#))

In Ephesians 1:4+ Paul writes that [our election in eternity past](#) guarantees we will be **blameless** in eternity future...

Just as He chose ([eklego](#)) us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and **blameless** ([amomos](#)) **before Him**. In love

**MacArthur** points out that **blameless** conveys the wonderful truth that "When we enter heaven we will not have all our sins and shortcomings flashed before us for everyone to see, as we sometimes hear in popular theology. Christ will affirm before the eternal throne of God that we are now counted blameless." ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Blameless** (above reproach, unproveable) ([410](#)) ([anegkletos](#) from a = without, negative particle + [egkaleo/enkaleo](#) {en = in + kaleo = call} = to call in {as a debt or demand}, to bring to account, to accuse in court, call into account, bring a charge against - in Ro 8:33+ "who will bring a charge [egkaleo] against God's elect?... " The answer "**no one!**") means not arraigned (as in a court), that which cannot be called to account, unblamable, irreproachable, free from accusation or reproach, not accused of having done anything wrong. **Anegkletos** ("not convicted, not found guilty") refers to character (behavior) that *stands up* when *correctly* tried, not convictable when evaluated by *sound rules of evidence*. **Anegkletos** signifies that believers cannot be called to account, for in Heaven they will have no blot on their life for which they could be accused, arraigned, and disqualified. It means there is nothing laid to one's charge (as the result of public investigation). It is not simply an acquittal but the absence of even a valid accusation. 5v in NT - 1 Co. 1:8; Col. 1:22; 1 Tim. 3:10; Titus 1:6; Titus 1:7

**ILLUSTRATION** - A video circulating on the Internet showed a huge black Labrador whose owner, a soldier, had just returned from an extended term of service. The animal could not stop leaping on his master, wagging his tail, and crying in small barks of joy. Finally, the man made it to an easy chair where the animal jumped on top of him, crying dog tears because the man he had waited so patiently for had at last returned. Paul writes to the church at Corinth specifically addresses them in verse 2 along with "all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Together we are followers of Jesus Christ, and we should be people who are longing for His return. Paul expresses his thankfulness for this community of believers (v. 4). Paul is reminding the church that they are to remain faithful as they "eagerly wait" for Christ's return (v. 7). Our behavior should be influenced by our desire to please God, because we know that we will see Him soon. Paul mentions the use of our spiritual gifts in verse 7. The use of the God-given gifts are evidence of the faith within us and of our relationship with Him. We are not to sit aimlessly waiting for Christ's return, but rather we should be serving Him with the abilities He has given us. We are to remain faithful. Notice the dynamic here: while we are remaining faithful, God is keeping us "firm" in our faith so we do not stumble and sin. The wait may seem long as we serve God in this fallen world, but He has promised us His Holy Spirit to guide us and keep us "blameless" to the end (v. 8). ([Today in the Word](#))

#### 1 Corinthians 1:9 God is faithful, through Whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amplified - God is faithful (reliable, trustworthy, and therefore ever true to His promise, and He can be depended on); by Him you were called into companionship and participation with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Wuest (paraphrase) - Faithful is God through whom you were divinely summoned into a joint-participation with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into fellowship with his son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:9 God will do this, for he is faithful to do what he says, and he has invited you into partnership with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:9 God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:9 πιστς θες, δι ο κλητε ες κοινωναν αν το υ ο α το ησο Χριστο το κυρ ου μ ν.

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:9 God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:9 faithful is God, through whom ye were called to the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ



our Lord.

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:9 God is faithful, through whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:9 God is faithful; you were called by Him into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:9 God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:9 God is faithful, and by him you were called to fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:9 You can rely on God, who has called you to be partners with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:9 God faithfully keeps his promises. He called you to be partners with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

- **God:** 1Co 10:13 Nu 23:19 De 7:9 32:4 Ps 89:33-35 100:5 Isa 11:5 25:1 Isa 49:7 La 3:22,23 Mt 24:35 1Th 5:23,24 2Th 3:3 Titus 1:2 Heb 2:17 6:18 10:23 11:11 Rev 19:11
- **through whom :** Col 1:24 Ro 8:28,30 9:24 Ga 1:15 1Th 2:12 2Th 2:14 2Ti 1:9 Heb 3:1 1Pe 5:10
- **fellowship:** 1Co 1:30 10:16 Joh 15:4,5 17:21 Ro 11:17 Ga 2:20 Eph 2:20-22 3:6 Heb 3:14 1Jn 1:3,7 4:13
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## Related Passages

1 Corinthians 10:13+ No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and **God is faithful**, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

2 Corinthians 1:18 But as **God is faithful**, our word to you is not yes and no.

Hebrews 10:23+ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is **faithful**;

Deuteronomy 7:9 "Know therefore that the LORD your **God, He is God, the faithful God**, Who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments;

## THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD AND FELLOWSHIP WITH HIS SON!

**God is faithful** ([pistos](#)) - Amplified "God is faithful (reliable, trustworthy, and therefore ever true to His promise, and He can be depended on)." Surprisingly this specific phrase is found only 3 times in the NAS - 1 Cor 1:9, 1 Cor 10:13, 2 Cor 1:18. What has Paul just said about the saint's future? (1) We will be confirmed (established, made sure) to the end and (2) blameless at His coming. Paul's point is you can trust God to keep these promises BECAUSE He is faithful, trustworthy! That they would be **blameless** is especially significant in the Corinthian church which was rife with serious spiritual problems so how could Paul be so confident that God would **confirm them to the end** and that they would be **blameless**? In this passage Paul explains the basis of his firm assurance that they (and we) will be found **blameless** before God. To reiterate, we can be confident because God said it, that settles it, whether we believe it or not! In other words, He is **faithful** and is not a man that He should lie (Nu 23:19+, cf Heb 6:17-18+). "The ground of Paul's hope for the ultimate welfare of the Corinthians is God's fidelity." [G. G. Findlay](#) He would confirm and secure them (and us) to the end!

Note that Paul puts the Greek word ([pistos](#)) for **faithful** first in the Greek sentence which places even more emphasis on God's faithfulness!

**MacArthur** on **God is faithful** - We are sure of this grace—past, present, and future—because God is faithful. God is faithful to His sovereign will—through whom you were called. When God calls someone to salvation, He is faithful to that call. Thus our future glory at Christ's appearing is certain (Ro 8:30). ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Jack Arnold** - The fact that every believer will stand in God's presence (**ED: BLAMELESS!**) does not depend upon man's faith but upon God's faithfulness. Our security is grounded in the character of God. One may have doubts at times about the reality of eternal security, but God is faithful even over our doubts. Since God has given us this great salvation, we ought to live lives in accordance with our calling, position and future promise that we will be in His presence. (Related - [Eternal security](#))

**Robertson and Plummer** - The confident hope expressed in 1 Cor 1:8 rests upon the faithfulness of God (1 Cor 10:13; 1 Th 5:24; Ro 8:30; Phil. 1:6) Who had been the Agent, as well as the Source, of their call. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary - CRITICAL AND EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY](#))

To be called by the faithful God is the guarantee of everlasting salvation.

- Spurgeon

As Paul wrote in Php 1:6+ "For I am confident of this very thing, that **He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.**" Play Steve Green's beautiful [He Who Began a Good Work in You](#). Do you believe He will be faithful to complete it in you?

**Hodge - God is faithful**, one in whom we may confide; one who will fulfil all his promises. The apostle's confidence in the steadfastness and final perseverance of believers was founded neither on the strength of their purpose to persevere, nor on any assumption that the principle of religion in their hearts was indestructible, but simply on the fidelity of God. If God has promised to give certain persons to his Son as his inheritance, to deliver them from sin and condemnation and to make them partakers of eternal life, it is certain he will not allow them to perish. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**W E Vine on God is faithful** - cf. 1 Cor 10:13; 2 Cor 1:18; 1 Th 5:24; 2 Th 3:9; and for further testimony to the faithfulness of God see Dt 7:9; Ps 36:5; Ps 40:10, and especially Psalm 89, which mentions it seven times, including Ps 89:49; see also Ps 92:2; Ps 119:75, 90; Ps 143:1; Isaiah 11:5; Isa 49:7; Lamentations 3:23; Hosea 2:20; 2 Timothy 2:13; Hebrews 10:23; 1 John 1:9.

**Spurgeon on God is faithful** - Blessed be His Name that He is. **We are often very unfaithful.** (ED: Every time we sin we are unfaithful to God!) Man is always so, but "**God is faithful.**" As Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, "Faithful is He that calleth you, Who also will do it." (1 Th 5:24+)

**Faithful** (4103) (**pistos** from **peitho** = to persuade - induce by words to believe) is something or someone who is worthy of faith or keeps promises, and thus is dependable (worthy of reliance or trust), trustworthy, steadfast, unswerving. 1 Co. 1:9; 1 Co. 4:2; 1 Co. 4:17; 1 Co. 7:25; 1 Co. 10:13; 2 Co. 1:18; 2 Co. 6:15; Gal. 3:9; Eph. 1:1; Eph. 6:21; Col. 1:2; Col. 1:7; Col. 4:7; Col. 4:9; 1 Thess. 5:24; 2 Thess. 3:3; 1 Tim. 1:12; 1 Tim. 1:15; 1 Tim. 3:1; 1 Tim. 3:11; 1 Tim. 4:3; 1 Tim. 4:9; 1 Tim. 4:10; 1 Tim. 4:12; 1 Tim. 5:16; 1 Tim. 6:2; 2 Tim. 2:2; 2 Tim. 2:11; 2 Tim. 2:13; Tit. 1:6; Tit. 1:9; Tit. 3:8; Heb. 2:17; Heb. 3:2; Heb. 3:5; Heb. 10:23; Heb. 11:11; 1 Pet. 1:21; 1 Pet. 4:19; 1 Pet. 5:12; 1 Jn. 1:9; 3 Jn. 1:5; Rev. 1:5; Rev. 2:10; Rev. 2:13; Rev. 3:14; Rev. 17:14; Rev. 19:11; Rev. 21:5; Rev. 22:6

**Through Whom you were called - Through Whom** indicates God was the "intermediate Agent," the causative Agent if you will. In other words, it was God's sovereign pleasure and will which moved Him call us out of darkness into His marvelous light, ultimately into covenant oneness with the Light of the world (aka "fellowship" in this passage). **Were called** is the divine passive indicating God's power and grace **called** us (He initiated the call and He completed the call) and **we did nothing to merit His calling!** Are you humbled yet? Are you thankful **you were called**? Note also that **were called** (past tense - at the time of their salvation) is a truth which includes the assurance of what God began, He will complete. How can we be sure? 1 Cor 1:8 just said He "**will also confirm you to the end**". And we can also **compare Scripture with Scripture** in this case looking at Romans 8 where Paul explains this association in a "string of pearls" in Romans 8:30+ writing that those "whom He predestined, He also **called**; and these whom He **called**, He also [justified](#); and these whom He [justified](#), He also **glorified**." In short the fact that they (and you dear believer) **were called** in the past assures they (and you) will be glorified in the future!

**Vine** - The **calling** of the saints is always attributed to God the Father (cf. John 6:44, 45; Ro 8:29, 30). For the various purposes of their calling see also 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14; Hebrews 12:24. (Collected Works)

**MacArthur on you were called** - We are saved because God wanted us saved, and we stay saved because God does not change His mind about that desire. We had no part in God's original desire to call us, and we can do nothing to change it. If He called us when we were lost and wretched, He surely will not cease to be faithful to that call now that we have come **into fellowship with His Son**. ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord**- Wuest = "into a joint-participation with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." At the time Paul wrote this letter, their **Fellowship** ([koinonia](#)) was something that was being tested by divisions, etc (cf 1 Cor 1:10-12, 1 Cor 11:18, 12:25), so Paul reminds them of the ultimate Source of **fellowship**. With Him they (we) had (have) eternal partnership

and communion.

**THOUGHT** - It strikes me that **fellowship** ([koinonia](#)) is a word intimately related to the covenant we are now in with Christ by His blood (SEE [The Oneness of Covenant](#) and [Covenant: Oneness Notes](#)). **Covenant** speaks of oneness, communion and **FELLOWSHIP**. It is our present **POSITION** in Christ and with Christ forever and ever. Amen! But it is not just our **POSITION** for position always calls for a [concordant PRACTICE](#). Peter alludes to what our **PRACTICE** should be (and how it is possible) writing that "by these (2 Peter 1:3b+) He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises (PROVISION FOR PRACTICE OF INCREASING FELLOWSHIP), in order that by them we become **PARTAKERS** ([koinonos](#)) of the divine nature (cf 2 Cor 3:18+), having escaped (BECAUSE OF THE ACT OF GOD'S OPERATION RESCUE, THE "RED CROSS") the corruption (A DETERIORATION WHICH IS IN PROGRESS AND UNSTOPPABLE FOR ALL WHO ARE NOT IN CHRIST, THE ONLY "PREVENTATIVE AGENT") which is in the world by lust (THE EFFECTIVE AGENT THAT CONTINUALLY CAUSES CORRUPTION)." (2 Peter 1:4+) So as we by grace through faith (which manifest itself in Spirit enabled obedience out of love, not legalism), lay hold of God's wonderful promises in Christ, the Spirit transforms us, taking us from glory to glory and from one degree of fellowship/koinonos to another, until that glorious day (1 John 3:2+) when our eternal PRACTICE will be PERFECT, UNHINDERED, UNFETTERED FELLOWSHIP with our Lord and Savior Christ and it will endure forever and ever. Amen and amen.

**Vine** points out that "This partnership (FELLOWSHIP) with God's Son involves rejection by the world, suffering with Christ, and the glories hereafter (1 Pe 1:11; 1 Pe 2:21; 1 Pe 4:12, 13; 1 Pe 5:10)." (Ibid)

John speaks of **fellowship** in his first epistle

What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have **fellowship** ([koinonia](#)) with us; and indeed our **fellowship** is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:3+)

**His Son** refers to His divinity as the Son of God, co-equal, co-eternal with God the Father. **Jesus** ([Iesous](#)) refers to His humanity and His mission for this name means "Jehovah saves," (cf Mt 1:21+). **Christ** ([Christos](#)) is the Anointed One, the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament. **Lord** ([kurios](#)) signifies He is our Possessor (cf Titus 2:14+) and we belong to Him (1 Cor 6:19-20+) and under His Lordship we have (among many other things) the privilege of His provision and protection and continual prayers (Heb 7:25+, Ro 8:34+).

**Ray Stedman** - This is the key verse of First Corinthians. The rest of the letter centers around it. It is a statement that God had called them to a very important relationship, and, by implication, here at the very beginning of this letter we learn that this is the reason for all of the problems in the Corinthian church. They had not understood the implications of their calling, and the relationship they personally and individually had with Jesus Christ himself. ([The Corinthian Crisis](#))

**Robertson and Plummer** on **into fellowship** ([koinonia](#)) - This **fellowship** (Ro 8:17; Phil. 3:10 f.) exists now and extends to eternity: it is effected by and in the Spirit (Ro 8:9 f.); hence κοινωνία (το) πνεύματος ("fellowship of the Holy Spirit" = 2 Cor. 13:13; "fellowship of the Spirit" = Phil. 2:1). ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary - CRITICAL AND EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY](#))

**MacArthur** on **fellowship with His Son** - The word [koinonia](#) (fellowship) also means partnership, oneness (**ED**: SEE [The Oneness of Covenant](#)). We are secured to glory by being one with God's beloved Son. We entered the kingdom by grace and we will be kept in the kingdom by grace (cf 1 Cor 1:8+). ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

At the end of this chapter, Paul explains how they (WE) attained the privileged position of **fellowship** ([koinonia](#)) with Christ writing "by His doing you are **in** Christ Jesus, Who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Corinthians 1:30+)

**Guzik** makes an excellent observation that "In these first 10 verses, Paul refers to Jesus in every verse, for a total of 11 times (using the designations Jesus, Christ or Him)(**ED**: CORRECTION - MY COUNT IS 27 TIMES!). In this emphasis on Jesus, Paul promotes the sure cure for the problems of the Corinthians: getting your eyes off self and on Jesus." ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** points out that "in Paul's epistles the **call** of God is always seen as an effective call that produces salvation." ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Calling** is a privilege that brings sinners into a new position of fellowship with Christ and with this new position of **called** out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1Pe 2:9+) comes a solemn responsibility.

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the **calling** with which you

have been **called**, (Eph 4:1+)

**COMMENT:** The saints at Corinth were not walking in a manner worthy of their calling (and gifting)!

"so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God Who**calls** you into His own kingdom and glory. (1 Th 2:12+)

**Related Resources:**

- [What is the effectual calling/call? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is fellowship with God? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Jack Arnold** feels that "**Who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord**" may well be the key verse of First Corinthians. The rest of the letter centers around it. God called these Corinthian Christians into a very important relationship **fellowship** with Jesus Christ the Lord. Notice that they were called to **fellowship** with Christ as Lord. The reason for all the problems in the Corinthian church was that they did not understand the implications of their calling and their relationship with Christ, nor were they submitted to the Lordship of Christ in their experience. God sovereignly called these Corinthians into **fellowship** or partnership with Christ. They had lost a sense of Christ's **fellowship**. His Lordship over their lives was set aside. They no longer lived in the awareness and the excitement that they were partners with Christ in everything they did. This letter, therefore, was written to call the people back into an awareness of what it means to have **fellowship** with Jesus Christ. Through **fellowship** with Christ we get direction and dynamic to live the Christian life in a way that is pleasing to Him.

**Alan Redpath** on **fellowship with His Son** - The Greek word for "**fellowship**" here is [koinonia](#), which means having everything in common. It is the thought of communion together, of mutual understanding. We who have been enriched, made wealthy by the grace of God so that our lives may reveal Christ to others, experience this tremendous privilege of having everything in common with our Lord. We are in partnership with Him, if you like. A partnership is a business relationship, but it is also a family tie. A husband or wife may refer to the other one in their marriage as their "partner," because they have all things in common. At least, that is God's intention; His plan is the sharing of all interests. We have the same thing in our Lord Jesus Christ. Your interests are His: your mind and its development, your body and its sanctity, purity and holiness, your spirit and its graciousness, tenderness and love. Your concern is to be His glory, the wonder of His person, the majesty and greatness of His power. Your constant ambition should be not only to learn about doctrine, but to know Him. His interests are in your development, your progress, your growth. Your interests are to be in the glory of the sovereignty of Christ. **There should be not only mutual interests, but mutual devotion. How wonderful to know that all the resources of Christ are yours!** "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him" (Colossians 2:9–10+). **What a breath-taking verse that is! All your resources are His: your personality, your possessions, your abilities, whatever they are. That is the completeness of communion: all He has belongs to you, and all you have (which is so little at best) belongs to Him.** That is the response He is seeking from His children.

**THOUGHT** - As we set out on this royal route to heaven, we have the resources of grace and peace; we are enriched in all utterance and in all knowledge; and we are given this great and precious privilege of partnership with Christ. **All He has is at your disposal now, and His desire is that all you have should be at His disposal now and always. Are you in that living, vital relationship with the Lord Jesus today?** (Alan Redpath)

**Ray Stedman** - **Fellowship with Christ is the work of the Holy Spirit** It is His task to take the things of Christ and make them known unto us, to make the person of Jesus vivid and real in our daily experience. That is what Paul is talking about here -- Christ made real to the heart, enabling him to satisfy the thirsts of the soul; Christ providing the power that it takes to do and meet the demands of both the law and the love of God. Fellowship with Christ is not only direction in what to do, but it is dynamic -- it is how to do it....What the church is called to is to an understanding of the presence of Christ in the human heart to supply to it that dynamic, that sense of adventure, that innovative spirit that opens doors in unusual and unanticipated ways that lends adventure and color to life. Now that was what was missing in Corinth, and as we open this letter and go on into it further, we will see how, in every case, the apostle calls them back to that: They were suffering divisions because they had lost sight of the Lordship of Jesus. They were immoral because they had forgotten that the members of their bodies were the members of Christ. They were in lawsuits with one another because they had failed to see that Jesus was judge of the innermost motives of the heart. They were quarreling because they had forgotten that others were members of Christ's body and, therefore, they were members one of another. All that the apostle does to heal the hurts at Corinth is to call them back to an awareness of fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Lenski** says **fellowship with His Son** "embraces the entire communion with Christ, including the consummation at the last day. In this life our communion with Christ is mediated on his part by Word and" by His Spirit." ([The Interpretation of I Corinthians](#))

In his second letter, Paul prayed for this **fellowship** to be experienced in their daily walk asking that "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the **fellowship** of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." (2 Cor 13:14).

## Related Resource:

- See John's "tests of fellowship" in 1 John 1:6-7+.

**John Stott** explains that the believer's **fellowship** is "that common participation in the grace of God, the salvation of Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit which is the spiritual birthright of all Christian believers. It is their common possession of life -- one with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (**ED**: cf "fellowship of the Spirit" = Philippians 2:1+), which makes them one."

**Hodge on fellowship - Fellowship** includes union and communion. The original word (κοινωνία) signifies participation, as in 10:16, "participation of the blood of Christ," 2 Cor. 13:14, "participation of the Holy Ghost." We are called to be partakers of Christ; partakers of His life, as members of His body; and therefore, partakers of His character, of His sufferings here and of His glory hereafter. This last idea is made specially prominent. Believers are called to be partakers of the glory of Christ, Ro 8:17, 23; 2 Th 2:14. It is because believers are thus partakers of Christ, that the apostle was assured they could never perish. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want,  
More than all in Thee I find."  
--Charles Wesley

**Tyndale Bible Dictionary** succinctly defines **fellowship** as "Communion with God, which results in common participation with other believers in the Spirit of God and God's blessings." Believers have **fellowship** vertically with the Triune God through His Son Christ Jesus and horizontally with other saints. The "vertical fellowship" precedes and makes possible the "horizontal fellowship" between believers.

**Comfort on fellowship** - "The Father and Son have enjoyed communion with each other since before the creation of the world. When Jesus entered into time, His **fellowship** with the Father also entered into time. During the days of His ministry on earth, Jesus was introducing the Father to the disciples and initiating them into this **fellowship**. The unique **fellowship** between God and Jesus began in eternity, was manifested in time through the incarnation of Jesus, was introduced to the apostles, and then introduced to each and every believer through indwelling of the Holy Spirit (2Cor 13:14; Phil 2:1).

**Spurgeon on fellowship** - Where it is not so, the life of piety seems to ooze away. The blessing of God cannot rest upon a church unless we dwell together in unity, and for unity it is necessary that we be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

**Fellowship** (communion, sharing) ([2842](#))(**koinonia** from **koinos** = that which is in common, belonging to several or of which several are partakers) describes the experience (in contrast to koinonia as an **act**) of having something in common and/or of sharing things in common with others. It describes a close association involving mutual interests and sharing or to have communion (Which Webster defines as "intimate fellowship") It denotes the active, joint participation, cooperation and/or sharing in a common interest or activity. The idea of **koinonia** is frequently referred to as **fellowship** (the state of sharing mutual interests, experiences, activities, etc.; a relation in which parties hold something in common; see excellent article on [Fellowship](#)). **Koinonia** in this case a very special kind of sharing—entering into what John and the other apostles experienced with Christ. Believers have fellowship with the Triune God through His Son Christ Jesus and this also leads naturally (supernaturally) to fellowship with other believers.

All 17v in NT - Acts 2:42; Rom. 15:26; 1 Co. 1:9; 1 Co. 10:16; 2 Co. 6:14; 2 Co. 8:4; 2 Co. 9:13; 2 Co. 13:14; Gal. 2:9; Phil. 1:5; Phil. 2:1; Phil. 3:10; Phlm. 1:6; Heb. 13:16; 1 Jn. 1:3; 1 Jn. 1:6; 1 Jn. 1:7

**ILLUSTRATION OF FAITHFUL** - There was once a young boy whose dad left him on a downtown corner one morning and told him to wait there until he returned in about half an hour. But the father's car broke down and he could not get to a phone. Five hours went by before the father managed to get back, and he was worried that his son would be in a state of panic. But when the father got there, the boy was standing in front of the dime store, looking in the window and rocking back and forth on his heels. When the father saw him, he ran up to him and threw his arms around him and hugged and kissed him. The father apologized and said, "Weren't you worried? Did you think I was never coming back?" The boy looked up and replied, "**No, Dad. I knew you were coming. You said you would.**"

**THOUGHT** - And beloved, our Father is faithful as is His Son Who said "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." (Jn 14:3)

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**Life Application Study Note** - Before tackling the problems, Paul described his hope for the Corinthians. He guaranteed these



believers that God would consider them "free from all blame" when Christ returns (see also Ephesians 1:7-10). This guarantee was not because of their great gifts or their shining performance, but because of what Jesus Christ accomplished for them through his death and resurrection. All who believe in the Lord Jesus will be considered blameless when Jesus Christ returns (see also 1 Thessalonians 3:13; Hebrews 9:28). Today's struggles, difficulties, and failures don't tell the whole story. Keep the big picture in mind. If you have faith in Christ, even if it is weak, you are and will be saved.

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**Jack Arnold** - What does God want Christians to learn from this section of scripture - 1 Cor 1:4-9? First, we are secure in Christ. He possesses us and we possess Him. Second, we have spiritual gifts that God wants us to use and not abuse to get His work done. Third, fellowship with Jesus Christ and recognition of His Lordship over our lives is the key to keep from becoming a carnal Christian. Fourth, we need to appreciate the fact that we are rich beyond measure with spiritual blessings in Christ. Are we aware of our wealth in Christ? No one has more right to be called a spiritual plutocrat than a Christian. It is when we realize our spiritual wealth in Christ that we will have the basis for godly living as Christians.

Many years ago the U.S. government gave a huge piece of land to a tribe of Indians in Oklahoma. They gave it because they thought it was worthless land. Shortly thereafter, oil was found on the land and this tribe became fabulously wealthy. The land had been divided up among the Indians in individual plots. Sometime after this an Indian died of starvation. He had a locket around his neck in which a piece of paper was crumpled. He valued that paper because it had come from the Great White Father in Washington, D.C. When the locket was opened and the paper read, it was in fact from the Department of Indian Affairs informing this man he was a possessor of one of the wealthy plots of land in the Indian reservation. Yet he died of starvation because he was illiterate and did not know what was in his locket. He was not aware of his wealth and lived accordingly. **How many Christians there are who are wealthy in Christ but live in spiritual poverty!**

**Ray Stedman** - Despite all this mighty provision, there was no manifestation of the power of God. This reminds me of Peter Marshall's very vivid description of contemporary Christians. He says, "**Christians are like deep-sea divers encased in suits designed for many fathoms deep, marching bravely forth to pull plugs out of bathtubs!**" What was wrong? Well, what was wrong was the Corinthians lack of understanding of what it meant to have Jesus Christ living among them. I have found that the major struggle of churches is right at this point. They have lost the sense that Jesus is among them, that they have an individual relationship to the Lord of glory himself. They no longer live their lives in the awareness and the excitement that they are partners with Christ in everything they do. When that begins to fade from the Christian consciousness, all these troubles that the Corinthians were experiencing begin to crowd in, and press in upon us. Therefore, this letter is written to call these people back, as it is written to call us back as well, to an awareness of what it means to have fellowship with Christ.

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#### **F B Meyer - 1 Corinthians 1:9 Called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.**

The word for fellowship is the same that is employed in Luke 5:10, of James and John being partners with Simon. We have been called into partnership with the Son of God, in his redemptive purposes, his love and tears for men, and ultimately in his triumph and glory. He has entered into partnership with man, and we are now summoned into partnership with Him through the communion of the Holy Ghost. In the words of the apostle, "our fellowship [or partnership] is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

How fruitful of comfort is the thought that Christ's interests are ours, and that we are at liberty to draw upon his resources to the uttermost. Suppose a poor clerk were to be summoned from his desk into the counting-house of a Rothschild, and informed that from that moment he was taken into partnership with the firm: would it not be less of an honor than this which has fallen to our lot? Association with millionaires in money-making were infinitely less desirable than association with the Son of God in world-saving. And would that poor clerk feel any anxiety as to his share in meeting the immense liabilities of the concern? However great they might be, he would know that the resources of the firm were adequate, and he would be able to sleep easily at night, though millions were due on the morrow. Child of God, cannot thy Father meet all his Son's engagements?

The call to this partnership is from the Father. It is He who has chosen us for this high honor of cooperating with his Son. Will He have led us into such an association, and leave us to be overwhelmed by the difficulties of the situation He has created? It cannot be! He will supply all our need.

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#### **Ben Merold - Paul and the Corinthians 1 Corinthians 1:1-9**

##### **Introduction**

- A. This letter was sent to the church at Corinth.
  - 1. Everything about this letter is relevant to the church today.
  - 2. This church had many problems even though it seemed to have all the spiritual gifts (v. 7).

B. Most of the attitudes and problems that cause trouble in today's church are addressed in this letter.

## **I. The Author**

A. The author is Paul. His background and conversion are recorded in Acts 9:1–31, Acts 22:1–21 and Acts 26:1–29.

B. He is an apostle. He met the resurrected Christ. The word “apostle” means “one sent.” Paul was sent, or commissioned, by Christ in Acts 9:15.

C. Much of the book of Acts is a record of Paul's activities.

D. Paul wrote a major part of our New Testament.

## **II. The Corinthians**

A. A record of the establishment of this church is found in Acts 18.

B. In spite of their problems, Paul said they were “called to be holy” (v. 2).

1. There is positional holiness. We are set apart and positioned in Christ when we accept him as Savior. The Corinthians had this positional holiness.

2. There is practical holiness. This applies to our Christian growth and lifestyle. The Corinthians were not doing well with this aspect of holiness.

3. Positional holiness must come first. We must be in Christ before we can grow in Christ.

4. This phrase, “called to be holy,” is translated “saints” in other translations. A Christian is a saint, one set apart to one. It originally referred to a committed marriage relationship.

## **III. Paul's Greeting to the Corinthians (vv. 3–9)**

A. “Grace and peace” (v. 3).

1. “Grace” was the popular Gentile Christian greeting.

2. “Peace” was the most used Jewish Christian greeting.

B. Paul expresses thanksgiving (vv. 4–7).

1. He thanks God for grace (v. 4).

a. We need to emphasize grace (Ephesians 2:1–10).

b. This grace comes through Christ.

c. The biblical plan of salvation is the means of appropriating this grace.

2. He thanks God that they have been “enriched” (v. 5).

a. “in every way—in all your speaking and in all your knowledge”

b. The testimony about Christ was confirmed in them.

c. They had all of the spiritual gifts.

C. Paul mentions the second coming of Christ (vv. 7–8).

1. This motivates us toward the future.

2. There is strength to be received from a knowledge of the second coming.

3. We will be blameless when he comes (Ephesians 5:25–27).

## **Conclusion**

A. Paul reminds them that they are in fellowship with Jesus Christ (v. 9).

B. This is the real basis of unity.

**Illustration** Once I was conducting an evangelistic meeting with the great song writer and singer, Virgil Brock. We used the song, “Where He Leads Me I Will Follow,” as an invitation hymn. He interrupted the invitation in a gracious way and said, “The next verse begins with the words, ‘He will give me grace and glory.’ Remember, you must receive the grace before you can have the glory.” How true! I have never forgotten it.

**1 Corinthians 1:10** Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Amplified - But I urge and entreat you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in perfect harmony and full agreement in what you say, and that there be no dissensions or factions or divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in your common understanding and in your opinions and judgments.

Wuest - Now, I beg of you, please, brethren, my appeal to you being enforced by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ [that Name holding within its compass all that He is in His glorious Person and wonderful salvation], I beg of you, please, that all of you be speaking the same thing, and that there be no factions among you, but that the breaches in your fellowship caused by these factions having been healed, you may remain perfectly united in the sphere of the same mind and in the sphere of the same opinion. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:10 I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to agree together, to end your divisions, and to be united by the same mind and purpose.

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:10 I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:10 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.

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:10 I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:10 Παρακαλῶ μὲς, ὅτε τοῦ νοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, να τὰ ἅλα γητε πνευ καὶ μὴ μὴ νῶ σχίσματα, τε δὲ κατηρητισμὸς νῶ τὰ νο καὶ νῶ τὰ γνῶ.

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:10 And I call upon you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that the same thing ye may all say, and there may not be divisions among you, and ye may be perfected in the same mind, and in the same judgment,

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:10 Now I urge you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, that there be no divisions among you, and that you be united with the same understanding and the same conviction.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:10 Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose.

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:10 I urge you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and in the same purpose.

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:10 Brothers, I urge you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, not to have factions among yourselves but all to be in agreement in what you profess; so that you are perfectly united in your beliefs and judgements.

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:10 Brothers and sisters, I encourage all of you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to agree with each other and not to split into opposing groups. I want you to be united in your understanding and opinions.

- **by the name:** Ro 15:30 1Th 4:1,2 2Th 2:1 1Ti 5:21 2Ti 4:1
- **that you:** Ps 133:1 Jer 32:39 Joh 13:34,35 17:23 Ac 4:32 Ro 12:16 15:5,6 Ro 16:17 2Co 13:11 Eph 4:1-7,31,32 Php 1:27 2:1-4 3:16 1Th 5:13 Jas 3:13-18 1Pe 3:8,9
- **divisions,** 1Co 11:18 1 Cor 12:24-25 Mt 9:16 Mk 2:21 Jn 7:43 9:16 10:19
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## CALL FOR UNITY IN FACE OF DISUNITY

This verse marks the beginning of Paul's response to the first of two reports he had received concerning the church - major divisions (1 Cor 1:10-4:2) and gross immorality (1 Cor 5:1-6:20).

**Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ-** Wuest - "my appeal to you being enforced by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ [that Name holding within its compass all that He is in His glorious Person and wonderful salvation]" **Exhort** is present tense (continually). ESV, NLT, NIV, NRSV all translate "I appeal" (in English appeal = An earnest or urgent request, entreaty, or supplication) and NET has "I urge." Instead of issuing a command (which he had the authority to do as an apostle), Paul makes an appeal. He is pleading with them to be one in the Spirit. Had he commanded them right off, they might have felt he was abusing his authority. Paul, although separated by hundreds of miles writing from Ephesus, in effect says "I am coming alongside of you," and doing so **by the Name of**, in the authority of, **the Lord Jesus Christ** (fifth time he uses the full title - 1 Cor 1:2, 3, 7, 8). By the Name of would also serve to remind the Corinthians that his written words were not his private opinion, but were backed by the authority of the Lord.

**ILLUSTRATION OF THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST** - It would be spiritually helpful, though, if we followed the example of musical genius Johann Sebastian Bach. Often at the bottom of a manuscript he would write the letters INDNJC, standing for the Latin words In Nomine Domini Nostri Jesu Christi, "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

While Paul has affirmed his apostolic authority (1 Cor 1:1), here he appeals to the saints as his **brethren** (see preceding note on [adelphos](#) - both brothers and sisters) which would serve to soften what is clearly a criticism of their conduct. Not only that, brethren reminds the Corinthians (who were experiencing divisions) that they were in the same family, the family of God (Jn 1:12+, 1 Jn 3:1+). **Brethren** or *brothers* reminds one of David's words in Ps 133:1 "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For **brothers** to dwell together in **unity**!" (Play the [toe tapping](#) tune [To Dwell in Unity](#) which I think even Paul would have affirmed!)

**John Calvin** - "Now, after preparing their minds for rebuke, acting like a good, experienced surgeon, who touches the wound gently when a painful remedy must be used, Paul begins to handle them more severely."

**Hodge** - There is only one exhortation in this verse, which is expressed first in general terms, that all of you agree with one another, and is then explained in the negative form, that there may be no divisions among you, and then positively, that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Jack Arnold** - They should obey not out of respect for Paul but out of respect for Jesus Christ their Lord. A willingness to place themselves under the Lordship of Christ was the key to unification of the church. The Corinthians did not have a problem in their heads but in their hearts because they hated authority and would not bow to any man, not even Christ.

**Exhort** (implore) (3870) ([parakaleo](#) from **para** = side of, alongside, beside + **kaleo** = call) literally means to call one alongside, to call someone to oneself, to call for, to summon. **Parakaleo** conveys the idea of giving help or aid, which would be very apropos for ed in the in infested Corinthian church. **Parakaleo** is the root of the word [parakletos](#), John's Name for the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7). **Parakaleo** in the Corinthian letters - 1 Co. 1:10; 1 Co. 4:13; 1 Co. 4:16; 1 Co. 14:31; 1 Co. 16:12; 1 Co. 16:15; 2 Co. 1:4; 2 Co. 1:6; 2 Co. 2:7; 2 Co. 2:8; 2 Co. 5:20; 2 Co. 6:1; 2 Co. 7:6; 2 Co. 7:7; 2 Co. 7:13; 2 Co. 8:6; 2 Co. 9:5; 2 Co. 10:1; 2 Co. 12:8; 2 Co. 12:18; 2 Co. 13:11

Paul had a veritable "**laundry list**" of problems with the Corinthians, but it is notable that the first problem he chooses to address is their disagreements and divisions. All their problems were serious issues but disunity can destroy a church, as most of us have seen with church splits we have experienced or know about.

As **John MacArthur** explains the pathogenesis and the problem with church divisions - "From birth to death the natural inclination of every person is to look out for "number one"—to be, to do, and to have what he wants. Even believers are continually tempted to fall back into lives of self-will, self-interest, and general self-centeredness. At the heart of sin is the ego, the "I." Self-centeredness is the root of man's depravity, the depravity into which every person since Adam and Eve, except Jesus Christ, has been born. Even Christians are still sinners—justified, but still sinful in themselves. And when that sin is allowed to have its way in our flesh, conflict is

inevitable. When two or more people are bent on having their own ways, they will soon be quarreling and arguing, because their interests, concerns, and priorities sooner or later will conflict. There cannot possibly be harmony in a group, even a group of believers, whose desires, goals, purposes, and ideals are generated by their egos....Few things demoralize, discourage, and weaken a church as much as bickering, backbiting, and fighting among its members. And few things so effectively undermine its testimony before the world. Quarreling is a reality in the church because selfishness and other sins are realities in the church. Because of quarreling the Father is dishonored, the Son is disgraced, His people are demoralized and discredited, and the world is turned off and confirmed in unbelief. Fractured fellowship robs Christians of joy and effectiveness, robs God of glory, and robs the world of the true testimony of the gospel. A high price for an ego trip! ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**That you all agree and that there be no divisions among you** - Paul states two purposes he is appealing to the Corinthians - (1) agree and (2) no divisions. **All agree** is literally "that you all (continually) say the **same** ([autos](#)) thing." This is a better translation for it was Paul's appeal for them to have a united witness (say the same thing) to a lost city! **No divisions** means no split, rift or discord. The key word in this passage is "**same**" ([autos](#)) used 3 times. Unity of believers is so important that Jesus prayed for it three times in His great prayer (John 17:11, 21-23).

**Robertson on divisions** - These divisions were over the preachers (1:12-4:21), immorality (5:1-13), going to law before the heathen (6:1-11), marriage (7:1-40), meats offered to idols (8 to 10), conduct of women in church (11:1-16), the Lord's Supper (11:17-34), spiritual gifts (12-14), the resurrection (ch. 15).

**Guzik** - Paul's plea is that they stop ripping each other apart, tearing up the body of Christ. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Jack Arnold** - What Paul was obviously asking was not that these Corinthians would agree on every secondary theological issue but that they agree on the essentials or the primary truths of the Christian faith so as to present a united front to the city. Paul wanted to see a harmonious body of believers working together in the cause of Christ. A distinction must be made between truths which are fundamental and truths which are periphery. This is the same concept our Lord taught in John 17:21 "that all of them **may be one**, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me." **Our uniting is one of the basic witnesses we have to the world.**

**Divisions** (4978)([schisma](#) from [schizo](#) = to cleave, split >> English [schism](#) = separation or division into factions) literally describes a tear as of a garment (Mt 9:16, Mk 2:21). In classical Greek used only of actual rents in material. Papyri use it for a splinter of wood and for ploughing. Paul us **schisma** figuratively here to refer to doctrinal differences and/or divided loyalties within the group with resulting discord (cf Jn 7:43; 1Co 12:25). **Vincent** adds **schisma** is used "In the sense of discord, see John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19. Here, faction." Arnold writes that "The word "**divisions**" refers to an old discarded garment that was torn into pieces. Therefore, a division is when a group of Christians or a local church is torn into pieces by ungodly actions. The only way to overcome divisions is to have unity in the local church and that comes as each person places himself or herself under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and bows to His authority." **Schisma** - 8v - Matt. 9:16; Mk. 2:21; Jn. 7:43 = division based on who they thought Christ was (Just like today!); Jn. 9:16; Jn. 10:19; 1 Co. 1:10; 1 Co. 11:18; 1 Co. 12:25

**NOTE:** A rip or tear takes so little time to occur, but the healing process takes so long. Take a sheet of paper, a roll of tape and a watch with a second hand and try an experiment. First, see how long it takes you to divide the sheet of paper into 20 pieces. Record your time. Then, using the tape, see how long it takes to unite those 20 pieces into a single sheet again.

1 Cor 11:18 For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that **divisions** exist among you; and in part I believe it.

1 Cor 12:24-25 Whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, so that there may be **no division in the body**, but that the members may have the same care for one another.

Writing to the church at Rome Paul warned...

Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause **dissensions** ([dichostasia](#) - literally standing apart - disunity, dissension, division, factious opposition) and hindrances contrary to the teaching ([didache](#) - the doctrine) which you learned, and turn away from them. (Ro 16:17+).

**But** ([de](#)) - Term of contrast. What's the change of direction?

**John MacArthur** makes a fascinating statement regarding unity - One of the main reasons that cults in our day have had such an impact on the world is their unity. Disharmony is not tolerated. Though misguided, misused, and often totalitarian, such unity is



attractive to many people who are tired of religious uncertainty, ambiguity, and confusion. ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

Paul has just described their fellowship with Jesus Christ their Lord and now turns to their fellowship with one another. The implication is that their unity and/or oneness with Christ would or should motivate them to pursue unity with one another.

**Ray Stedman** - church unity is a very important matter, and, because of its significance, Paul puts it first in the list of problems he has to deal with here at Corinth. Many of the other problems were flowing out of this division within the congregation. Here in Verse 10 he briefly shows us the ground of unity, and the nature of unity in a church. The ground, of course, is the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. "I appeal to you," he says, "by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Their relationship to Christ was the unifying factor of the church. There is no other name big enough, great enough, glorious enough, and powerful enough to gather everybody together, despite the diversity of viewpoint and the differences of background or status in life, than the name of Jesus. That is why the apostle appeals to it. He recognizes that we share a common life if we have come to Christ; we are brothers and sisters because we have his life in us. He is the ground, always, of unity. And more than that, we have a responsibility to obey him, to follow his Lordship. Therefore, the only basis upon which you can get Christians to agree is by setting before them the Person of the Lord Jesus, and calling them back to that fundamental base. This is what Paul does here. ([Behind Divisions](#))

**HCSB** note - Paul's appeal to unity is expressed in a first-century idiom translated agree in what you say. The added phrase the same conviction refers to the shared conviction about the centrality and importance of the gospel message—Christ crucified (1 Cor 1:17; 1Cor 1:18-3:4). In Paul's mind, this central conviction was the key to church unity.

**That you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment** - NET = "be united." KJV = "perfectly joined together." Here Paul gives the antithesis and the "antidote" for disunity and divisions and pleads for them to be joined together ("fitted together," "mended") in keeping with their position which was one in Christ Jesus. **Be made complete** is [katartizo](#) which conveys the fundamental idea of repairing, of mending, of putting something into its appropriate condition so that it would function well. It was used of setting a fracture, so here Paul applies it to a "*fracture*" (so to speak) in the Body of Christ. In this case he refers to the local body of believers in Corinth pleading that they would seek to function as a unified body.

**Be made complete** is perfect tense speaking of Paul's desire that this be their permanent state. **Complete** is in the passive voice, which in this context is almost certainly the divine passive, that is, a work of the Holy Spirit. Even saints in their own natural capacities cannot attain this degree of unity so this must be a supernatural work of the Spirit - cf "fellowship of the Spirit" in 2 Cor 13:14 and "unity of the Spirit" in Eph 4:3+ (note that Spirit filled believers still have a responsibility to *maintain* this unity, but it is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit). In Acts 4:32+ Luke writes "the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul ([homothumadon](#) = same mind/temperament). And if we examine the immediate context, Acts 4:31+, it is notable that this congregation was filled with the Spirit, which would strongly support the thought that it was the Spirit Who brought them into like mindedness. Indeed, the church was probably never more like minded than on the day of Pentecost when the Spirit fell on the believers and birthed the Church (read Luke's description of the early church in Acts 2:46-47+ -- see related discussion on a Spirit Filled Church)

**William Barclay** on **made complete** or KJV "joined together" says this is "A medical word used of knitting together bones that have been fractured, or joining together a joint that has been dislocated. The disunion is unnatural and must be cured." ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Jack Arnold** - They were to be united "**in mind**." This does not mean all Christians have to think alike. In fact, that would be impossible, but Christians can agree on the basic, primary things and give a united witness to the unsaved world. The Apostles' Creed was an attempt by the early church to state a basic belief of Christians, and it would be well for us to think through this creed to keep us balanced. The Corinthians were also to be united in "**judgment**" (opinions); that is, they were to be of the same general convictions and opinions, being united in faith, hope and love. For Christians to be of the same mind and opinion, they must be in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, and fellowship with Christ comes when we acknowledge His Lordship over our lives, giving up our rights and personal privileges, taking the place of servants. The Moravians had a motto which sums up what our attitude about unity should be: ([1 Corinthians 1:10-17 Divisions Because Of Personalities](#))

In essentials: Unity

In non-essentials: Liberty

In all things: Charity

**THOUGHT** - "**In all things: Charity**" - this should not be misconstrued that we are to accept error that contradicts God's Word. Clearly we must confront the "errorist" but we are still to do so in "charity" (love) in the pattern of Ephesians 4:15+ which is literally "truthing" ([aletheuo](#) in present tense) which we might render "truth-speaking" but doing so in (locative of sphere) the Spirit enabled attitude of **love**.

**Arnold's** comments remind me of Paul's warning to the saints in Colossians who were "not holding fast to the Head (CHRIST), from Whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God." (Col 2:19+) The key to "church growth" and "church power" is Christ, and the division among the Corinthians was impeding the "flow" of Christ's power through His Spirit to and through the saints.

**Stedman on mind** - the apostle says they are to be of the same mind. Now, how could that be? I think the letter to the Philippians helps us here, because in that passage I just quoted from, Paul goes on to say, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," (Philippians 2:5). He then goes on to describe for us the mind of Christ, which is a willingness to give up rights and personal privileges and give in and take a lower place. Then comes that great Christological passage where he describes how Christ, *...who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.* (Philippians 2:6-8 RSV) That is the mind Paul is talking about. When everybody decides to put the things of Christ first, and is willing to suffer loss that the honor and glory of Christ might be advanced, that is what brings harmony in a congregation. That is always the unifying factor in a church, and that is the mind that is to be among us, the mind that does not consider itself the most important thing. ([Behind Divisions](#))

**John MacArthur** has a similar thought - The source of unity is the Lord Himself. We are called to preserve it and we are able to destroy it, but we are not able to create it. The unity of the church is already established by the Holy Spirit. We can only keep it or harm it. It is kept by doing "nothing from selfishness or empty conceit," but with humility counting others better than ourselves (Phil. 2:3). If an issue arises that we feel needs attention, we should carefully and lovingly present our views to those involved or to those in authority, but without pride or contention. Vanity and self-will are almost always the causes of divisions and factions in a congregation—and in every other group. We keep unity by not insisting on our own way, by avoiding squabbles and bickering, and by putting the interests of our Lord and of His people above all else. (See [1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

As **MacArthur** says "Only **Scripture-taught, Spirit-led men** are able to guide a church into the unity of truth and protect it from error. If a church does not have that kind of men, no form of leadership will work spiritually. Such men are God's men and they represent Jesus Christ. Christ rules the church through them, and their decisions should be agreed with and followed. Such men are able to lead the church in the unity of faith and practice which the New Testament consistently demands (cf. Heb. 13:7). They are able to guide a congregation in being complete in the same mind and in the same judgment. But if they are not united, the people will not be either." (See [1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#)) (Bold added)

**MacArthur** goes on to make an important statement - Pastoral elders should make decisions on the basis of unanimous agreement. Not even a three-fourths vote should carry a motion. No decision should be made without total one-mindedness, no matter how long that takes. **Because the Holy Spirit has but one will, and because a church must be in complete harmony with His will, the leaders must be in complete harmony with each other in that will.** The congregation then is to submit to the elders because it has confidence that the elders' decisions are made **under the Spirit's direction and power.** Because they believe the elders are **one in the Spirit**, the congregation is then determined to be one with the elders. There may be struggle in coming to this kind of unity, as there was in Corinth—but it is here mandated by the Spirit Himself through Paul. (See [1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** - They could not speak the same thing if they had not the same **mind** and the same **judgment**. Paul dreaded the introduction of anything that would divide the hearts of believers one from another; and, beloved, let every one of us, wherever we go, be on the side of Christian truth, Christian unity, and Christian love. There is no true unity outside of truth; and the nearest way to Christian union is union in the truth. When error shall be destroyed, that which divides will be taken away; when truth is dominant, union will be universal, but it will not be so before that is the case.

**Be made complete** (2675) ([katartizo](#) from *katá* = with + *artizō* = to adjust, fit, finish, in turn from *ártios* = fit, complete) means to fit or join together (see Wayne Barber's illustration below). To mend or repair, making whole by fitting together, to order and arrange properly. **Katartizo** was used for setting a fracture and mending a net (cf Mark 1:19+). Figuratively, to restore or set right those in error; to prepare, to render perfect. As **Arnold** says "Paul wanted the *breaks* among these Christians mended so that they might come into a beautiful relationship of harmony with one another." This verb means to supply that which is missing, to mend that which is broken. In the church at Corinth, the unity or harmony was in effect "broken!" **Vincent** adds that *katartizō* "signifies to readjust, restore, whether in a physical or a moral sense." And so in 1 Cor 1:10 **Katartizō** was used metaphorically to describe the **restoration of harmony** among the quarreling factions that had torn the body apart!

All NT uses of [katartizo](#) - Matt. 4:21; Matt. 21:16; Mk. 1:19; Lk. 6:40; Rom. 9:22; 1 Co. 1:10; 2 Co. 13:11; Gal. 6:1; 1 Thess. 3:10; Heb. 10:5; Heb. 11:3; Heb. 13:21; 1 Pet. 5:10. Paul's use in Galatians 6 gives us a good sense of the meaning...

Gal 6:1 Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, **restore** such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

[Wayne Barber](#) illustrates **katartizo** this way "Have you ever worked on a jigsaw puzzle? I'm talking about the ones with thousands of pieces in it. One of the things you do is put all the ones of darker color over here, and the ones of lighter color over here, and the ones with blue and the ones with yellow. You try to separate the pieces before you start the puzzle. You put them in these different little piles and even though they look divided what you're going to do is you're going to start pulling from each one of these piles. **Even though it is all divided before you start it ends up being united when you finish** Each one of those pieces, though different, can be fitted together. The apostle Paul is saying to the church of Corinth, "I'm not asking you to be clones of each other. I know that you're different." He addresses the different gifts of the body in chapter 12: "I know that you're different but come on, man, make peace with one another. Come out of your little groups over here. Come back together and fit the way God wants you to fit. Be made complete. Be mended. Be healed." That's what he's saying to them. The same thing anybody would say to a group of people he loves, that he knows have been ripped apart and torn apart because people won't live verses 1-9. They won't live under the lordship of Jesus Christ. They become a cancer in the body and would rather divide than unite.... This is the same word that's used in Hebrews 11:3. This is a key verse to understanding this word *katartizo*. What does it mean? It says in Hebrews 11:3, "By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God." That word "prepared" in the New American Standard is this word. And the word for "worlds" is ages, the ages of time. What he's saying is that the ages of time have been fitted together by the very word of God. What is it that fits man together? It's that very same word, folks, that fits us together. When we get up under the word and the will of God, it fits us back together like we ought to be and all of a sudden the division stops and they're healed. All of a sudden people come back to unity. That's what he's praying for. And the Word is what draws them back. You come back up under the authority of the lordship of Christ, under the authority of His Word, and God fits us into His Word. That's what he's saying here. Be fitted back together. You're divided. You're broken up. You're ripped asunder.

**Mind** (3563)(**nous**) refers to a basic meaning direct one's inner sense to an object. *Nous* refers to human intellectual perception and moral judgment. It is the God given faculty of perceiving and understanding and is the channel through which truth reaches the heart. *Nous* describes everything in the realm of the intellect, including one's will, emotions, ability to think, reason and decide. Uses of *nous* in the Corinthians letters - 1 Co. 1:10; 1 Co. 2:16; 1 Co. 14:14; 1 Co. 14:15; 1 Co. 14:19

[Wayne Barber](#) asks "what is it that fits us? Look at 1 Corinthians 2:16 (PAUL'S NEXT USE OF THE WORD **nous**) We have something that if we submit to, will immediately produce unity. It's something that when you get up under it, it gets in you and you are fitted into the Word. That's what happens. He says, "For who has known the **mind** (**nous**) of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the **mind** (**nous**) of Christ." We have the Word of God ourselves. We have the Holy Spirit of God Who gives us the wisdom from the Word. And so, when you're fitted back together (**katartizo**), it takes the Word to do that, just like the Word fitted the ages together in Heb 11:3. The Word fits us back together.

Lightfoot says "'**nous** denotes the frame or state of mind, **gnōmē** the judgment, opinion or sentiment, which is the outcome of **nous**."

**Judgment** (opinion)(1106)(**gnome**) basically refers to the mind as the instrument of knowing and so that which is purposed or intended as here in 1 Cor 1:10. **Gnome** - 8v - Acts 20:3; 1 Co. 1:10; 1 Co. 7:25; 1 Co. 7:40; 2 Co. 8:10; Philemon 1:14; Rev. 17:13; Rev. 17:17

#### Related Resource:

- [What is the importance of Christian unity? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is unity in Christ? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- See Comments on Ephesians 4:1-17 where Paul deals with Christian Unity

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**Jehovah's Witnesses Answered Verse by Verse** - 1 Corinthians 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no division among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. (KJV)

The Watchtower Society uses this verse to impose upon its followers a degree of lockstep conformity that is incredible to outsiders. And, rather than chafe under it, Witnesses actually boast of their total obedience to the Society as evidence that they are the only true Christians, because they alone "all speak in agreement" and are "united in the same mind and in the same line of thought" (1 Cor. 1:10, NWT) (**ED**: NWT = NEW WORLD TRANSLATION - [Is the New World Translation a valid version of the Bible? |](#)

They are specifically instructed not to accept or read “the religious literature of people they meet” (The Watchtower, 5/1/84, p. 31), not to listen to “criticism of Jehovah’s organization” (The Watchtower, 5/15/84, p. 17), and not to speak words “expressing criticism of the way the appointed elders are handling matters” (The Watchtower, 1/15/84, p. 16). The Witnesses are even told to “Avoid independent thinking ... questioning the counsel that is provided by God’s visible organization,” and to “Fight against independent thinking” (The Watchtower, 1/15/83, pp. 22, 27).

But did the apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, mean that they should not only end their schismatic divisions but should also submit themselves to some human leader in total, unquestioning obedience—like mindless robots? Hardly! Paul’s further writings to the Romans reveal that there was plenty of room for individual freedom in the early church:

People range from those who believe they may eat any sort of meat to those whose faith is so weak they dare not eat anything except vegetables. Meat-eaters must not condemn the scrupulous. On the other hand, the scrupulous must not condemn those who feel free to eat anything they choose, since God as welcomed them. ... If one man keeps certain days as holier than others, and another considers all days to be equally holy, each must be left free to hold his own opinion (Rom. 14:2–5, JB).

As Christians, we should certainly be united on the basics of our faith, all of us joining together in following Christ as Lord and looking to him as our Savior, but there is also room for diversity. We might even disagree on matters that would necessitate meeting separately from those of another opinion. For example, it would be difficult for meat-eaters and vegetarians to share a banquet together, and those who do not observe a particular “holy day” would normally not attend a service that others held to celebrate it. But such disagreements should not be allowed to break the bond of love that unites us as brothers and sisters in Christ. Even if our brother feels differently on such matters, we should “welcome him all the same without starting an argument” (Rom. 14:1, JB). Point out to the Jehovah’s Witness that it is not lockstep conformity, but love, that is “a perfect bond of union” (Col. 3:14, NWT).

In reasoning on the matter with a Witness, you might freely admit that Christians regret the divisions that plague the church. Some of these are due to traditions that developed over the centuries in different localities due to geographical separation and language barriers. Others are the result of sincere differences of opinion among men who equally respect the Bible and accept the Lordship of Christ, but who have reached different conclusions in areas where Scripture speaks ambiguously or not at all. The solution, however, does not lie in one organization’s leaders standing up and announcing to the world: “Everyone must agree with us! Then we will all be of ‘one mind’ as true Christians.” That approach has been tried many times, and it leads only to deeper divisions. In fact, there are numerous exclusivist religious groups that claim to be “the only true Christians,” the Watchtower Society being only one among many. Finding those who agree with you, and then disfellowshipping the rest of the world, is not the way to true Christian unity.

The Jehovah’s Witness should also be asked to look at one area in which the Watchtower Society specifically violates scriptural admonition. This is the matter of holidays, or holy days. As we noted above, Romans 14:5–6 makes allowance for individual Christians to observe special days that other Christians may choose not to observe. Yet the JW who dares to celebrate Christmas or Easter or Thanksgiving Day (or even Mother’s Day!) is immediately put on trial by a judicial committee and disfellowshipped—totally cut off from friends and family.

For further discussion of Jehovah’s Witness’ conformity to instructions from the Watchtower organization, [see Matthew 24:45](#) and [Revelation 3:14](#)

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**ILLUSTRATION** - It is said that when the British and French were fighting in Canada in the 1750s, Admiral Phipps, commander of the British fleet, was told to anchor outside Quebec. He was given orders to wait for the British land forces to arrive, then support them when they attacked the city. Phipps’ navy arrived early. As the admiral waited, he became annoyed by the statues of the saints that adorned the towers of a nearby cathedral, so he commanded his men to shoot at them with the ships’ cannons. No one knows how many rounds were fired or how many statues were knocked out, but when the land forces arrived and the signal was given to attack, the admiral was of no help. He had used up all his ammunition shooting at the “saints.” LESSON - Paul is not SHOOTING THE SAINTS! He begins by COMMENDING the saints and then Biblically addressing real problems, not prejudices.

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### **Rivals or Allies? 1 Corinthians 1:10**

The city of Texarkana sits squarely on the state border between Texas and Arkansas. The city of 70,000 inhabitants has two mayors, two city councils, and two police and fire departments. The cross-town sporting rivalry between high schools draws an uncommonly high attendance, reflecting the deep allegiance each has to their own state’s school. More significant challenges arise as well, such as disputes over the shared water system, governed by two sets of state laws. Yet the town is known for its unity despite the line that divides it. Residents gather annually for a dinner held on State Line Avenue to share a meal in celebration of

their oneness as a community.

The believers in Corinth may not have drawn a line down their main thoroughfare, but they were divided. They'd been quarreling as a result of their allegiances to those who taught them about Jesus: Paul, Apollos, or Cephas (Peter). Paul called them all to oneness "in mind and thought" (1 Corinthians 1:10), reminding them it was Christ who was crucified for them, not their spiritual leaders.

We behave similarly today, don't we? We sometimes oppose even those who share our singularly important belief—Jesus' sacrifice for our wrongdoings—making them rivals instead of allies. Just as Christ Himself is not divided, we, as His earthly representation—His body—mustn't allow differences over nonessentials to divide us. Instead, may we celebrate our oneness in Him. By: Kirsten Holmberg ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Over what nonessential spiritual issues are you likely to allow division? How can you foster unity instead?

God, help me to remain focused on You and Your sacrifice for Your people. May I not be distracted by the less important issues but call others to oneness as a community of faith.

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### **Finding Harmony** —1 Corinthians 1:10

During the Christmas season, my wife and I attended a presentation of Handel's Messiah. In addition to being touched with the fine production of this stirring music, we were also moved by something else. After the first section, the primary conductor stepped down and handed the baton to another man who had directed this annual production for many years.

We noticed no change. For both conductors, the quality of the music remained high.

It made me think. What if some musicians had said, "We like the first guy better. Let's not do our best for this one." It would have ruined the majestic music. Instead, the musicians worked equally hard for both.

It should be that way in the church. We should give our best effort for the work of the Lord no matter who is our leader, provided of course that he is following God. But in many congregations there's a tendency to follow one leader over another, dividing their allegiance while damaging the effectiveness of the church.

Paul pleaded with the Corinthians to avoid divisions based on personalities. That advice still applies today. As we serve God, we need to realize that we can't have harmony until we're completely in tune with Christ. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Like a mighty army moves the church of God;  
Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod;  
We are not divided, all one body we—  
One in hope and doctrine, one in charity.  
—Baring-Gould

Keeping in tune with Christ keeps harmony in the Church.

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### **United Goal**—1 Corinthians 1:10

The spotted owl has been disappearing in the US. Originally it was believed that old growth logging was its greatest threat. But research shows that one of the owl's relatives may be the problem. For the past 15 years, the barred owl has been rapidly migrating westward. Barred owls, which used to live exclusively east of the Mississippi, compete for the same food as spotted owls but are more aggressive and adaptable.

In a similar way, our greatest spiritual conflict often comes not from outside the church, but from other Christians. This was happening in the church of Corinth, and Paul took some time to address the divisive spirit that had grown in this congregation. This spirit threatened the unity of the church. Paul, with a pastoral nudge, encouraged the Corinthians to agree on the essentials and not be divided over the nonessentials. People were quarreling because they were aligning themselves with different Christian leaders—Paul, Apollos, Peter, and even Christ. In creating these divisions, they were valuing their favorite leader above unity in Christ. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Paul said the one essential that should unify the church is preaching the good news. That should be our united goal as well.

Lord, bless our congregation,  
We humbly ask of Thee,  
That we may walk together



In perfect unity.

—Fennema

A united church is a strong church.

**1 Corinthians 1:11 For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you.**

Amplified - For it has been made clear to me, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions and wrangling and factions among you.

Wuest - For it was made clear to me concerning you, my brethren, by members of Chloe's household, that there are wranglings among you. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:11 For members of Chloe's household have made it clear to me, my brothers and sisters, that there are quarrels among you.

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:11 For some members of Chloe's household have told me about your quarrels, my dear brothers and sisters.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:11 For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers.

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:11 My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you.

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:11 δηλ θη γ ρ μοι περ μ ν, δελφο μου, π τ ν Χλ ης τι ριδες ν μ ν ε σιν.

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:11 for it was signified to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe, that contentions are among you;

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:11 For it hath been signified unto me concerning you, my brethren, by them that are of the household of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:11 For it has been reported to me about you, my brothers, by members of Chloe's household, that there is rivalry among you.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you.

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:11 For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters.

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:11 For it has been reported to me about you, my brothers, by Chloe's people, that there are rivalries among you.

- **I have been informed:** 1Co 11:18 Ge 27:42 37:2 1Sa 25:14-17
- **that there:** 1Co 3:3 6:1-7 Pr 13:10 18:6 2Co 12:20 Ga 5:15,20,26 Php 2:14 1Ti 6:4 2Ti 2:23-25 Jas 4:1,2
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THEIR QUARRELS LED TO THEIR DIVISIONS

**For** - Term of explanation. Paul begins by explaining why he has just exhorted them to be in agreement and likeminded. He urges them to union because he had heard they were divided.

**Spurgeon** - He does not go beating about the bush, but he speaks straight out, and gives the name of his informants, for persons who bring reports about others should always be ready to have their names mentioned. It may be unpleasant for them, but it is sometimes necessary to do unpleasant things and those who will not allow their names to be mentioned in connection with a statement adverse to character deserve no notice whatever. ([PREACHING CHRIST CRUCIFIED](#))

**I have been informed concerning you, my brethren** - Notice Paul uses the Greek verb [deloo](#) which indicates that the information he has received is not hearsay, rumor or gossip but was a clear report. Paul wanted the Corinthians to know that he had sufficient evidence of the existence of contentions among them. **Informed** is the first word in the Greek sentence which places emphasis on his receipt of this information. Notice that he continues to refer to them as his **brethren** (see preceding note on [adelphos](#)) in spite of what he has heard about their behavior. Even in using the word **brethren** Paul was emphasizing unity and the foolishness of divisions, for in Christ they all belonged to one family!

**Vincent** says **informed** means "word means to make clear, or manifest (delos). Compare 1 Cor 3:13. It may imply that Paul was reluctant to believe the reports, but was convinced by unimpeachable testimony. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Informed** (1213)([deloo](#) from **delos** = manifest, evident) means to make plain by words and thus to declare and make manifest to one's mind. Deloo is used of indications which lead the mind to conclusions about the origin or character of things. It means to make some matter known that was unknown or not communicated previously. It means to show clearly, to signify, to make manifest, visible, clear, or plain and to make known. Used 7x in NT - 1 Co. 1:11; 1 Co. 3:13; Col. 1:8; Heb. 9:8; Heb. 12:27; 1 Pet. 1:11; 2 Pet. 1:14

**By Chloe's people** - This is the only mention of **Chloe** in the Bible, so we cannot be certain of her identity nor the identity of her people which could be kinsmen, children, even slaves. And since Paul was writing from Ephesus, Chloe could have been from either Ephesus or Corinth, but we simply cannot say with certainty.

**Wiersbe** - We do not know who the people were who belonged to "the house of Chloe," but we commend them for their courage and devotion. They did not try to hide the problems. They were burdened about them; they went to the right person with them; and they were not afraid to be mentioned by Paul. This was not the kind of "cloak and dagger" affair that we often see in churches—activities that usually make the problem worse and not better. ([The Wiersbe Bible Commentary](#))

**Vincent on Chloe's people** - The persons may have been slaves who had come to Ephesus on business for their mistress, or members of her family. Chloe means tender verdure, and was an epithet of Demeter (Ceres), the goddess of agriculture and rural life. It is uncertain whether she belonged to the Corinthian or to the Ephesian church. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**That there are quarrels ([eris](#)) among you** - Here is the basic problem. There were not just differences of opinion, which are normal in every church, but overt **quarrels** which the result that there were divisions.

As [Jack Arnold](#) points out "The logical sequence is opinions, then quarrels, and then divisions. These divisions come about over secondary theological issues or personal preferences when someone says, "My opinion is right and everybody else is absolutely wrong." This kind of thinking always results in schism, a splinter church, a fragmented church or a denomination. The Apostle Paul says that this kind of reasoning is of the flesh. No wonder the Corinthians were said to be carnal, worldly and fleshly."

It is notable that Paul used the same Greek word ([eris](#)) translated **quarrels** in his letter to the Galatians writing

"Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, **strife ([eris](#))**, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice (present tense - as their habitual practice or lifestyle) such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal 5:19-21+)

As we see in the the rest of the letter to the Corinthians the Galatian passage could have been an apt description of the church at Corinth (e.g., immorality, disputes, dissensions, factions, etc). Clearly, **quarrels** indicated that these saints were acting in a fleshly, non-spiritual manner. They were grieving the Spirit and His supernatural power would have been quenched preventing the body from experiencing Spirit wrought unity and fellowship. In fact Paul emphasized their fleshly condition using [eris](#) a second time in 1 Cor 3:3+ declaring "you are still **fleshly ([sarkikos](#))**. For since there is jealousy and **strife ([eris](#))** among you, are you not **fleshly ([sarkikos](#))**, and are you not walking (LIVING, CONDUCTING YOUR LIVES) like mere (NATURAL, UNREGENERATE) men?"

**Quarrels** (2054)([eris](#)) means contention, wrangling, quarrels. It refers to engagement in rivalry, especially with reference to positions taken in a matter! It conveys ideas of self-centered rivalry and contentiousness and is an expression of enmity with bitter sometimes violent conflict or dissension. It has no place even for simple tolerance, much less for humility or love. **Barclay** adds that **eris** "is the contention which is born of envy, ambition, the desire for prestige, and place and prominence. It comes from the heart in which there is jealousy. ... **Eris** is the spirit that is born of unbridled and unholy competition. It comes from the desire for place and power and prestige and the hatred of being surpassed. It is essentially the sin which places self in the foreground and is the entire negation of Christian love. It is the characteristic of the man who has forgotten that only he who humbles himself can be exalted." **Eris** - 9x in NT - Ro 1:29; Ro 13:13; 1 Co. 1:11; 1 Co. 3:3; 2 Co. 12:20; Gal. 5:20; Phil. 1:15; 1 Tim. 6:4; Titus 3:9

**Bob Deffinbaugh** - While a student in seminary, I became friends with a student who was a veterinarian. I always teased him by telling him his ministry could be preaching in a church that was going to the dogs. I wonder just how one would feel about being sent to a church like the one in Corinth, as described in the two epistles of Paul to the Corinthians. Frankly, from a purely human point of view, the situation in Corinth appears to be hopeless. And yet when we read these introductory verses to this epistle, Paul is positive, upbeat, and optimistic. His prayers concerning this church are filled with expressions of thanksgiving. How can this be? How can Paul be so positive and optimistic as he communicates with this church? One thing is certain—it is not because of the godly conduct of many of its members.

**African Study Bible** - An Ibo proverb from Nigeria says, E nenie nwa ite, O gbonyuo oku, meaning, "If you overlook a tiny pot, it will boil over and douse the fire." It is true that if we do not take offence at small irritations, disunity will be quenched. On the other hand, God expects us to correct bad attitudes and errors no matter how insignificant they may appear. In this way, they do not grow into major problems.

#### Related Resource:

- [Who was Chloe in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the importance of Christian unity? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is unity in Christ? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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**THE SOLUTION FOR DIVISION AND DISORDER AND DECLINE** - The tendency toward spiritual decline was not limited to the early church. It has happened again and again down through the centuries, and has been especially evident when Christians prospered and enjoyed freedom from persecution. It's a danger we must all be aware of. Jesus gave us the antidote for this disorder. He said, "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works" (Rev. 2:5+). This prescription will prevent the spiritual regression that brings so much harm to us individually and to our churches.

It's easy, it seems, to wander away,  
Life is so busy with work and with play;  
Lord, help me see the way that I'm going,  
Give me a faith that's constantly growing.  
—K. De Haan

To advance, we sometimes have to turn around.

**1 Corinthians 1:12 Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ."**

Amplified - What I mean is this, that each one of you [either] says, I belong to Paul, or I belong to Apollos, or I belong to Cephas (Peter), or I belong to Christ.

Wuest - Now, what I mean is this; that each one of you is saying, As for myself, I am a follower of Paul; But as for myself, I am a follower of Apollos; But as for myself, I am a follower of Cephas; But as for myself, I am a follower of Christ. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:12 Now I mean this, that each of you is saying, "I am with Paul," or "I am with Apollos," or "I am with Cephas," or "I am with Christ."

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:12 Some of you are saying, "I am a follower of Paul." Others are saying, "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Peter," or "I follow only Christ."

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:12 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."

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:12 What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ."

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:12 λ γω δ το το τι καστος μ ν λ γει, γ μ ν ε μι Πα λου, γ δ πολλ, γ δ Κηφ, γ δ Χριστο .

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:12 and I say this, that each one of you saith, 'I, indeed, am of Paul' -- 'and I of Apollos,' -- 'and I of Cephas,' -- 'and I of Christ.'

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:12 Now this I mean, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos: and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:12 What I am saying is this: Each of you says, "I'm with Paul," or "I'm with Apollos," or "I'm with Cephas," or "I'm with Christ."

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ."

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:12 What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ."

- **Now I mean this:** 1Co 7:29 15:50 2Co 9:6 Ga 3:17
- **I am:** 1Co 3:4-6,21-23 4:6
- **Apollos:** 1Co 16:12 Ac 18:24-28 19:1
- **Cephas:** 1Co 9:5 15:5 Joh 1:42 Ga 2:9
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## CONGREGATIONAL CLIQUES AT CORINTH

A **clique** is an exclusive group of friends or associates with a common purpose. In Corinth the cliques had a common **person**. They had not yet split into four churches but did have four factions. Imagine a car with four different sized tires! The ride would be bumpy and likely the car would eventually break down.

**Now I mean this** - Paul clarifies what he has just said, and elaborates on the specific nature of their quarrels. Vincent adds that this was "A familiar classical formula: *What I mean is **this***" where "**This**" usually refers to what follows. Compare Gal. 3:17; Eph. 4:17.

**MacArthur** gives some background - Paul had ministered in Corinth for a year and a half. He then sent Apollos to be the second pastor. Apparently a group of Jews in the church had been saved under Peter's (Cephas') ministry. Parties soon developed in the names of each of those men....The inevitable result of such party spirit is contention, quarrels, wrangling, and disputes—a divided church....**Spirituality** produces humility and unity; **carnality** produces pride and division. The only cure for quarreling and division is renewed spirituality. In my experience the most effective means of correcting a contentious, factious person is to share with him selected Scripture passages on carnality and its evidences, to confront him directly with the cause of his sin. ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**That each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ"**- Notice each group had it's own slogan by which it identified its members. Paul identifies the four groups that have been clearly pointed out by Chloe's people.

The "**Paul** party" - Paul was the founding father and so naturally many of the saints would follow him for he had led them to a saving knowledge in Christ.

The "**Apollos** party" - Apollos was the rhetorician with oratorical skills in a city that loved oratory. (cf Acts 18:24,25+)

The "**Cephas** party" - Cephas was the original apostle who spent 3 years with Jesus. There is no evidence he ever visited Corinth. But some may have been saying let's get back to the beginning of the church in Jerusalem where Peter preached the sermon that God used to birth the church. While we cannot be definitive, those saints who followed Cephas may have been Jewish Christians, for they would be more likely to be familiar with the role Peter played in the birth of the church.

### Related Resource:

- See [devotional below](#)

The "**Christ** party" - Last but not least, there was Christ. This one sounds so "spiritual," but undoubtedly they felt superior to the other 3 groups, which was in itself sinful and divisive! So instead of following a mere man, they said we will follow the Perfect Man. And so these saints sought to follow His words and not the words of men like Paul, Peter or Apollos.

**Wayne Barber** quips - Then the spiritual ones walk in and say, "Hey, we're of Christ." To me they're the scariest ones in this whole

bunch" "We're of Christ and nobody else around here is."....If you want to know what a baby in Christ is, a little immature whining little church member over in the nursery, he's about to tell you. First of all, it's people who say, "Well, I'm of Apollos, I'm of Cephas, I'm of Christ" or whatever. They're men followers, etc. 1Cor 3:1 says, "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men." Now why couldn't he? He spent a year and a half with them. They trained Apollos and sent him over there. And he said, "I couldn't speak to you as spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ."

**Guzik** makes an interesting observation that "The Corinthians' boasting about their "party leaders" was really boasting about themselves. It wasn't so much that they thought (their "leader") was great, but that they were great for following him." Though division is ungodly, it is not wrong to make distinctions between churches and ministers. God has made different churches and different ministries with different callings and characters, because the job of preaching the gospel is too big for any one group.. "I bless God that there are so many denominations. If there were not men who differed a little in their creeds, we should never get as much gospel as we do ... God has sent different men to defend different kinds of truth; but Christ defended and preached all ... Christ's testimony was perfect." (Spurgeon) ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Wiersbe** - How, then, did the Corinthians create this four-way division? Why were there quarrels ("contentions") among them? One answer is that they were looking at the Gospel from a philosophical point of view. Corinth was a city filled with teachers and philosophers, all of whom wanted to share their "wisdom." Another answer is that human nature enjoys following human leaders. We tend to identify more with spiritual leaders who help us and whose ministry we understand and enjoy. Instead of emphasizing the message of the Word, the Corinthians emphasized the messenger. They got their eyes off the Lord and on the Lord's servants, and this led to competition. ([The Wiersbe Bible Commentary](#))

**Ray Stedman** thinks this fourth group were the worst because they likely had a spirit of self-righteous smugness. **Spurgeon** agrees writing that "The last were as bad as the others, it makes no difference what the party name is, for it may only thinly conceal the most sectarian spirit to say, "I am of Christ."

**MacArthur** on those who said "**I of Christ**" - They had the right name but it is clear from Paul's accusation that they did not have the right spirit. Perhaps like some "Christ only" groups today they felt they had no need for human instructors—despite the Lord's specific provision for and appointment of human preachers, teachers, and other leaders in His church (1 Cor. 1:1; 12:28; Eph. 4:11; 2 Tim. 1:11; etc.). ([1 Corinthians](#))

**Vincent** points out that "The repeated "**de** and, expresses the opposition between the respective parties. The followers of Apollos preferred his more philosophical and rhetorical preaching to the simpler and more direct utterances of Paul. Others ranged themselves under the name of Peter. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Cephas** is Peter's Aramaic name found 9x in NT (Jn. 1:42; 1 Co. 1:12; 1 Co. 3:22; 1 Co. 9:5; 1 Co. 15:5; Gal. 1:18; Gal. 2:9; Gal. 2:11; Gal. 2:14)

**Robertson** is probably correct in his explanation of the "Cephas cult" - there is no evidence that Peter himself visited Corinth. Judaizers came and pitted Peter against Paul to the Corinthian Church on the basis of Paul's rebuke of Peter in Antioch. These Judaizers made bitter personal attacks on Paul in return for their defeat at the Jerusalem Conference. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Goins**: The fourth party named was the Christ party. These were the purists, those who sounded the most spiritual. It was probably the worst of the four parties. There was a self-righteous smugness about these folks. They basically said, "We don't need human leaders at all. Jesus is the head of the body, and we'll just listen to him. We're not going to listen to Paul or Apollos or Peter." This group would have been religiously intimidating in the life of that fellowship, claiming superiority in Bible study and prayer and worship. These were folks you would have heard saying, "The Lord spoke to me on this matter...." They were spiritual elitists who were unwilling to submit themselves even to the apostolic authority that Jesus Christ had defined and put in place for the church. They were just as divisive as the other three groups. ([A CRISIS OF DIVISION](#))

**Stedman** writes "you do not have to be very old to recognize that that is still a problem in the church. The same viewpoints are still dividing people. There are those who are emotionally attached to some great Christian leader who has helped them, and they will only listen to him. They read only his books or listen only to his tapes. And there are others who are drawn to some speaking style that has attracted them. They love to listen to someone because he turns them on emotionally. There are still others today who follow after some school of thought (Calvinists, Arminians, Dispensationalists)....If you survey the church scene all over America today, you find people dividing up this way. Some say, "I am of Gothard," and others say, "No, I am of Bright." Still others say, "We are of Schaeffer," and others, "We are of Graham," or, "We are of C. S. Lewis."...Paul says this is all basically, fundamentally wrong. Whenever this attitude of gathering around a man is allowed to perpetuate itself, it is the source of much trouble and difficulty....it is very clear that he is deeply troubled by this. When you divide up among men you lose something, that is what he is saying. It is a serious threat to the life of a church to find people choosing favorite preachers, to the degree, at least, that they do not want to listen to anyone else. Now, we all have our favorite preacher, and up to a point that is not wrong. There are some people who minister to



us better than others, and it is only natural that we should listen to them and follow them. But it is the exclusiveness that Paul is concerned about here -- people who do not even want to come to a service if someone other than their favorite is preaching. That is what Paul speaks about. ([Behind Divisions](#))

#### Related Resources:

- [Who was Apollos? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Who was Peter \(Cephas\) in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

### 1 Corinthians 1:13 Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

Amplified - Is Christ (the Messiah) divided into parts? Was Paul crucified on behalf of you? Or were you baptized into the name of Paul?

I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius,

Wuest - The Christ has been divided into various parts, with the present result that He lies there broken up into fragments which are distributed among you. Paul was not crucified on your behalf, was he, or, it was not into the name of Paul that you were baptized, was it ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:13 Is Christ divided? Paul wasn't crucified for you, was he? Or were you in fact baptized in the name of Paul?

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:13 Has Christ been divided into factions? Was I, Paul, crucified for you? Were any of you baptized in the name of Paul? Of course not!

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul?

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:13 μεμρισται Χριστος; μη Παλος σταυρωτην εν ονομα Παλου βαπτισθητε;

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:13 Hath the Christ been divided? was Paul crucified for you? or to the name of Paul were ye baptized;

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:13 Is Christ divided? Was it Paul who was crucified for you? Or were you baptized in Paul's name?

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:13 Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:13 Has Christ been split up? Was it Paul that was crucified for you, or was it in Paul's name that you were baptised?

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:13 Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in Paul's name?

BBE 1 Corinthians 1:13 Is there a division in Christ? was Paul nailed to the cross for you? or were you given baptism in the name of Paul?

- **Christ:** 2Co 11:4 Ga 1:7 Eph 4:5

- **Paul:** 1Co 6:19,20 Ro 14:9 2Co 5:14,15 Tit 2:14
- **or:** 1Co 1:15 10:2 Mt 28:19 Ac 2:38 10:48 19:5
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THREE RHETORICAL QUESTIONS POINT TO SUPREMACY OF CHRIST

**Has Christ been divided?** - "Is there a division in Christ?" "This rhetorical question is calculated to get their attention. As [Wuest](#) paraphrases it "Has Christ been divided and different parts handed out to different people?" "The very idea is grotesque and must be rejected." (Wiersbe) Jesus did not belong to any of their four divisions at the exclusion of the others. They knew that Christ had not been divided. So what is Paul implying with this question? He is saying that when we begin to follow cliques around our favorite preacher or teacher, we are dividing up the body, the church, which is composed of members, all of whom belong to Christ and compose His body.

**Hodge** - Of course the answer must be no. As Christ is incapable of division, as there can be but one Christ, the church cannot be divided. It is contrary to its nature to be split into hostile parties, just as it is contrary to the nature of a family to be thus divided. As the head is one, so are the members.

**Paul Apple** - Response to the Problem Focuses on Centrality of Jesus Christ

1. Unity of Christ - Proper Focus on the Person of Jesus Christ "Has Christ been divided? Gets at the heart of the matter; only one body of Christ; The error of carnal divisions expelled by the unity of Christ Matt. 12:25+; Teaching doctrine does not divide . . . it actually unifies
2. Cross of Christ - Proper Focus on the Substitutionary Atonement of Christ "Paul was not crucified for you, was he?" Allegiance cannot be to Paul; there is only one Mediator
3. Baptism in the Name of Christ - Proper Focus on the Meaning of the Symbolism of the Sacraments of the Church Commanded by Christ. Launches him into discussion of baptism; what better shows your allegiance? ([1 Corinthians Commentary](#))

**Arnold** explains that "When a Christian follows a man instead of Christ, there can only be trouble. There is simply no human teacher in the church of Christ, past or present, who has a totally complete view of Christ or a perfect system of theology. If we limit ourselves to one teacher or one speaker and feed only on him, we are getting a warped view of Christ." ([1 Corinthians 1:10-17 Divisions Because Of Personalities](#))

**ILLUSTRATION** - There was an old, contentious Quaker who went from one meeting to another, never finding the "true" church. Someone once said to him, "Well, what church are you in now?" He said, "I am in the true church at last." "How many belong to it?" "Just my wife and myself, and I am not sure about her sometimes." (Guzik [1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** - The central principle of Paul's argument is that believers are one in Christ and should never do anything that disrupts or destroys that unity. No human leader, no matter how gifted and effective, should have the loyalty that belongs only to the Lord. ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** - Is Christ divided? Paul begins with that, for it is the worst of all divisions to make Christ the head of a party in his own church.

**Stedman** explains it this way - to chop up Christ and parcel him out as though his person and his work came in various packages, thus you lose perspective of the whole of Christian theology. When you follow one man you are getting a view of Christ, but there is no teacher in the church who has ever come along -- including the Apostle Paul himself -- who has ever had a totally complete view of Christ. That is why we have four gospels, because not even one of the disciples who was with the Lord was capable of giving us a complete enough view of Christ. It took four viewpoints to report his earthly life and ministry accurately enough to us. God, therefore, has designed that there be many teachers, many preachers, many viewpoints, in a church. In the body of Christ at large there are many who can make a contribution to the understanding of Christ. If you limit yourself to one speaker or one teacher and feed only on him, you are getting a distorted view of Jesus Christ; you are chopping Christ up, dividing him and taking one little portion as one man reports it and ignoring the rest, thus your view of Christ is deficient and unable to satisfy you as it was intended to do. ([1 Corinthians 1:10-19 Behind Divisions](#))

**Divided** (allotted apportioned) ([3307](#)) **merizo** from **meris**= a part) means to divide, part, share, separate. 13x in NT - Matt. 12:25; Matt. 12:26; Mk. 3:24; Mk. 3:25; Mk. 3:26; Mk. 6:41; Lk. 12:13; Rom. 12:3; 1 Co. 1:13; 1 Co. 7:17; 1 Co. 7:34; 2 Co. 10:13; Heb. 7:2

**Paul was not crucified for you, was he?** - A negative response is expected. No man died for them. Only the God-Man could do that. Only Christ can atone for sin. This is just as contemporary today as it was 2000 years ago for we might ask "John MacArthur or John Piper were not crucified for you were they?" Popular religious leaders sadly are exalted higher than they ought to be exalted. This is what fallen flesh does, exalting finite men over the supremacy of the infinite Christ.

**Hodge** - Was Paul crucified for you? Did Paul redeem you? Were you purchased by his blood, so that you belong to him? If not, then you are not his, and it is wrong to say, "We are Paul's." Believers bear no such relation even to inspired teachers as to justify their being called by their names. They are called Christians because they are the worshipers of Christ, because they belong to him, and because they are consecrated to him. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**ILLUSTRATION** - [Martin Luther](#) recognized this danger toward denominationalism in his day and In his debate with [John Eck](#) in 1517, wrote the following...

I pray you, leave my name alone, and do not call yourself Lutherans, but Christians. Who is Luther? My doctrine is not mine. I have not been crucified for any one. Saint Paul would not that any one should call themselves of Paul, nor of Peter, but of Christ. How then does it befit me, a miserable bag of dust and aches to give my name to the children of Christ? Cease, my dear friends, to cling to those party names and distinctions -- away with them all and let us call ourselves only Christians, after Him from whom our doctrine comes. It is quite proper that the Papists should bear the name of their party; because they are not content with the name and doctrine of Jesus Christ, they will be Papists besides. Well, let them own the Pope, as he is their master. For me, I neither am, nor wish to be, the master of anyone. I and mine will contend for the sole and whole doctrine of Christ who is our sole master.

**C H Spurgeon** in a sermon on Col 3:17 said this about cliques...

The text also rebukes those Christians who do much in the name of some eminent Christian man. I shall not censure any particular denomination, but if the truth censures them, let them hear it. When **George Whitfield** refused to form a new sect, and said, "*Let my name perish, and let Christ's name last for ever*," he acted as his Lord would have him. Paul was not crucified for you, neither did Apollos die for you, therefore take none of these names, but let the name of Christ be named among you, and under that name be ye known. Though there is a Lutheran church, it was a good saying of Luther, though couched in rugged words, "*I desire above all things that my name should be concealed, and that none be called by the name of Lutheran, but of Christian. What is Luther? My doctrine is not mine, but Christ's. I was not crucified for any. How comes it to pass, that I, who am but a filthy, stinking bag of worms, that any of the sons of God should be denominated from my name? Away with these schismatical names; let us be denominated from Christ, from whom alone we have our doctrine.*" It shall be well for all churches when they are ruled by the like spirit (ED: energized by THE Spirit - Eph 4:3+). Names which indicate their difference of doctrine will probably survive till Christ comes, but the names of men they will do well to discard. ([Method and Music, or The Art of Holy and Happy Living](#))

[John Wesley](#), founder of the Methodist Church, in the preface of his New Testament with Notes (1754, p. 5), wrote:

"Would to God that all the party names and unscriptural phrases **ED**: I LIKE THIS -- THE MODERN CHURCH IS INTRODUCING MANY NEW TERMS WHICH SOUND GOOD BUT ARE NOT FOUND IN SCRIPTURE - BEWARE! STICK TO THE PURE WORD IN YOUR DESCRIPTIONS FOR ONLY GOD'S PURE WORD HAS POWER!) and forms, which have divided the Christian world were forgotten, and that we might all agree to sit down together as humble loving disciples at the feet of our common Master, to hear His words and imbibe His Spirit and to transform His life into our own."

**Charles Spurgeon**, one of the most recognized Baptist preachers who ever lived, wrote: "I say of the Baptist name, let it perish, but let Christ's name last forever. I look forward with pleasure to the day when there will not be a Baptist living. I hope they will soon be gone. I hope the Baptist name will soon perish; but let Christ's name endure forever" ([The Eternal Name](#)).

**Albert Barnes**, great Methodist commentator: "These divisions should be merged into the holy name Christian."

**Dr Luke** gives us the name by which we should be gladly known... "And the disciples were called **Christians** first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26+).

The apostle **Peter** adds "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (1 Peter 4:16+).

**MacArthur** - Paul began his letter by establishing his authority as an apostle. But he wanted no part of the faction named for him.

He had never been crucified for anyone. ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

As **Arnold** says "Whenever Christians become guilty of preacher-worship, **they have taken their eyes off Christ and the result will inevitably be disunity**. No human leader died for us. Cliques tend to emphasize the importance of a human leader. Leaders are built up and almost made equal to the Lord Himself. People begin to think things about him that are not true, and expect things from him that he cannot do. Cliques tend to deify a leader and look at him as if he can do nothing wrong, and as if he knows all things and can solve all problems. All teachers are men, and Christians reveal their immaturity when they see their leaders as anything else." ([1 Corinthians 1:10-17 Divisions Because Of Personalities](#))

**Stedman** explains the second rhetorical question - There he (PAUL) indicates that the problem with cliquishness is that it tends to overemphasize the significance of the human leader. It builds him up too much; it makes him a rival, to some degree, of the Lord himself. People begin to think things about him that are not true, and expect things from him that he is unable to deliver. You only have to listen around you today and you find outstanding leaders being held up by their congregations as almost the equal of the Lord himself in their value to the church. We tend to deify men, and people look at them as if they can do no wrong, can make no errors, that they know everything and can settle all questions. I have had to do some degree of battle with this myself. I have had people say to me, "Oh, Mr. Stedman, when you speak I see so clearly! I hang on every word you say. Whatever you say, I believe." (I have been trying for a long time to get my wife to accept that!) But that is a very dangerous attitude, and yet we tend to think of people as being the channel by which deliverance can come to our heart. Now, it cannot. Paul is putting his finger right on the problem when he asks, "Was Paul crucified for you?" There is not a single Christian teacher who ever lived who can help us be forgiven one single sin, not one. There is not a single teacher who ever lived who can heal the hurt of a broken heart, or supply energy and adequacy to someone who feels worthless and unable to function in society, not one. There is not a teacher among us today, or at any other time, who is able to open the mind and open the eyes of the heart and reveal to us the glory and majesty of God, not one. That is not the work of men; that is the work of God himself. He chooses various channels through which to work. We must allow him the privilege of doing that. They will not all be the same flavor; they will not all have the same characteristics. We reveal our immaturity when we insist that only those with certain characteristics are the ones we will listen to, or we feel can bless or strengthen our lives. No man is the Savior; no man can deliver us except Jesus. ([1 Corinthians 1:10-19 Behind Divisions](#))

**Or were you baptized in the name of Paul** - Finally a third rhetorical question which continues through the next two verses. **Name** stands for authority. They knew they had been baptized in the Name of Jesus. To identify with a man's name instead of the Name Jesus was clearly wrong. Paul's point is not to minimize the importance of baptism but to put it in proper perspective. Apparently the Corinthians were placing too much emphasis on baptism by a particular leader. A believer's allegiance can only be to Christ.

**Wiersbe** makes an excellent point on **baptized** - Keep in mind that baptism was an important matter in the New Testament church. When a sinner trusted Christ and was baptized, he cut himself off from his old life and often was rejected by his family and friends. It cost something to be baptized in that day....I have read accounts about people who had to be baptized by a certain preacher, using special water (usually from the Jordan River), on a special day, as though these are the matters that are important! Instead of honoring the Lord Jesus Christ and promoting the unity of the church, these people exalt men and create disunity. ([Be Wise 1 Corinthians](#))

**Hodge** - **Were you baptized into the name of Paul?** That is, in reference to Paul, so that he should be the object of your faith and the one whose name you were to confess. By baptism we are brought into the number of the disciples and are followers of him into whose name, or in reference to whom, we are baptized. As, therefore, all Christians are baptized into Christ and not unto the apostles, much less any uninspired teacher, it is Christ whom they should confess, and by his name they should be called. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Arnold** explains that "When these Corinthians were water baptized, they publicly swore loyalty to Jesus Christ and placed themselves under His authority alone. By following men, they were offending the confession they made when baptized." ([1 Corinthians 1:10-17 Divisions Because Of Personalities](#))

**MacArthur** - When the Lord's people quarrel and dispute and fight, they reflect against the Lord before the world, they weaken His church, and worst of all they grieve and put to shame the One who bought them—who died to make them one in Him. The Father is one, the Son is one, the Spirit is one, and the church is one. ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Baptized** (907) (**baptizo** from **bapto** = cover wholly with a fluid; stain or dip as with dye; used of dyeing the hair; of a ship that "dipped" = sank) has a literal and a figurative meaning in the NT. The literal meaning is to submerge, to dip or immerse as in water. A study of the 77 NT uses reveals that most of the uses of **baptizo** in the Gospels and Acts are associated with literal water baptism. The Greeks used **baptizo** to describe dyeing a garment the whole garment being plunged into the dye. Figuratively, **baptizo** pictures the introduction or placing of a person or thing into a new environment or into union with something else so as to alter its condition or its relationship to its previous environment or condition. In this sense **baptizo** means to be

identified with. When a person believes in Jesus he or she is figuratively "baptized" into Christ (Romans 6:3+, Col 2:12+, Gal 3:27+) and becomes identified with Him, one with Him in the New Covenant. In summary, the physical act of water baptism depicts the supernatural transaction of identification with Christ when one is saved by grace through faith. Water baptism ABSOLUTELY DOES NOT save a person's soul. Belief in Jesus Christ alone results in salvation of one's soul. Other uses of **baptizo** in the letters to Corinth - 1 Co. 1:13; 1 Co. 1:14; 1 Co. 1:15; 1 Co. 1:16; 1 Co. 1:17; 1 Co. 10:2; 1 Co. 12:13; 1 Co. 15:29

#### Related Resource:

- [Is baptism necessary for salvation? | GotQuestions.org](#)

#### 1 Corinthians 1:14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,

Amplified - I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, [Eerdmans Publishing](#))

Wuest - I am thankful that not even one of you did I baptize except Crispus and Gaius;

NET 1 Corinthians 1:14 I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius,

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:14 I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius,

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:14 I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius,

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:14 εὐχαριστῶ [τῷ θεῷ] τὸ ὅτι οὐδεὶς ὑμῶν ἐμὲ βάπτισεν ἄλλῳ, ἢ Κρίσπῳ καὶ Γαῖῳ,

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:14 I give thanks to God that no one of you did I baptize, except Crispus and Gaius --

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, save Crispus and Gaius;

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:14 I give thanks (to God) that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:14 I am thankful I did not baptise any of you, except Crispus and Gaius,

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:14 I thank God that I didn't baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius

BBE 1 Corinthians 1:14 I give praise to God that not one of you had baptism from me, but Crispus and Gaius;

- **thank:** 1Co 1:4 14:18 2Co 2:14 Eph 5:20 Col 3:15,17 1Th 5:18 1Ti 1:12 Phm 1:4
- **Crispus:** Ac 18:8
- **Gaius:** Ro 16:23 3Jn 1:1-4
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### PAUL BAPTIZED ONLY A FEW

Paul's point in 1 Cor 1:14-17 is to emphasize that unity is promoted by focusing on the central message, the proclamation of the simple but powerful Gospel. "(v14-16) The Central Mission Is Not Trying to Compete For Disciples. (v17) The Central Mission Is: the Proclamation of the Gospel = the Cross of Christ" (Paul Apple).

Regarding **Crispus** in Acts 18:8+ Luke records that

"**Crispus**, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized."

**Comment** - Note the emphasis is on belief in Christ with baptism taking a secondary role.

I thank ([eucharisteo](#) - present tense - continually thank) **God that I baptized** ([baptizo](#)) **none of you except** [Crispus](#) and [Gaius](#) -



Why is he thankful to God here? If he had baptized many or most of the Corinthians, it would have made the problem of party loyalty (loyalty to a man) potentially even worse. Paul in saying that he only baptized a few, is implying he had no part in creating the divisions that were forming in Corinth. Paul was not looking for a cult following consisting of those "Baptized by Paul"! **Gaius** is likely the man mentioned in Ro 16:23+ "**Gaius**, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother."

**Hodge** - Although it was the duty of the apostles to baptize (Matthew 28:19), Paul rejoiced that it had so happened that he had administered that ordinance to only a few people in Corinth, so that all pretext that he was making disciples to himself was taken away. Paul did not consider this a matter of chance but of providential direction, and therefore a cause of gratitude to God. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Apple** - This section is not to minimize the proper importance of baptism. Paul is not saying that the believers did not need to be baptized - only that he did not need to be the one administering it. ([1 Corinthians Commentary](#))

**Alan Johnson** - Paul's main point in these verses (1 Cor 1:14–16) is to defuse the bickering spirit among the factions by denying that the gospel he preached required people to be baptized in his name or in any way declare themselves to be his followers. ([1 Corinthians](#))

Keep in mind that Jesus baptized no one John 4:2 recording "Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were," for anyone baptized by Him would have been prone to pride and a better than thou attitude. And given that Paul was the founder of the church at Corinth, it would have doubtless led to pride in those who were dunked in water by him. They would say "I was baptized by the apostle Paul. Who were you baptized by -- that Alexandrian Jew Apollos?"

**THOUGHT** - My guess is that all of us have fallen into a similar fleshly trap from time to time, saying things like "Guess who I heard in church last Sunday? Charles Swindoll." And we do so to seek at least a little "inflation" of our status with the person we are speaking. The fallen world does this all the time -- they call it "[name dropping](#)," which the dictionary says means to "mention important people as if they are one's friends or associates, usually in an attempt to receive preferential treatment." The Corinthians were in a sense "[name dropping](#)" and it was divisive. Believers need to guard against this fleshly (worldly) tendency to impress others. As John MacArthur says "it is not wrong to have special affection for certain persons, such as the one who baptized us, especially if we were converted under his ministry. But it is quite wrong to take special pride in that fact or pride in any close relationship to a Christian leader."

#### Related Resource:

- [Who was Crispus in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Who was Gaius in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Is baptism necessary for salvation? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**1 Corinthians 1:15 so that no one would say you were baptized in my name.**

Amplified - Lest anyone should say that I baptized in my own name.

Wuest - lest anyone should say that into my name you were baptized. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:15 so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name!

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:15 for now no one can say they were baptized in my name.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:15 so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name.

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:15 so no one can say that you were baptized into my name.

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:15 να μ τις ε π τις ε τ μ ν νομα βαπτισθητε.

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:15 that no one may say that to my own name I did baptize;

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:15 lest any man should say that ye were baptized into my name.

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:15 so that no one can say you were baptized in my name.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:15 lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name.

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:15 so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name.

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:15 so that no one can say you were baptized in my name.

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:15 so that no one can say that you were baptised in my name.

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:15 so that no one can say you were baptized in my name.

BBE 1 Corinthians 1:15 So that no one may be able to say that you had baptism in my name.

- I: John 3:28,29 John 7:18 2Co 11:2
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

John 4:2+ (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were)

John 3:28+ (John the Baptist) You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent ahead of Him.'

### ONLY ONE NAME INTO WHICH WE ARE BAPTIZED

Jesus gave a clear commission to His apostles (AND TO US) "Go therefore and **make disciples** of all the nations, baptizing ([baptizo](#)) them in the **Name** of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." (Mt 28:19+)

Baptism speaks of identification and to be baptized into a '**hame**,' means to be fully identified with the possessor of that name. Paul is disavowing any desire for anyone to claim they were baptized into his name. Implicit is that his desire is that they were baptized into, identified with the infinite Triune God, not with any finite man.

**So that** (term of purpose) **no one would say you were baptized** (see [baptizo](#)) **in my name** - Paul is simply emphasizing that he had no part in creating these cliques. If they could have said they were baptized by Paul, it would have been a declaration of pride in their "Party of Paul."

**Leon Morris on my name** - The '**name**' in antiquity meant far more than it does with us. It stood for the whole personality; it summed up the whole person. The preposition eis is literally 'into', and ' "Into the name" implies entrance into fellowship and allegiance, such as exists between the Redeemer and the redeemed' (Robertson and Plummer). There could be no suggestion that Paul had said or done anything to bring his converts into such a relation to him personally. He had pointed people to Christ. ([The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians](#))

**1 Corinthians 1:16 Now I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any other.**

Amplified - [Yes] I did baptize the household of Stephanas also. More than these, I do not remember that I baptized anyone.

Wuest - However, I also did baptize the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know positively whether I baptized any other person, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:16 (I also baptized the household of Stephanus. Otherwise, I do not remember whether I baptized anyone else.)

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:16 (Oh yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas, but I don't remember baptizing anyone else.)

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:16 (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.)

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:16 (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.)

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:16 β ππισα ὁ κα τ ν Στεφαν ο κον, λοιπ ν ο κ ο ὁ α ε τινα λλον β ππισα.

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:16 and I did baptize also Stephanas' household -- further, I have not known if I did baptize any other.

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:16 I did, in fact, baptize the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't know if I baptized anyone else.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:16 Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other.

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:16 (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.)

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:16 (I baptized the household of Stephanas also; beyond that I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.)

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:16 Yes, I did baptise the family of Stephanas, too; but besides these I do not think I baptised anyone.

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:16 I also baptized Stephanas and his family. Beyond that, I'm not sure whether I baptized anyone else.

BBE 1 Corinthians 1:16 And I gave baptism to the house of Stephanas; but I am not certain that any others had baptism from me.

- **household:** 1Co 16:15,17 Ac 16:15,33
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Now I did baptize ([baptizo](#)) also the household of [Stephanas](#)** - Paul recalls this family which came to Christ and which he did baptize. David Garland quips "He did not put notches in his Bible to keep a head count of those he had baptized." (BECNT-1 Cor)

**S Lewis Johnson** - It is clear that he does not here depreciate baptism; he simply puts it in its proper place, as a symbolic act pointing to the real fact of identification with Christ by faith. ([1 Corinthians 1:10-17 Corinthian Dissention](#))

**Hodge on Stephanas** - Stephanas was one of the three messengers sent to inform the apostle of the state of the church in Corinth and to deliver the letter to which reference is made in 1 Cor 7:1 (compare 1 Cor 16:15, 17). ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized ([baptizo](#)) any other** - Paul is not saying that baptism (it is part of Jesus' commission in Mt 28:19+) was not important but that it was not his focus, for no one is saved by water baptism, but only by "baptism" into (identification with) Christ (Ro 6:3+)

**MacArthur** has an interesting comment on **beyond that I do not know...** - This comment gives an interesting insight into the [inspiration of Scripture](#). As an apostle writing the Word of God, Paul made no errors; but he was **not omniscient**. God protected His apostles from error in order to protect His Word from error. But Paul did not know everything about God or even about himself, and was careful never to make such a claim. He knew what God revealed—things he had no way of knowing on his own. What he could know on his own, he was prone to forget. He was one of us. ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Hodge** agrees that "[inspiration](#) made its recipients infallible, but it did not make them omniscient. They were preserved from asserting error, but they were not enabled either to know or to remember all things." ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Thomas Schreiner** - Paul communicates to the Corinthians that the person who performed the baptism is utterly insignificant. By paying attention to the person who baptized them, they were missing out on the true import of baptism. ([1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** - Paul considered that it was a providential circumstance that he had baptized no more of them, else they would have cried themselves up as superior to those who had been baptized by others. There were other people who could baptize for him: it was enough for that he should concentrate all his energies upon that one matter of preaching the gospel, not that he neglected the divine command, but that it was not necessary that he, any more than his Master, should baptize personally, for we read that "Jesus Christ baptized not, but his disciples." Not to put a dishonour upon the ordinance, but to let us see that the ordinance does not

depend upon the man, but upon that sacred name into which we are baptized, and upon the true faith of the person baptized.  
([PREACHING CHRIST CRUCIFIED](#))

#### Related Resource:

- [Is baptism necessary for salvation? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**1 Corinthians 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void.**

Amplified - For Christ (the Messiah) sent me out not to baptize but [to evangelize by] preaching the glad tidings (the Gospel), and that not with verbal eloquence, lest the cross of Christ should be deprived of force and emptied of its power and rendered vain (fruitless, void of value, and of no effect).

Wuest - for Christ did not send me on a mission to be a baptizer but to be a bringer of good news, not bringing this good news within the realm of philosophical discourse, lest the Cross of the Christ be emptied of its true significance and power. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel-- and not with clever speech, so that the cross of Christ would not become useless.

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:17 For Christ didn't send me to baptize, but to preach the Good News-- and not with clever speech, for fear that the cross of Christ would lose its power.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:17 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.

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel--not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:17 ο γ ρ π στειλ ν με Χριστ ς βαπτ ζειν λλ ε αγγελ ζεσθαι, ο κ ν σοφ λ γου, να μ κενωθ σταιρ ς το Χριστο .

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but -- to proclaim good news; not in wisdom of discourse, that the cross of the Christ may not be made of none effect;

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not in wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made void.

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to evangelize-- not with clever words, so that the cross of Christ will not be emptied of its effect.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with the wisdom of human eloquence, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its meaning.

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:17 After all, Christ sent me not to baptise, but to preach the gospel; and not by means of wisdom of language, wise words which would make the cross of Christ pointless.

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:17 Christ didn't send me to baptize. Instead, he sent me to spread the Good News. I didn't use intellectual arguments. That would have made the cross of Christ lose its meaning.

- **not in:** Joh 4:2 Ac 10:48 26:17,18
- **not:** 1Co 2:1,4,13 2Co 4:2 10:3,4,10 2Pe 1:16
- **speech,** 1Co 2:5
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## Related Passage:

Mark 3:14+ And He appointed twelve (APOSTLES), so that they would be with Him and that He could send ([apostello](#)) them out to **preach**,

2 Timothy 4:2+ **Preach** ([kerusso](#) in [aorist imperative](#) see [need of Holy Spirit to obey](#)) the word. **Be ready** ([aorist imperative](#)) in season and out of season; **reprove** ([aorist imperative](#)), **rebuke** ([aorist imperative](#)), **exhort** ([aorist imperative](#)), with great patience and instruction.

## PAUL WAS A "SENT" PREACHER!

You have probably heard the saying "The main things are the plain things, and the plain things are the main things." The [main thing](#) for Paul was not **to baptize but to preach the Gospel**. The Gospel was the "plain thing" but it was also the "profound thing" the wisdom of God which confounds the wisdom of men and converts the heart of those who welcome the message (cf Jas 1:21+). If you have been called to preach then preaching should be your priority. Be careful of being sidetracked from preaching by other activities.

**Hodge** entitles 1 Cor 1:17-31 as "Paul's Defense of His Manner of Preaching. The apostle, having been led to mention incidentally that he had baptized very few people in Corinth, states that the reason for this is that his great official duty was to preach the Gospel (verses 17–18). This naturally led him to speak of the manner of preaching. It was one of the objections urged against him that he did not preach with words of human wisdom—that is, that he did not preach the doctrines taught by human reason, which he calls the wisdom of the world. Through the remainder of this and the whole of the following chapter, he assigns his reasons for thus renouncing the wisdom of the world, resuming the subject of the divisions existing in the Corinthian church at the beginning of chapter 3." ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Paul Apple** sees 1 Cor 1:17 as a transition verse to the section. Baptism = Secondary to the Preaching of the Gospel; You were saved before you hit the waters of baptism Gal. 6:14+ - boast only in the cross; Preach the Word that focuses on Christ; ([1 Corinthians Commentary](#))

**A T Robertson** notes that in this passage we see "Paul's idea of his mission from Christ, as Christ's apostle, to be *agospelizer*. This led, of course, to baptism, as a result, but Paul usually had it done by others as Peter at Caesarea ordered the baptism to be done, apparently by the six brethren with him (Acts 10:48+)." ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**For** (gar) is a term of explanation. What's Paul explaining? He explains why he had personally baptized so few, why he did not emphasize baptism.

In context he has just discussed baptism and now explains why baptism is not to be their primary concern and should not take precedence over the proclamation of the Gospel. He will proceed to give a warning regarding proclamation of the Gospel in a culture which esteemed oratorical presentations. **Schreiner** adds that "Speakers were prized and praised in the Graeco-Roman world, and they were assessed by their [rhetorical](#) brilliance. Handbooks were written on correct rhetorical style by ancient writers" (Ibid)

Paul alludes to his call to preach in Galatians 1:15-16+

But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me so that (PURPOSE) **I might preach Him** among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood,

**Christ did not send** (see [note](#) below) **me to baptize** ([baptizo](#)) **but to preach the gospel** ([euaggelizo/euangelizo](#)) - Paul did not choose to preach but was sent to preach - the point is that preaching is not something he decided he wanted to do, but the mission to which God called him. The point is that one must not take upon himself the role of preacher (or any other specific role in the church) unless he/she has received a Divine call. Notice also that clearly this statement indicates that Paul did not consider baptism as essential for salvation as some groups do today. If baptism were essential to salvation, then Paul would be saying here that he was thankful that he saved none of them except Crispus and Gaius (1 Cor 1:14)! Water baptism ideally should follow belief in the Gospel, but is not part of the Gospel per se. "Others can baptize the repentant, but Paul must preach the crucified Christ....Others can baptize the repentant, but Paul must preach the crucified Christ." (Johnson) What was necessary for salvation was the proclamation of the Gospel. The present tense signifies Paul's commission is to continually **preach the gospel**, the good news, the God news, the news about the God-Man Christ Jesus! As **Carl Henry** said "The New Testament meaning of the term *Gospel* is clear and precise (ED: WHICH IS WHY ONE DOES NOT NEED "CLEVER" SPEECH!): the Gospel is the good news of [God's merciful](#)



[rescue](#), of an otherwise doomed humanity through the mediatorial life and work of Jesus Christ."

**Alan Johnson** - This corrective truth encourages us to avoid overemphasizing baptism in God's economy in comparison to proclamation of the gospel message. Baptism has an important place in our response and expression of our faith. But it must not take precedence over the message of the gospel or be administered in a manner that enlists people to follow a particular person or faction within the diverse expressions of the church. ([1 Corinthians](#))

Water baptism "[takes a back seat](#)" to Gospel proclamation.

**THOUGHT** - [Francis of Assisi](#) is credited with the saying "*Preach the Gospel at all times. When necessary, use words.*" Tim Chester quips "That may be a great medieval sound bite, but it falls short of what the Bible teaches about evangelism." (Total Church) Some sources say closer to what he actually said was "*It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching.*" Either way, the emphasis of this popular saying is more on one's **walk** than on one's **words**. However, this saying, while conveying the important truth that our walk should be an authentic representation of our proclamation of the Gospel is somewhat misleading (and not thoroughly Biblical). Paul's words in 1 Cor 1:17 would argue against the phrase "**if necessary use words.**" **WORDS ARE NECESSARY!** Our life, no matter how Christ-like, is not a substitute for the proclamation of the Gospel. We **MUST** always use words (THE GOSPEL), and we also must continually strive, enabled by the Spirit, to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, so that our walk validates our word, the truth of the word of the Gospel we proclaim. So I would change the saying slightly - "*Live out the Gospel at all times, so that you may proclaim the Gospel at all times.*" No one will be saved by our good life, but only by the good word of the Word of Life found only in the proclaimed Gospel of Jesus Christ. (Regarding the need to speak the Gospel Paul said "for **WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.**" 14 How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? **How will they BELIEVE in Him Whom they have not HEARD?** And how will they hear without a preacher? 15 How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, **"HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!"** -- Ro 10:13-15+, See also how Jesus our Model to imitate began His ministry - Read Mark 1:14, 14+)

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ.

- Romans 10:17+

**Carson** writes that "A first-century orator or public speaker was expected to produce carefully crafted speeches which drew attention to his skilful use of rhetorical conventions. Oratory was called 'magic' because it was seen to bewitch the hearers. The content of the speech was immaterial, only the performance mattered. They spoke to gain the adulation of their audiences. (New Bible Commentary)

**Leon Morris** - Some at least of the Corinthians were setting too high a value on human wisdom and human eloquence in line with the typical Greek admiration for rhetoric and philosophical studies. In the face of this Paul insists that preaching with wisdom of words was no part of his commission. That kind of preaching would draw men to the preacher. It would nullify the cross of Christ. The faithful preaching of the cross results in men ceasing to put their trust in any human device, and relying rather on God's work in Christ. **A reliance on rhetoric would cause men to trust in men, the very antithesis of what the preaching of the cross is meant to effect.** ([Tyndales 1 Corinthians 1-4](#)) (Bold added)

**Hodge** - The commission was, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them" (Matthew 28:19+). The main thing was to make disciples; recognizing them as such by baptism was subordinate....Baptism was a work that the apostles seem to have generally left to others (Acts 10:48+). During the apostolic age, and in the apostolic form of religion, truth stood immeasurably above external rites. The apostasy of the church consisted in making rites more important than truth. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Robertson and Plummer** - Preaching was St Paul's great work, but his aim was not that of the professional rhetorician. Here he rejects the standard by which an age of rhetoric judged a speaker. The Corinthians were judging by externals. The fault would conspicuously apply, no doubt, to those who 'ran after' Apollos. But the indictment is not limited to that party. All alike were externalists, lacking a sense for depth in simplicity, and thus easily falling a prey to superficialities both in the matter and in the manner of teaching. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** - It is true that baptism is in the original commission of all Christ's servants, but it occupies a very secondary place compared with the preaching of the gospel; and was an evil day when the Christian Church began to put rites before doctrines, and ceremonies in the place that should be occupied by the gospel itself. Paul therefore says that his main commission was not to baptize, "but to preach the gospel."....Paul made this statement not to put a dishonor on the ordinance of baptism but to let us see that the ordinance does not depend on the man but on that sacred name into which we are baptized and on the true faith of the person baptized. Other people could baptize for Paul. It was enough that Paul should concentrate all his energies on the one matter

of preaching the gospel—not that he neglected the divine command—but that it was not necessary that he, any more than his Master, should personally baptize, for we read that “Jesus himself was not baptizing, but his disciples were” (Jn 4:2). ([Preaching Christ Crucified](#))

Paul recognized his divine call and obeyed, for when Jesus appeared to Paul on the Damascus Road, He clearly commissioned Paul to concentrate on the "[main thing](#)" declaring...

‘But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes (PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL) so that (PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL) they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that (PARDON OF THE GOSPEL) they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance (POSSESSIONS FROM THE GOSPEL) among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.’ (Acts 26:16-18+).

**Sent** (649) ([apostello](#) from **apo** = from, away from + **stello** = to withdraw from, avoid) means to send off, to send forth, to send out. To send out; to commission as a representative, an ambassador, an envoy. **Apostello** means more than just to send but "to send off on a commission to do something as one's personal representative, with credentials furnished" ([Wuest](#)) In fact the following are true of the person sent from God - (1) He belongs to God (TO JESUS), Who has sent him out, (2) he is commissioned to be sent out, (3) he possesses the authority and Spirit given power from God and finally (4) he has a message from the Sender, in this case the Gospel message. **Apostello** in the present context is another affirmation by Paul that he was called by God as an apostle, which some in Corinth were questioning (cf 1 Cor 9:1-2+). The rabbis used the term **apostello** to refer to one called and sent as an official representative of another. **Apostello** was used by the Greeks for the personal representatives of the king, ambassadors who functioned with the king's authority. To make light of the king's envoys was to be in danger of insubordination.

**Preach the gospel** (2097) ([euaggelizo/euangelizo](#) from **eu** = good, well + **aggello** = proclaim, tell; English = evangelize) means to announce good news concerning something. **Euaggelizo** was often used in the [Septuagint](#) for preaching a joyful message (1Sa 31:9; 2Sa 1:20; 4:10) and in a Messianic Prophecy of the NT Gospel in Isaiah 61:1+. **Euaggelizo/euangelizo** in the NT it (with 2 exceptions) refers to the good news of salvation offered through belief in Jesus Christ's death, burial and resurrection. One other point we often forget is that not only is preaching the Gospel for winning the lost (past tense salvation), but for saving the saved (present tense salvation - progressive sanctification - see "*being saved*" in 1 Cor 1:18 below)! **Euaggelizo** in the letters to Corinth - 1 Co. 1:17; 1 Co. 9:16; 1 Co. 9:18; 1 Co. 15:1; 1 Co. 15:2; 2 Co. 10:16; 2 Co. 11:7

What prompted this next statement? Remember that Corinth (and Greece in general at that time) was a center of human wisdom, philosophers and oratorical speakers. It would have been easy for the saints at Corinth to fall into the trap of placing a high value on human wisdom, at the expense of lowering the value of God's Gospel or in Paul's words causing it to be "emptied of its power." (ESV).

**Johnson** observes that "Here we are introduced for the first time to the Corinthians' infatuation with wisdom and speech artistry....This cultural appetite for speech eloquence combined with an intense desire, also fostered by the social structure, to improve one's status or honor in the eyes of others. It was desirable to advance through stages or levels of new knowledge acquisition, associated with reveling in the eloquence of speech forms, argument and emotional effect generated by orators who brought such "wisdom."" ([1 Corinthians](#))

**Not in cleverness of speech** ([logos](#) = word and intelligence, words are intelligence expressed, gives us Eng "logic") - Not in "clever rhetoric." Amplified = "not with verbal eloquence." [Wuest](#) not "within the realm of philosophical discourse." **Not** is [ouk](#) which is the stronger Greek negative which signifies absolutely not in (literally) "*wisdom of word*." **Cleverness** is [sophia](#) a word the Greeks loved. *Sophia logon* "means natural wisdom expressed in words. Preaching should be in plain speech (Word centered, Spirit filled, supernatural wisdom), not clever (natural) speech. **Vincent** says that cleverness ([sophia](#)) "is mental excellence in its highest and fullest sense," which is fascinating because Paul's statement relegates "*man's best guess*" to a distant "*second place*," so that it is not even worth using in the declaration of God's plan of redemption of sinners. It was not that Paul did not have a gift of speaking for in Acts 14:12 after speaking, the pagans called him "[Hermes](#) because he was the chief speaker." Think about his statement -- if Paul had been clever ("*wisdom in word*"), to whom would the hearers be attracted, to eloquent Paul or to the shameful **Cross of Christ**?

**Carson** - Paul used none of the orator's tricks of the trade, for he did not preach with words of human wisdom, lit. 'by means of the wisdom of rhetoric'. To have adopted the secular convention would have promoted the speaker on whose performance the audience

sat in judgment. This would have diverted their attention away from the cross to Paul himself, thus robbing the hearers of the opportunity to hear about the amazing event by which God [rescues people](#). (New Bible Commentary)

**Arnold** - The Greeks placed tremendous emphasis on eloquence, excellent rhetoric, good diction, high sounding words; colorful language, and oratorical ability. The Greek professional men of wisdom had a methodology that embellished all of their messages with flowery eloquence. In many cases, the Greeks would rather hear something said beautifully than something said clearly.... Flowery wordings and philosophical reasoning in preaching no longer make the Cross a cross. Why? The Cross, by its very nature, is an offense to men. It says man is nothing; he is depraved, a sinner by imputation, nature and acts, and he is in need of a Savior because he cannot save himself. The Cross says man is absolutely, totally, helplessly, and hopelessly lost. The moment preachers put the Cross in high sounding phrases, in man's wisdom, in philosophical terms, this appeals to man's mind and feeds his pride. The gospel then evaporates into a system, a principle, a theory. The gospel is not a system, but a person, not a principle but a salvation. Remember

**Wisdom of word**, which can be equated with philosophy, deals with abstract ideas, whereas the cross of Christ is a historical event and as such it can neither be doubted nor neglected. It is neither theory nor thought; it is a fact and should be presented as such.  
-- Spiros Zodhiates

**THOUGHT** - Have you ever presented the Gospel to someone and found that you were beginning to slip into use of persuasive eloquence or clever arguments? I suppose we all have done this at times, especially when the person seemed to have no response to the simple truth of the Gospel. Of course the worst trap to fall into (and I did this with my very intelligent fellow medical practitioners) is to use clever argumentation without ever getting around to giving them the simple Gospel. Let's face it the Cross is offensive to unbelievers and often we fear their reaction to us. I have had folks simply listen with total apathy, others would scoff at me and some would even threaten to hit me if I said any more about Jesus and the Cross.

**Zodhiates** - Natural gifts, even when used in the work of the Lord, without the definite call of God **ED**: AND I WOULD ADD ENERGIZED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD), are not good enough. Paul wanted to make it clear that he preached because God had called him to that work, not because he had a natural inclination for oratory. Interestingly God did not call Paul to do something he was not naturally gifted to do. It is painfully obvious that some preachers should not have entered that ministry at all. They are trying to do something for which God has given them no ability, and their desire to enter the ministry has mistakenly led them to assume that they had a divine call. After all, are not our innate abilities God-given? If someone is a gifted speaker and only a poor singer, why should God call him to be a vocalist instead of exercising the natural gift He has bestowed on him? God recognizes that when He made us, He gave us certain talents and abilities. The Lord may call us to do something which does not require the eloquence and ability of a preacher, as was seemingly the case with those who baptized the converts of the Apostle Paul. This does not give preachers the license to look down on those who do other forms of Christian service. God knows what each one is able to do, and He calls him or her to do it. We must make sure, however, that what we hear is His call and not merely our own desire.

**THOUGHT** - Have you ever felt like you were not "smart enough" to share the Gospel with another person? Perhaps that person was your superior or had some initials after their name like Phd, Md, etc. Paul would say "PERISH THAT DOUBTING THOUGHT!" Just preach the Gospel and leave the rest to God's Spirit. The Gospel has **INTRINSIC POWER**, **SUPERNATURAL POWER** to penetrate brilliant intellects and hardened hearts (it penetrated my hard, deceived, prideful heart!) Romans 1:16+ is clear that the Gospel "is the **power** ([dunamis](#)) of God for salvation ([soteria](#)) to everyone who believes ([pisteuo](#)), to the Jew first and also to the Greek (THOSE TWO WORDS TAKE CARE OF ALL HUMANITY, EVERY RACE, EVERY PEOPLE)."

What God has done to win us back to Himself is humanly unreasonable. No matter how wise our words may be, we may not necessarily cause people to receive the offer of salvation in Christ. Acceptance of the gospel is dependent upon a power other than human wisdom. Only the power of the cross of Christ can cause sinful man to accept the good news. (Zodhiates)

**Cleverness** (4678) ([sophia](#) compare **saphes** = clear) is the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of action, based on knowledge and understanding. **Sophia** is used in an ironic sense (ironic because it is not true wisdom in God's estimation) by adding "of this world" (1Cor 1:20), "of this age" (1Cor 2:6), or "fleshly wisdom" (2Cor 1:12). **Sophia** in Corinthians - 1 Co. 1:17; "wisdom of the wise" = 1 Co. 1:19; God has made "foolish the wisdom of the world" = 1 Co. 1:20; 1 Co. 1:21; 1 Co. 1:22; 1 Co. 1:24; 1 Co. 1:30; 1 Co. 2:1; 1 Co. 2:4; 1 Co. 2:5; 1 Co. 2:6; 1 Co. 2:7; 1 Co. 2:13; 1 Co. 3:19; 1 Co. 12:8; 2 Co. 1:12 **Note that SOPHIA is a KEY WORD in 1 Corinthians 1 (8 times) and in 1 Corinthians 2 (7 times)!**

**THOUGHT** Recall that the Greeks were lovers of [philosophy](#), the Greek word [philosophia](#) derived from [philos](#), lover and [sophia](#), wisdom and so is literally a love of wisdom which came to mean tenets of

heathen Gentile philosophers. "*Human understanding or wisdom and, by implication, in contrast with divinely revealed knowledge.*" (Louw-Nida). In short, the Greeks were lovers of human wisdom, but not God's wisdom and the saints at Corinth were vulnerable for this love of human wisdom **rubbing off on** them and clouding or distorting their thinking on the pure milk of the Gospel. Indeed many central beliefs of Christianity are in direct opposition to those of men like [Socrates](#), [Plato](#), and [Aristotle](#). Paul had issued a stern warning to the saints at Colossae to "**See to it** ([blepo](#) in [present imperative](#)) that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.." (Col 2:8+)

#### Related Resources:

- [How has Greek philosophy influenced Christianity? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Should a Christian study philosophy? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is godly wisdom? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is wisdom? What is the difference between wisdom and knowledge? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why is wisdom referred to as a she in Proverbs? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How can I tap into the wisdom of God? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How can I get wisdom from God? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How is the fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**ILLUSTRATION OF NOT PREACHING WITH CLEVER SPEECH** - The difference is illustrated in the account of two men who went to hear a certain famous preacher. Coming away from the service they said, "My, what eloquence! He knows how to choose the right words and how to say them! His oratory is simply irresistible!" The next week they went to hear another preacher, equally as famous. They left the service silently and reverently. Finally one said, "**My, what a Christ!**" (Zodhiates)

**ILLUSTRATION** - This brings to mind a preacher who was deeply concerned for the salvation of a Christ-rejecting lawyer. To reach him, he prepared a special sermon for him and urged that he attend a designated service. The lawyer accepted the invitation with thanks. He was unmoved by the sermon. However, as he left church, an illiterate woman, whose heart was filled with the love and compassion of Christ, stopped him and, with tears streaming down her face, said, "I sure love my Jesus, and won't you love my Jesus, too?" The earnest plea went directly to the lawyer's heart, who presently began to rejoice in the Savior's love and forgiveness. We can never over-emphasize the futility of trying to win people to Christ by "wise words," nor the effectiveness of the personal pleas to win people to Christ. (Zodhiates)

**Play and ponder** the powerful words of the hymn "[Not I But Christ](#)" (this is one of those convicting hymns which absolutely demolishes our pride!)

Not I, but Christ be honored, loved, exalted,  
Not I, but Christ be seen, be known and heard;  
Not I, but Christ in every look and action,  
Not I, but Christ in every thought and word.

Oh, to be saved from myself, dear Lord,  
Oh, to be lost in Thee,  
Oh, that it may be no more I,  
But Christ that lives in me.

Not I, but Christ to gently soothe in sorrow,  
Not I, but Christ to wipe the falling tear;  
Not I, but Christ to lift the weary burden,  
Not I, but Christ to hush away all fear.

Christ, only Christ, no idle word e'er falling,  
Christ, only Christ, no needless bustling sound;  
Christ, only Christ, no self-important bearing,  
Christ, only Christ, no trace of I be found.

Not I, but Christ my every need supplying,  
Not I, but Christ my strength and health to be;  
Christ, only Christ, for spirit, soul, and body,

Christ, only Christ, live then Thy life in me.

Christ, only Christ, ere long will fill my vision,

Glory excelling soon, full soon I'll see;

Christ, only Christ, my every wish fulfilling,

Christ, only Christ, my all in all to be.

**So that** - Term of purpose. Explains the purpose of unapologetically preaching the pure, unadulterated Gospel without "wise words."

**The cross** (see [stauros](#)) **of Christ would not be made void** - "emptied of its power." (ESV, NIV) Man's "wise word" would invalidate God's [summum bonum](#), His highest good, His wisdom from above, manifest in the preaching of **the cross of Christ**. In short man's wise words can empty the Cross of its power! The idea of **made void** is literally "be emptied out," to remove the content of something, in this case the simplicity and profundity of the **Cross of Christ** and in so doing taking away the effectiveness of the Cross, in effect depriving it of its power to save.

The cross stands high above the opinions of men  
and to that cross all opinions must come at last for judgement.

-- A. W. Tozer

**Arnold** - The central aspect of Paul's preaching was the Cross of Christ. The cross has become a modern day symbol for Christianity. People wear the cross around their necks. The cross is displayed in most church buildings and it stands high on many a steeple. We become so use to seeing the cross that it has lost meaning for us, and we certainly do not understand the cross as the first century Christians did. To them it was a horrible symbol of the death of a criminal. *"It (the cross) was for these early Christians, and for those among whom they lived, a horrible symbol. If you had used it then as a symbol it would have made people shudder. We would get much closer to it today if we substituted a symbol of an electric chair for the cross. Suppose we had an electric chair mounted on our wall here, with its straps and its atmosphere of death and shame? Wouldn't it be strange driving across this country to see church steeples with electric chairs on top? We would get much closer to the meaning that the cross had in the minds of first century people if that were true"* (Stedman, First Corinthians). It is interesting to note that the cross had such negative connotations that it was not used as a symbol for over a hundred years in the early church.

**MacArthur** - Human wisdom, epitomized in philosophy, has always been a threat to revelation. Martyn Lloyd-Jones has commented, "The whole drift toward modernism that has blighted the church of God and nearly destroyed its living gospel may be traced to an hour when men began to turn from revelation to philosophy." But the trust in human wisdom that we call modernism is hardly modern. It began with Adam and Eve, when they set their own judgment above God's, and was in full bloom in Paul's day. Whenever human wisdom, whether a definite philosophical system or not, gets mixed with divine revelation, revelation loses....Without exception, man's wisdom elevates himself and lowers God. It always, no matter how seemingly sincere and objective and scholarly, caters to man's self-will, pride, fleshly inclinations, and independence.....When man elevates his own wisdom he automatically attempts to lower God's wisdom, which looks to him like foolishness, because it conflicts with his own thinking. ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Lenski**: The combination of human wisdom with the gospel makes the gospel itself of none effect, kenos, "empty," without inner reality or substance. The gospel would not only lose some quality or some part of itself; it would evaporate entirely and leave only a hollow show of gospel terms and phrases. Instead of saying that the gospel would be made void and empty, Paul writes "the cross of Christ," because this is the very heart of the gospel. If the cross is cancelled or lost, the entire gospel is gone. On the cross Christ died for our sins, and this is in brief what "the cross" signifies: atonement for sin and guilt, reconciliation with God, forgiveness and peace blood-bought. Everything else contained in the gospel radiates from this vital center. If this center is blotted out, all the rays emanating from it are dissipated in everlasting night. ([The Interpretation of I Corinthians](#))

**Thiselton** answers the question of how man's wisdom undercuts and empties the Cross of its power - If everything rests on human cleverness, sophistication, or achievement, the cross of Christ no longer functions as that which subverts and cuts across all distinctions of race, class, gender, and status to make room for divine grace alone as sheer unconditional gift.... To treat the gospel of the cross of Christ as a vehicle for promoting self-esteem, self-fulfillment, and self-assertion turns it upside down and 'empties' it of all that it offers and demands" ([The First Epistle to the Corinthians](#))

**Zodhiates** adds "There is a simple truth in the Gospel—Christ died for our sins so that we might not have to die. By accepting His death in our stead, we receive His life. We are born again. This is so simple that words of human wisdom may obscure it. We must be careful that people get the clear-cut message of the gospel when we preach or testify."

**Leon Morris** says it well - The faithful preaching of the Cross leads people to put their trust, not in any human device, but in what God has done in Christ. A reliance on [rhetoric](#) would cause trust in men, the very opposite of what the preaching of the cross is meant to effect. ([The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians](#))



**Guzik** - How sobering this is! The great gospel of Jesus Christ, the very power of God unto salvation—made empty and of no effect through the pride and cleverness of men! This danger was constantly on the mind of the apostle Paul, and should be constantly on the mind of any preacher or teacher. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Schreiner** adds "What Paul criticizes here is a focus on [style instead of substance](#) such that hearers are swayed by the artistry of the speaker rather than by the message of the cross....One could become entranced with the skill and the power of the speaker and fail to grasp the message of the cross. Another way to put it is that the [medium must match the message](#). If the medium features the brilliance and the craft of human beings, it subverts the message of the cross that humbles human beings and reveals to them their spiritual poverty." ([1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

**THOUGHT** - What is the application to us today? Be careful how you present the Gospel - make sure it is the Gospel of the Cross of Christ!

**Be made void** (2758)([kenoo](#) from [kenos](#) = empty) means to completely eliminate elements of high status or rank by eliminating all privileges or prerogatives associated with such status or rank. Kenoo can mean to cause to be without result or effect = destroy, render void or of no effect. The irony is that Jesus made Himself "void" (kenoo in Php 2:7+ = emptied Himself) that He might become the perfect sacrificial Lamb on the Cross! Kenoo used only 5x in NT - Rom. 4:14; 1 Co. 1:17; 1 Co. 9:15; 2 Co. 9:3; Phil. 2:7

**Jack Arnold** makes a good point observing that "Perhaps he made mention of the cross here in order to heal the fragmentation in this church. By calling them back to the meaning of the cross, Paul hoped to help them find unity. When we get our eyes off men and systems and put them on Christ and His cross, divisions are minimized.

**Spurgeon** - A very remarkable passage! Paul could have used the wisdom of words. In some of his epistles he gives us a specimen of his mighty rhetoric. He was a born master of speech. There was a touch of poetry in him, and always a high logical power, but he would not use it in his preaching, lest the **cross of Christ** should be made of none effect. You may do what you like with human wisdom, put a bit into its mouth and try to lead it into obedience to Christ, but somehow or other its tendency is to rebel against him. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

Calvary shows how far men will go in sin,  
and how far God will go for man's salvation.  
-- H. C. Trumbull

**Zodhiates** - Paul's design here cannot be to condemn true eloquence and just reasoning, but to rebuke the vain parade, the glittering ornaments, and the dazzling rhetoric that the Greeks held in such esteem. Do not shy away from the cross of Christ and the blood that He shed there for sinners. This is the distinctiveness of the Christian gospel. Because it is distinctive, do not neglect it for the sake of ecumenical agreement. At the close of a worship service, a gentleman accosted a preacher and, after conceding that the sermon possessed certain commendable features, added, "But it had one damning defect!" Upon inquiring what this defect was, the startled minister received the following reply: "I am a Jew. I have only recently been born again. Up to that time I attended the synagogue. But there was really nothing in your sermon that I could not have heard in the synagogue, nothing that a Jewish rabbi might not have preached." "That," said the preacher in later years, "was the greatest lesson in homiletics I was ever taught." Be careful lest your words hide the cross, for it is there that sinners can lay down their burden of sin. Remember philosophy deals with abstract ideas, whereas the cross of Christ is a historical event and as such it can neither be doubted nor neglected. It is no theory of thought; it is a fact and should be presented as such. "How is it," a bishop asked a dramatist, "that I, in expounding divine doctrines, produce so little effect upon my congregation, while you can so easily rouse the passions of your audience by the representation of fiction?" "Because I recite falsehoods as if they were true, while you deliver truths as if they were fiction!" he replied. This indeed is the reason for the weakness of most preaching in our day. The truth of the cross is a fact must be related to the need of men everywhere. ([1 Corinthians 1: A Richer Life for You in Christ](#))

Whoever receiveth the Crucified One,  
Whoever believeth on God's only Son,  
A free and a perfect salvation shall have,  
For He is abundantly able to save.

**ILLUSTRATION** - A preacher who announced that he was going to deliver a series of sermons on the blood of Christ was approached by a committee and asked to change his topic to "the death of Christ," because "the word 'blood' is not very popular with many of the people in this university town." The preacher replied, "Jesus might have died in bed without shedding His blood, but 'without the shedding of blood there is no remission [Heb. 9:22]. I expect to keep the blood as my theme.'....A minister was preaching from the text, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7), when suddenly he was interrupted by an atheist who asked, "How can blood cleanse sin?" For a moment the preacher was silent; then he continued, "How

can water quench thirst?" "I don't know," replied the infidel, "but I know it does." "Neither do I know how the blood of Jesus cleanses sin," answered the preacher, "but I know that it does."

**A.W. Tozer** in his book [Man, A Dwelling Place for God](#), admonishes all who are tempted to water down the gospel -- "The new **cross** that's being spoken of today does not slay the sinner. It redirects him. It gears him into a cleaner and a jollier way of living and saves his self-respect. To the self-assertive it says, "Come and assert yourself for Christ." To the egotist it says, "Come and do your boasting in the Lord." To the thrill seeker it says, "Come and enjoy the thrill of Christian fellowship." The Christian message is slanted in the direction of the current vogue in order to make it acceptable to the public... The faith of Christ does not parallel the world, it intersects it. In coming to Christ, we do not bring our old life onto a higher plain. We leave it at the cross. (Mk 8:34-38+) The corn of wheat must go into the ground and die. (Jn 12:24) We who preach the gospel must not think of ourselves as public relation agents trying to establish good will between God and the world. We must not imagine ourselves commissioned to make Christ acceptable to big business, the press, the world of sports or even modern education. We are not diplomats but prophets, and **our message is not a compromise but an ultimatum.**"

**Robby Gallaty** - Share the gospel as graciously, lovingly, and tactfully as possible, but always share it boldly, accurately, and fully. A watered-down gospel is a false gospel. ([Growing Up: How to be a Disciple Who Makes Disciples](#) - highly recommended resource if you seek to obey Jesus' command to **Make disciples** - Mt 28:19+)

**Schreiner** has a good summary application of this section writing that "Paul's theology is eminently practical, and he is concerned here about **divisions and factions which focus on human ministers rather than on Christ**. When people exalt ministers and their speaking skills and abilities, the significance of the cross has been forgotten. Paul is not saying that sermons and other addresses should be as boring as possible; he is saying that those who proclaim and preach must beware lest they draw attention to themselves instead of to the cross of Christ....The baseline and the centre for Paul is the gospel of Christ which proclaims forgiveness of sins through the crucifixion of Jesus." ([1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary](#)) (Bold added)

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## The Hollywood Hills Cross

May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Galatians 6:14

Today's Scripture & Insight: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

One of the most recognizable images in the US is the "HOLLYWOOD" sign in Southern California. People from all over the globe come to "Tinseltown" to gaze at cement footprints of stars and perhaps catch a glimpse of celebrities who might pass by. It's hard for these visitors to miss the sign anchored in the foothills nearby.

Less well known in the Hollywood hills is another easily recognized symbol—one with eternal significance. Known as the Hollywood Pilgrimage Memorial Monument, this 32-foot cross looks out over the city. The cross was placed there in memory of Christine Wetherill Stevenson, a wealthy heiress who in the 1920s established the Pilgrimage Theatre (now the John Anson Ford Theatre). The site served as the venue for The Pilgrimage Play, a drama about Christ.

The two icons showcase an interesting contrast. Movies good and bad will come and go. Their entertainment value, artistic contributions, and relevance are temporary at best.

The cross, however, reminds us of a drama eternal in scope. The work of Christ is a story of the loving God who pursues us and invites us to accept His offer of complete forgiveness. The high drama of Jesus' death is rooted in history. His resurrection conquered death and has an eternal impact for all of us. The cross will never lose its meaning and power. By: Dennis Fisher ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Thank You, Father, for the eternal significance of the cross. Help us to understand and appreciate the love that caused Your Son to embrace His cross for our sakes.

To know the meaning of the cross, you must know the One who died there.

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## Jack Arnold's conclusion of 1 Cor 1:10-17 - What does God want us to learn from this passage?

**First**, the unity of the local church is essential to an effective witness to the lost world.

**Second**, God condemns any attitude which leads to partisanship or faction within the church of Jesus Christ. These Corinthians were all meeting in the same place (probably in a home), but within the group were wrong attitudes which had fragmented the church. God hates any attitude whereby people devote themselves to a man, a doctrine or a practice, refusing to fellowship with anyone who does not think just as they do.

The Christian celebrity phenomenon presents great hazards as well, creating “groupies” who hang on every word (or song) of radio and television preachers or singers without testing their messages against the Scriptures as carefully as they do those of their own pastors and leaders (Craig Blomberg, First Corinthians).

**Third**, God wants us Christians, while holding to our convictions, to feel a part of the total Body of Christ. In New Testament times, denominations did not exist. There were no labels put on groups of Christians. They practiced baptism, but there were no Baptists. They believed in predestination, but there were no Presbyterians. They were committed to holy living, but there were no Methodists. They were Spirit-filled, but there were no Pentecostals. They believed in worship, but there were no Episcopalians. They observed the Lord’s Table, but there were no Plymouth Brethren. As Christians, we must get the right attitude about the universal, visible church of Christ.

**Fourth**, separation into cliques often brings pride and not humility, and God hates a proud heart. Pride does not want to change the problem of division, and this problem was never solved in Corinth. Clement of Rome, writing about 95 A.D., talks about the same cliques and divisions in his day.

**Fifth**, the key to defeating divisions in the church is an acknowledgment of the [Lordship of Christ](#), giving Him the authority to rule over our lives through the Word of God.

**Sixth**, we Christians are to be in loving fellowship with all true believers in Christ in whatever denomination or Christian group we may find ourselves.

When will the institutional church and particularly the church in the individualized West put away its petty squabbling and begin to demonstrate this biblically mandated unity more visibly? Not a few unbelievers ancient and modern have rejected the gospel on the grounds that a religion as visibly divided as Christianity could scarcely reflect the truth (Blomberg).

Too often churches, denominations and renewal movements break off and become their own “church of Christ,” forming every imaginable sect or way out group. This kind of activity is a shame for the church and is a cause for deep repentance.

**ILLUSTRATION** - John Wesley was very concerned about all the denominations in Christendom in his day. He told about a dream in which he was ushered to the gates of hell. At those gates, he asked the gatekeeper, “Are there any Presbyterians here?” And he found out there were. “Are there any Congregationalists here?” There were. “Any Baptists?” “Yes.” To his amazement he also found that there were Methodists in hell. Then Wesley was immediately translated to the gates of heaven, and he asked the gatekeeper, “Are there any Presbyterians here?” The answer was no. “Are there any Baptists or Congregationalists?” Again, the answer was no. “Well, then,” said Wesley, “there must be some Methodists?” The gatekeeper replied that there were absolutely no Methodists. Then Wesley said, “Who then is inside heaven’s gates?” The gatekeeper replied, “There are only Christians here!”

If you are not a Christian, you should know that no preacher can save you, no church can save you, and no Christian organization can save you. No evangelist can forgive your sins. No teacher can give you a righteousness that will make you acceptable to God. No man can open our eyes and make you see spiritual realities. Only Christ, the God-Man, the Savior, can forgive your sins, heal your broken heart, give you eternal life, cleanse you as white as the driven snow, and give you assurance of heaven. Do not trust in men to save you. Trust Christ. Do not trust any system of theology to save you. Trust Christ. Jesus said, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (Jn. 14:6). ([1 Corinthians 1:10-17 Divisions Because Of Personalities](#))

**1 Corinthians 1:18 For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.**

Amplified - For the story and message of the cross is sheer absurdity and folly to those who are perishing and on their way to perdition, but to us who are being saved it is the [manifestation of] the power of God.

Wuest - For the story, that story concerning the Cross, is, on the one hand, to those who are perishing, foolishness, but to us, on the other hand, who are being saved, it is God’s power. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:18 For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:18 The message of the cross is foolish to those who are headed for destruction! But we who are being saved know it is the very power of God.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:18 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.

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:18 ἡ λογὸς τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῖς μὲν πολλοῖς μωρὰ ἐστίν, τοῖς δὲ σὺν ἡμῖν θεοδυναμίς ἐστιν.

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:18 for the word of the cross to those indeed perishing is foolishness, and to us -- those being saved -- it is the power of God,

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:18 For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God.

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but it is God's power to us who are being saved.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:18 For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:18 The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:18 The message of the cross is folly for those who are on the way to ruin, but for those of us who are on the road to salvation it is the power of God.

- **word of the Cross:** 1Co 1:23,24 1 Cor 2:2 Ga 6:12-14
- **to:** Ac 13:41 2Co 2:15,16 2 Cor 4:3 2Th 2:10
- **foolishness:** 1Co 1:21,23,25 2:14 3:19 Ac 17:18,32
- **to:** 1Co 1:24 15:2 Ps 110:2,3 Ro 1:16 2Co 10:4 1Th 1:5 Heb 4:12
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Cor 4:19-20+ But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I shall find out, not the words of those who are arrogant but their **power** ([dunamis](#)). For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in (SUPERNATURAL) **power** ([dunamis](#)).

Galatians 6:12-14+ Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the **cross of Christ**. 13 For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh. 14 But may it never be that I would boast, except in the **cross of our Lord Jesus Christ**, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

### POWER OF THE CROSS VERSUS WEAKNESS OF HUMAN WISDOM

Paul will launch into a lengthy discussion contrasting the power of the cross with the weakness of human wisdom. In a word, the word of the Cross divides all mankind into two camps, one composed of those who are perishing and the other composed of those who are being saved or as C S Lewis phrased it "*immortal horrors or everlasting splendour*"

'the world has had enough teachers, it needs a Redeemer'  
-- C S C Williams

**D Edmond Hiebert** - "This is the epistle of the cross in its social application." It reveals the burning desire of the Apostle that the cross of Christ shall be applied to every problem in the Christian life. The intention of the epistle is intensely practical. ([An Introduction to the New Testament, Volume 2: The Pauline Epistles](#))

**Alan Johnson** entitles 1 Cor 1:18-2:5 "Paul's Second Response to Factions: Christ Crucified for You" writing that "The following section of Paul's letter (1 Cor 1:18–2:5) takes up this emphasis on the vanity of self-promotion through rhetoric and wisdom achievement without the cross and expands on its fallacies from several angles. ([1 Corinthians](#))

**Paul Apple** entitles 1:18-25 "**The Word of the Cross - True Power and Wisdom**" - Man pridefully asserts his own supposed strength and exalts his own worldly wisdom. He tries to formulate a religion where he can call the shots and approach God on his own terms. He imagines that he can control his own destiny and he relies on sophisticated rhetoric to conceal the lack of substance in his philosophic argumentations. But the message of the cross - the simple historical truth of Christ crucified - is the only message that can deliver sinful man from his lost condition of alienation from a Holy God. The unsaved will continue to mock at the humiliation of the cross as symbolizing only weakness and foolishness. But to those who believe the message of Christ crucified speaks of the power and wisdom of God. ([1 Corinthians Commentary](#))

**Ray Stedman** entitles 1 Cor 1:18-25 as "**God's Nonsense**." He adds that "These Christians at Corinth were quarreling over what Paul calls "the wisdom of words," and their quarrelings and divisions were sabotaging the impact of this church upon the city so that much of what had started out with tremendous power was beginning to fade away because of the divisions within the congregation. Now, the cure to such divisiveness and dissension, Paul says, is the gospel. We usually think of the gospel as something that non-Christians need to hear, but the New Testament makes very clear to us that it is Christians who need to understand the gospel. Believing the gospel is not only the means by which you become a Christian, it is the means by which you are delivered in your Christian life from all the causes of disagreements, factions, dissensions and pressures of lust, etc." ([1 Corinthians 1:18-25 God's Nonsense](#))

**Repelling and Compelling** - The cross of Christ is both repelling and compelling.

The idea that Jesus died on a cross for our sins is "intellectually contemptible and morally outrageous."  
--Oxford professor and philosopher Sir Alfred Ayer,

**MacArthur** sums up 1 Cor 1:18-25 - It is a contrast between the foolishness of men, which they think is wisdom, and the wisdom of God, which they think is foolishness....That God would take human form, be crucified, and raised in order to provide for man's forgiveness of sin and entrance into heaven is an idea far too simple, foolish, and humbling for the natural man to accept. That one man (even the Son of God) could die on a piece of wood on a nondescript hill in a nondescript part of the world and thereby determine the destiny of every person who has ever lived seems stupid. It allows no place for man's merit, man's attainment, man's understanding, or man's pride. ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Brian Bell** - An eminent professor of theology said to his students in his seminary class, "**Gentlemen, I ask you to remember that you are called upon to know something of the foolishness of preaching, not the preaching of foolishness.**" But he's **wrong**. The word of the cross is **foolishness**...to those who are perishing. It stands in contradiction to all the philosophy, education, & knowledge of this world, for the preaching of the cross puts the sentence of death upon them all. Christianity neither flatters human beings nor presents God in an easily palatable form. Who would have ever expect or invent: a crucified Messiah and a crucified self as the way to everlasting life? The story does sound crazy/foolish. It does! (be honest haven't you ever heard yourself & thought...this IS weird!) ([1 Corinthians 1:18-31 Sophia Meets Jesus](#))

**Arnold** has an excellent background introduction to 1 Cor 1:18ff - The Corinthian church was torn into pieces by division within its own ranks. They were following men. Some followed Paul, glorying in their Gentile liberty. Others followed Apollos, who was the epitome of the Hellenistic intellectual culture. Others followed Peter (Cephas), who liked a traditional Jewish approach to Christianity. Then there were those who were super-pious, an exclusive party who claimed to be followers of Christ only. The problem at Corinth was that the Christians were impressed with the wisdom of men. The church was quarreling over what Paul called the "words of human wisdom" (1 Cor. 1:17). They found it particularly stimulating to enter into debates about all kinds of theories and speculations centered around certain dynamic personalities. When people began to glory in human wisdom, they began to glory in leaders, and when they began to glory in leaders, there were divisions (schisms) within the church. They were exalting leaders because they were playing intellectual games which always leads to pride. In 1 Corinthians 1:10-17, Paul established the fact that there were divisions at Corinth. In 1 Corinthians 1:18-3:21, Paul deals with the causes of those divisions.... (HE ADDS) In 1:18-25, Paul shows that human wisdom and worldly reason have absolutely no place in the salvation of a person's soul. Paul does not play down the place of the intellect if it is used in a Christian context, but his premise is that worldly wisdom has no place in Christian salvation because the message of the Cross is a divine revelation. For the unsaved man, the gospel is foolishness, stupid, nonsense, absurd and moronic, but for the Christian touched by the sovereign grace of God, it is God's power for salvation. ([1 Corinthians 1:17-24 The Foolishness Of The Cross](#))

They are nailed to the cross, they are nailed to the cross!  
O how much He was willing to bear.



With what anguish and loss, Jesus went to the cross,  
But He carried my sins with Him there.  
—Breck

**Alan Redpath** - In this significant epistle you will find that Paul constantly brings his hearers back to the cross. He is convinced that the answer in each controversy and to every failure, as well as all hope for the future, is "the word of the cross."

**Wiersbe** makes an interesting point - The mention of the cross in 1 Corinthians 1:17 introduced this long section on the power of the Gospel versus the weakness of man's wisdom. It is interesting to see **how Paul approached this problem of division in the church**. First, he pointed to the unity of Christ: there is one Saviour and one body. Then he reminded them of their baptism, a picture of their spiritual baptism into Christ's body (1 Cor. 12:13). Then he took them to the cross. ([The Wiersbe Bible Commentary](#))

**William MacDonald** - It will help us to understand the section that follows if we remember that the Corinthians, being Greeks, were great lovers of human wisdom. They regarded their philosophers as national heroes. Some of this spirit had apparently crept into the assembly at Corinth. There were those who desired to make the gospel more acceptable to the intelligentsia. They did not feel that it had status among scholars, and so they wanted to intellectualize the message. This worship of intellectualism was apparently one of the issues that was causing the people to form parties around human leaders. Efforts to make the gospel more acceptable are completely misguided. There is a vast difference between God's wisdom and man's, and there is no use trying to reconcile them. Paul now shows the folly of exalting men, and emphasizes that to do this is inconsistent with the true nature of the gospel (1 Cor 1:18–3:4). His first point is that the message of the cross is the opposite of all that men consider to be true wisdom (1 Cor 1:18–25). ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**For (gar)** is a term of explanation. What is Paul explaining from verse 17? "For introduces the reason he did not come in wisdom of word. To the perishing, the cross must always appear to be foolishness." (S L Johnson)

**Zodhiates** says that "Paul explains why he thinks some leave out the cross of Christ and consequently render it ineffective."

**Lenski** says "The new paragraph begins with an explanatory **gar** and connects with what Paul has just said about emptying out the cross of Christ. To nullify the cross is to nullify the gospel, no matter how this may be done. Preachers and hearers who are guilty of this nullification may, of course, still use the term "cross of Christ" and may make it mean this or that according to their own wisdom, but the substance will be gone, only the shell of the cross will be left. "**For**" explains the matter by stating the nature of the cross." ([The Interpretation of I Corinthians](#))

**Schreiner** on **for (gar)** - Paul explains why one must not rely on rhetorical ability in the preaching of the cross. Stunning rhetoric which displays the skill of human beings and brings praise to them does not fit with the message of the cross, since the cross was the most humiliating form of punishment in the ancient world. ([1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

The pathway to heaven begins at the foot of the Cross.

**Johnson** - Paul's unstated question for the Corinthians would go something like this. How can the gospel of Christ be a form of worldly wisdom when it proclaims (message, v. 18) a crucified leader, Jesus? Isn't such a proclamation foolishness in terms of the world's evaluation of what counts for wisdom and knowledge? ([1 Corinthians](#))

**The word (logos) of the cross (stauros) is foolishness to those who are perishing** - KJV is a poor translation "the preaching of the cross," for here Paul is not describing the act of preaching but the content of preaching. That is always the most important thing in preaching. Not men with slick dialogue, but men sticking to sound doctrine. The **word of the cross** is the preaching of a crucified Saviour as the Sacrifice for sins (cf Jn 1:29+). The unsaved man looks at the Cross as **moronic** (see **moria** below). Contrast the **cleverness of speech (logos)** with the **word (logos) of the Cross**. They are diametrically opposed to each other. "Paul is contrasting man's word, which reflects man's wisdom, and God's Word, which reflects God's wisdom." (MacArthur) **The word of the Cross** is the Gospel (cf 1 Cor 15:1-7+). It is the truth that Jesus, fully God took on human flesh becoming fully Man, lived a sinless life and died on a rugged Cross to pay for the sins of those who would believe on Him is accounted as absolute foolishness (complete nonsense!) to natural (1 Cor 2:14+, cf Acts 26:24+), unregenerate, unsaved men **who are perishing**.

**Perishing (apollumi)** is in the present tense which depicts Christ and Cross rejectors as those who are in the process of being ruined now (cf Jn 3:18+) and ultimately forever (eternal punishment) (cf 2 Cor 4:3 also has **apollumi** in the present tense). The significance of the Cross is in the spiritual truth it reveals, and this can only be revealed to a man's mind by the Spirit of God. The lost world says you are worshipping a God Who died. A crucified Messiah, Son of God, or God must seem to be contradiction in terms to anyone—Jew, Greek, Roman, or barbarian—and is foolish to the natural man.

The message of the Cross is foolishness to the wonder-seeking Jew and to the wisdom-seeking Greek.

-- Robertson

**Arnold** points out that "Perhaps you can now understand a little better the way your unsaved family or friends or business associates react to you when you talk about Christ to them. You appear to be a **moron**!" Whenever we witness to a very self-sufficient, self-made man and tell him all of his impressive record or achievement is worth nothing in the sight of God, that it does not make him one degree more acceptable in the sight of God, that it is nothing more than wasted effort, we immediately feel the sting of the offense of the Cross. He will say, "You mean to tell me all this impressive array of knowledge and wisdom that has been accumulated for centuries, with all the great achievements of mankind in the realm of relieving human misery and the technological advances of our day, that all this is worthless and that God will not take this into account in the area of salvation. Nonsense!" ([1 Corinthians 1:17-24 The Foolishness Of The Cross](#))

As Paul says in 1 Cor 2:14+

a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are **foolishness** ([moria](#)) to him; and he cannot understand them, (WHY NOT?) because they are spiritually appraised.

The cross stands in bold opposition to the natural man.

Its philosophy runs contrary to the processes of the unregenerate mind.

-- A W Tozer

**Albert Barnes** has a good word on **the cross is foolishness** ('stupid folly') - The death on the cross was associated with the idea of all that is shameful and dishonorable; and to speak of salvation only by the sufferings and death of a crucified man was fitted to excite in their bosoms only unmingled scorn. ([1 Corinthians 1](#))

**J C Ryle** - As long as the world stands the cross will seem foolishness to natural man....(but) Take away the cross of Christ from the Bible and it is a dark book.

**Brian Bill** - An eminent professor of theology said to his students in his seminary class, "Gentlemen, I ask you to remember that you are called upon to know something of the foolishness of preaching, not the preaching of foolishness." But he's wrong. The word of the cross is foolishness...to those who are perishing. It stands in contradiction to all the philosophy, education, & knowledge of this world, for the preaching of the cross puts the sentence of death upon them all. Christianity neither flatters human beings nor presents God in an easily palatable form. Who would have ever expect or invent: a crucified Messiah & a crucified self as the way to everlasting life? The story does sound crazy/foolish. It does! (be honest haven't you ever heard yourself & thought...this IS weird!) ([Sophia Meets Jesus](#))

**Leon Morris** - A well-known graffito in Rome depicts a worshipper standing before a crucified figure with the body of a man and the head of an ass and the inscription 'Alexamenos worships his god'. That was the way the worldly-wise regarded the message of the cross. (TNTC-1 Cor)

**Cicero** (Pro Rabirio Perduellionis Reo 5.16) decries the crucifixion of a Roman citizen, exclaiming, "The very word '**cross**' should be far removed not only from the person of a Roman citizen but from his thoughts, his eyes and his ears." Christianity was cradled in what looks like disastrous defeat, and the unspeakable stigma of the cross exposed the preacher of this message to woeful contempt.... The gospel transforms the cross as a symbol of Roman terror and political domination into a symbol of God's love and power. It shows that the power of God's love is greater than human love of power...Since the cross represents painful death and profound humiliation, it calls into question the conventional wisdom about power and the divine. The ancients took for granted that deities possessed power, and the degree of their power determined their ranking in the pyramid of gods. In the cross, that pyramid is turned upside down. The most powerful God appears to be the most powerless. The cross makes hash of all secular and religious attempts based on human wisdom to make sense of God and the world. Victory is won by giving up life, not taking it. Selfish domination of others is discredited. Shame is removed through divine identification with the shamed in a shameful death. God offers a new paradigm that makes the experience of shame the highest path to glory and honor (Garland - BECNT-1Cor)

The cross of Christ will always be an offence to the natural man.

-- John Blanchard

**Perishing** as noted above is in the **present tense** picturing the foolish unbelievers as continually perishing or already in the process of perishing, "on the road to perdition". The NLT has a vivid paraphrase "*those who are headed for destruction!*" An unbeliever has no idea that every tick of the clock is moving him/her closer to eternal torment and separation from the glory of the Creator (cf 2 Th 1:8-9+)! The present tense of perishing recalls Ro 1:18+ where Paul wrote that "the wrath of God is (present tense - in process of being [divine passive]) revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in

unrighteousness." The use of the **present tense** also conveys the certainty of their future dread destiny. We see a similar contrast between **perishing** and **being saved** in Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians...

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. 15 For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who **are being saved** ([sozo](#) in present tense and passive voice = divine passive = work of the Spirit) and among **those who are perishing** ([apollumi](#) in present tense = they are already perishing even while still alive! A horrible, tragic thought!); 16 to the one an aroma from death to death (ED: LITTLE WONDER THEY ARE ANTAGONISTIC WHEN YOU GIVE OFF THE "FRAGRANCE OF CHRIST" IN THEIR PRESENCE! DON'T BE SURPRISED!), to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things? (INDEED - NONE OF US! FOR PAUL'S ANSWER SEE 2 Cor 3:5-6+) (2 Cor 2:14-16; see also comments on 2 Th 2:10 which contrasts **those who perish** and those **saved**) Play the great Fanny Crosby hymn [Rescue the Perishing](#) (and then go out and proclaim Jesus Christ and Him crucified to the lost in your sphere of influence.)

**Alan Redpath** says **perishing** "means entire failure to be what God intends a man to be: the disease of sin running its course unchecked. It indicates an increasing distance from God, a gradual sinking into depravity, a withdrawal of the only source of real happiness and power. It is the drift downward in spite of all the efforts made to pull oneself up....Each one of us is in one or the other of these categories: either we are being delivered from the disease of self and sin, or we are becoming more sinful and more selfish and more depraved in spite of all our self-effort. But notice, in the second place, that both "being saved," and "perishing" describe a continuing process. Life is pictured for us here as something that is moving and active. In the New Testament we have the great idea of salvation considered from at least three different points of view. Sometimes it is spoken of as having been accomplished in the past, "Ye have been saved." That describes the initial act of faith in the blood of Jesus Christ as Savior. Again it is spoken of as in the present, "Ye are being saved," as in verse 18. Sometimes it is relegated to the future, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Romans 13:11). But there are many passages which describe salvation as a continuous experience, running through life, such as "By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are [being] sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14). One thing that will characterize the life of every genuine believer in the Lord Jesus, truly born of the Spirit of God, is growth, development. He will not talk about having arrived; he does not say he has had a tremendous second experience of sanctification; he would not boast in his holiness, nor exalt his own experience, but there are evidences of his growth in his behavior. As he is more and more filled with the Spirit, he grows more gracious, more gentle, more Christlike, and as we stand back and watch his life, we see God working a miracle. As the clay in the hand of the potter, so the man's life is being molded, shaped, and conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus. **May I say kindly, yet firmly, that unfortunately many professing Christians show no evidence of such growth at all.** In fact, do I exaggerate if I dare to say that it is the **majority** of them? They may have been saved, perhaps, for twenty years, but they are still as mean, hot-tempered, selfish, jealous, unkind, impure, and worldly as ever. There are no marks of maturity, no evidences of becoming more like the Lord Jesus. The moment we accept forgiveness through the blood of the Lord Jesus we are obligated by bearing His name to stand for righteousness, purity, and holiness. Our business in life is to seek to win somebody else for Jesus; the redemptive ministry of the love of God should be expressed through our lives in service to others. That is the mark of the real thing. How desperately we all need power to stand for the right, power to speak for the Lord Jesus, power to live for Him day by day. **Just as "being saved" is a constant process, so is "perishing."** It is becoming more and more interested in worldly things, accepting defeat and compromise without blushing. How many who have professed to be Christians for a long time find it so much easier now to submit to things that are selfish, mean, and worldly! Paul describes salvation as a process that is going on constantly. Therefore, **it is not only registering a decision for Jesus that evidences your destiny; it is the direction of your character.** Perhaps that decision has even brought you into Christian training or some form of ministry, but if it is not accompanied by **direction of character**, there is room to question whether or not it is authentic. The Bible tells you to examine yourself, whether you be in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5+). **May the Holy Spirit challenge your heart with this New Testament description of real salvation! What has been the trend of your character in the past twelve months?** Your body comes to church, maybe to teach a Sunday school class. You listen to sermon after sermon, but deep down in your own soul, **is there progress into the Lord or regress into sin?** Do you have increased hunger for truth, for holiness, for righteousness, for the Lord Himself? Or is there carelessness and worldliness and superficiality, **an easy slipping into habits that you never dreamed you would allow a year ago?** We make constant progress along one road or the other, but what is the determining factor? What guides our direction and governs our destiny? It is the "preaching of the cross." Now let us be careful that we understand what that phrase means. It does not mean the act of preaching, itself. We have here the Greek word *logos*, the same word that is in the first chapter of the Gospel of John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . and the Word was made flesh . . ." (John 1:1, 14). It is "the word of the cross." " ([The Royal Route to Heaven: Studies in First Corinthians](#))

**Zodhiates on perishing...being saved** - As perishing is a progressive state, so is salvation. Paul speaks of the perishing ones and of those who are being saved. These are states of heart which increase by the very fact of continuance. Neither perishing nor being saved are static states. To put it simply, the longer you are saved, the more saved you are; and the longer you are lost, the more lost you are. (1 Cor Commentary)

**Henry Morris** rightly observes that "Those who regard Christianity as foolishness, rejecting and perhaps even ridiculing God's Word, thereby prove to others that they are perishing in sin, on their way to hell." (Defender's Study Bible).

**Cross** (4716)(**stauros** from **histemi** = to stand) was an an upright stake, especially a pointed one. Thayer adds the **stauros** was a well-known instrument of most cruel and ignominious punishment, borrowed by the Greeks and Romans from the Phoenicians; to it were affixed among the Romans, down to the time of Constantine the Great, the guiltiest criminals, particularly the basest slaves, robbers, the authors and abettors of insurrections, and occasionally in the provinces, at the arbitrary pleasure of the governors, upright and peaceable men also, and even Roman citizens themselves. **Stauros** is used in 1 Cor 1:17-18 figuratively to describe the **Cross** as a symbol which stands for the death of Christ as an atonement for sins.

**Stedman** gives background on the Cross - It was, for these early Christians, and for those among whom they lived, a horrible symbol. If you had used it then as a symbol it would have made people shudder. We would get much closer to it today if we substituted a symbol of an electric chair for the cross. Suppose we had an electric chair mounted on our wall here, with its straps and its atmosphere of death and of shame? Wouldn't it be strange driving across this country to see church steeples with electric chairs on top? We would get much closer to the meaning that the cross had in the minds of 1st century people if that were true. Now, the cross is not the whole of the gospel. Some people have misunderstood that from this letter, because Paul said that when he came to Corinth he came determined not to preach anything among them "save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Before this letter is over, however, the apostle is going to write a great section on the resurrection of Christ. That is part of it too. But the cross was particularly needed in Corinth, as it is needed in our American churches, because the word of the cross is the cure for all human division. ([God's Nonsense](#))

**D A Carson** - "What would you think if a woman came to work wearing earrings stamped with an image of the mushroom cloud of the atomic bomb dropped over Hiroshima? What would you think of a church building adorned with a fresco of the massed graves at Auschwitz?....The same sort of shocking horror was associated with cross and crucifixion in the first century."

**McGrath** - Corporations spend huge sums of money designing logos. Advertising agencies are hired to conceive a logo which will express the qualities that the corporation wants to be associated with it in the public mind. These are usually qualities such as stability, reliability, progressiveness, or aggressiveness. This design will appear on their letterheads, on their products, and be prominently displayed at their national and local headquarters....An organization which chose as its logo a hangman's noose, a firing squad, a gas chamber or an electric chair would accordingly seem to have taken leave of its senses. It would be sheer madness to choose an instrument of execution as a symbol of an organization....**And yet exactly such a symbol is universally recognized as the logo of Christianity. Christians are baptized with the sign of the cross.** Churches and other places of meeting do not merely include a cross, they are often built in the shape of a cross. Many Christians make the sign of the cross in times of danger or anxiety. The graves of Christians are marked with crosses. ([1 Corinthians](#))

**Johnson** - The decisive act of God in Christ's death has brought about a reversal of the world's values concerning status, success, self-achievement and boasting. The cross confounds all human wisdom and redefines wisdom in a new and paradoxical way. Therefore our whole way of seeing the world is turned upside down. The cross becomes the lens for an epistemological revolution, a conversion of the imagination. For anyone who grasps the paradoxical logic of this text, the world can never look the same (Hays). ([1 Corinthians](#))

**Dietrich Bonhoeffer** "Wisdom or grace without the cross is what is sold on the market like a cheapjack's wares. Cheap grace means justification of sin without the justification of the sinner, ... forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline ... the world goes on in the same old way ... grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ"

Every doctrine that is not embedded in the cross of Jesus will lead astray.

-- Oswald Chambers

There is not a word in the Bible, which is extra crucem,  
which can be understood without reference to the cross.

-- Martin Luther

## Related Resources:

- Baker's Evangelical Dictionary [Cross, Crucifixion](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Cross](#)
- Fausset's Bible Dictionary [Cross](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Cross, Crucifixion](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Cross](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Cross, Cross-Bearing](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Cross](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Cross](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Cross](#)

**Perishing** (622)(**apollumi** from **apo** = away from or wholly + **olethros** = state of utter ruin <> **ollumi** = to destroy) means to destroy utterly but not to cause one to cease to exist. **Apollumi** as it relates to men, is not the loss of being per se, but is best understood as the loss of *well-being*. It means the person's life is "ruined" so that they no longer fulfill the purpose for which they were created (for man it was to glorify God)! The **word of the cross** promises everlasting life for the one who believes. The failure to possess this life will result in utter ruin and eternal uselessness (but not a cessation of existence). Uses in letters to Corinth - 1Co. 1:18, 19; 8:11; 10:9, 10; 15:18; 2Co. 2:15; 2 Cor 4:3, 9.

**Foolishness** (3472)(**moros** from **moros** = foolish; Eng = **moron**) is a noun which is that which is folly, foolish, intellectually weak or irrational. It means lacking good judgment. It "denotes inappropriate behaviour, thought or speech, both of single lapses of sense as well as in the sense of a permanent attribute. It is concerned as much with lack of knowledge as with lack of discernment. The use of the word for the state of mental derangement (Soph., Aj. 1150) or for a man's behaviour when acting under the influence of his desires (Eur. Hippolytus 966; Soph., Ant. 469 f.) suggests the thought of a power which dominates man." (NIDNTT) "The Group in Classical Greek. **moros** and cognates denote deficiency, e.g., physical sloth, but more especially mental dullness." (TDNT) All NT uses by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians - 1 Co. 1:18; 1 Co. 1:21; 1 Co. 1:23; 1 Co. 2:14; 1 Co. 3:19

**Zodhiates** - A moron has limited ability to think logically. Lógos is the opposite of mōría; a logical person is the opposite of a moron.

**Illustration of foolishness** - Several years ago, there was a massive volcanic explosion in the state of Washington when **Mount St. Helens** erupted. Sheriff Bill Closner said, "People were in the danger areas around the mountain because they refused to obey roadblocks. The bottom line is that nobody would listen." As a result, there were needless deaths and injuries. **Even though danger was physically imminent, people still refused to obey the regulations.** Sin or disobedience always has consequences. If people refused to listen in the midst of dangerous circumstances like the Mount St. Helens eruption, we should not be so shocked at the depravity and stubbornness of men in spiritual matters. (Illustrations for Biblical Preaching: Over 1500 sermon illustrations arranged by topic and indexed exhaustively, Green, Michael P)

A minister who faithfully proclaimed the gospel in an open-air meeting was challenged at the close by an unbeliever who stepped from the crowd and said, "I don't believe in heaven or hell. I don't believe in God or Christ. I haven't seen them." Then a man wearing dark glasses came forward and said, "You say there is a river near this place? There is no such thing. You say there are people standing here, but it cannot be true. I haven't seen them. I was born blind. Only a blind man could say what I have said. And only a spiritually blind man can say what you have said! Does not the Word of God say, 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God'?" (Ps. 14:1).

**But** - Term of contrast. The sharp contrast here is striking as it separates all humanity into two groups, unsaved and saved, children of darkness or children of light. There is no in between, no purgatory. Only those who perish and those who are saved. Every person is either on a sure course for eternal punishment or eternal bliss!

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, if you are in the latter blessed group, you should stop now and have a short private praise and worship service. I fear I too often underestimate the greatness, grandeur and glory of my salvation, and that if I pondered more often the great salvation and great Savior, it would be a strong impediment against my willful sinning against Him! May our great Father grant that enabled by His Spirit we might all glory more often in our great salvation in Christ and that this would be a powerful motivation for us to walk in a manner



worthy of the Lord to please Him in all respects. Lord. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

**To us who are being saved** - **Us** is Paul and the saints at Corinth. **Being saved** ([sozo](#)) present tense and passive voice (divine passive = work of the Spirit) a truth which speaks of the believer's need to daily come to the Cross of Christ for power to fight the good fight of faith. This is tantamount to present tense salvation - we have been saved (justification), we are being saved (progressive sanctification and and will be saved (glorification). The Cross is the power of God which energizes and enables all three "tenses" of salvation.

One is reminded of the words of Jesus regarding taking up the cross in Mark 8:34-38+

And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must **deny** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) himself, and **take up** ([aorist imperative](#)) **his cross** and **follow** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) Me. 35 "For whoever wishes to save ([sozo](#)) his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save ([sozo](#)) it. 36 "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? 37 "For what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 38 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

### **The Old Rugged Cross**

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross, The emblem of suffering and shame  
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best for a world of lost sinners was slain.  
Oh, that old rugged cross, so despised by the world, has a wondrous attraction for me;  
For the dear Lamb of God left His glory above to bear it to dark Calvary.  
To the old rugged cross I will ever be true; its shame and reproach gladly bear,  
So I'll cherish the old rugged, till my trophies at last I lay down;  
I will cling to the old rugged cross, and exchange it some day for a crown.

**Stedman** - the saved (have not) been fully saved yet; we are on the way to that final salvation yet to be realized. But to us who **are being saved**, the cross is the key to the release of all God's blessing in human life. It is the way to experience the healing of God in the heart, the deliverance from the reign of sin, and the entry into wholeness, peace, and joy. The cross is an inescapable part of that process. ([God's Nonsense](#))

**A T Robertson** adds that "Salvation is described by Paul as a thing done in the **past**, "we were saved" (Ro 8:24), as a **present** state, "ye have been saved" (Eph. 2:5), as a **process**, "ye are being saved" (1 Cor. 15:2), as a **future** result, "thou shalt be saved" (Ro 10:9)." ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Brian Bell** - Here Paul speaks to the 2nd phase - progressive sanctification, where we are delivered from sin's power through the life of cross-bearing. Salvation (free from sin [i.e. Orig.sin]); Sanctification (free from sins power); Glorification (free from ever sinning again). Death to self does not mean a morbid, introspective inferiority complex that leads to insecurity. It just means being truly dead to self by depending solely on God. (Swindoll) They no longer have to rely on their own plans/intellect to see them through. They become the most secure people on earth. In the Roman Empire, people sentenced to die by crucifixion had to carry at least a section of their cross through the city to their place of execution. This practiced demonstrated to all observers that the condemned rebels had finally submitted to the state. In submission to the Father, Jesus carried His cross to Golgotha & was crucified on our behalf. Following Him requires a similar crucifixion - the death of our stubborn wills & selfish desires. Are you shouldering your personal cross? Are you nailing your selfish desires to that cross & letting them die?. Or do you find yourself feeding your selfish desires like a little puppy you just found & brought home? ([1 Corinthians 1:18-31](#) [Sophia Meets Jesus](#))

### **Related Resource:**

- [Three Tenses of Salvation](#)
- Progressive Sanctification

**Being saved** ([4982](#))([sozo](#)) has the basic meaning of rescuing one from great peril. Additional nuances include to protect, keep alive, preserve life, deliver, heal, be made whole. Jesus' very Name speaks of His primary purpose to save men from their sin - "She (Mary) will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will **save** ([sozo](#)) His people from their sins." (Mt 1:21+) In Mt 1:21 **sozo** is equated with deliverance from sins (guilt and power of) with Jesus' Name being a transliteration of Joshua meaning "Jehovah is salvation". Uses of **sozo** in the letters to the Corinthians - 1 Co. 1:18; 1 Co. 1:21; 1 Co. 3:15; 1 Co. 5:5; 1 Co. 7:16; 1 Co. 9:22; 1 Co. 10:33; 1 Co. 15:2; 2 Co. 2:15

**It is the power ([dunamis](#)) of God** - The truth of the Cross is the supernatural **power of God** to live a life which is pleasing to God. The Gospel has intrinsic power to save which is why it does not need us to add clever words! It is through **the word of the Cross** that "the **power of God** is manifested and exercised and therefore it is divinely efficacious." (Hodge)

Romans 1:16+ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the **power ([dunamis](#))** of God (NOT EVEN POWER OF PAUL) for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

1 Corinthians 1:24+ but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the **power ([dunamis](#))** of God and the wisdom of God.

1 Corinthians 4:19-20+ But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I shall find out, not the words of those who are arrogant but their **power ([dunamis](#))**. For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in **power ([dunamis](#))**.

**THOUGHT** - Are you living (being saved daily) in dependence on God's supernatural power or your natural power? The power of the cross enables daily victory over the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#). The power of "us" yields daily defeat by our strong supernatural foes!

**Utley** - The **gospel** reveals and channels the **power** of God. It produces faith. It produces repentance. It produces wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (cf. 1 Cor 1:30). The preaching of the cross does all of this. It is God's power behind the written word (the Bible), the living word (Christ), the preached word (the gospel), and the established word (Christlikeness/the kingdom of God). ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

Our salvation consists in the doctrine of the cross.

-- John Calvin

**Zodhiates** elaborates on this **power of God** in the Cross - Think of the characteristics of this divine power. It is invincible. It is also irrefutable, not able to be challenged. Think of God's power within you, and you will begin to realize that there is no condition, or circumstance, or opposition, or experience in your life that cannot be rectified. The full realization of this will enable you to live every moment of your life with the air of victory. This power is available and even necessary for all the children of God. "Tarry... until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49+). This **power of God** largely works through man's faculties. It is an energy, a force working within man's personality. It is not a blind, irresistible force, something like the wind, but rather a dynamic urge, creatively impelling men to do God's will, and to refuse the wrong. It never destroys man's personality or suppresses his character and gifts, but rather fulfills them. Paul links the **power of God** to the cross of Christ or to the Christ of the cross. In doing this he shows that Christ alone grants this power. It is not impersonal. God does not hire out His attributes or rent His power. It is not power like electricity. It cannot be detached from His presence. He strengthens us by indwelling us. He is not a Giver of power but the Gift of power itself. Christ is power in a person. We need Him, not "it." (Ibid)

The saving power of the cross does not depend on faith being added to it; its saving power is such that faith flows from it.

-- J. I. Packer

**Arnold** - This message of Christ brings deliverance from the guilt of sin. It breaks the chains of the bondage of sin in daily living, and it promises complete deliverance from the presence of sin the future. It is the Cross which releases all the spiritual blessings of life; it is the basis for all true peace and joy. The gospel is not simply good advice to men, telling them what they should do, nor is it a message about God's power. It is God's **power**!

**Schreiner** - We expect Paul to say that the message of the cross is 'wisdom' to contrast with the word foolishness in the first line. Instead, he surprises readers by claiming that the message of the cross is the power of God. The parallel with Romans 1:16 stands out: 'the gospel ... is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.' Perhaps our minds are drawn to Marx's famous words that the goal is not to understand the world but to change it; the gospel effects such a change. Paul does not concentrate on the wisdom of the gospel, for he wants to deflect the Corinthians from their adulation of human cleverness and virtuosity. Paul instead reminds the Corinthians that the message about Jesus as the crucified Lord transformed their lives. It brought them to salvation so that they will escape God's wrath on the day when the wicked perish. What the world deems to be foolish actually saves people from death. ([1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

**A T Robertson** - God's **power** is shown in the preaching of the Cross of Christ through all the ages, now as always. No other preaching wins men and women from sin to holiness or can save them. The judgment of Paul here is the verdict of every soul winner through all time. (Word Pictures)

**Power** ([1411](#))/([dunamis](#) from [dunamai](#) = to be able, to have power) power especially achieving power. It

refers to intrinsic power or inherent ability, the power or ability to carry out some function. **Dunamis** is the word generally used by Paul of divine energy to accomplish something supernaturally which cannot be accomplished naturally. Note that while dunamis gives us our English dynamite, that is not the best illustration of this power because dynamite explodes and destroys, while Gospel dunamis creates and enables one's new life in Christ. **Dunamis** in letters to Corinth - 1 Co. 1:18; 1 Co. 1:24; 1 Co. 2:4; 1 Co. 2:5; 1 Co. 4:19; 1 Co. 4:20; 1 Co. 5:4; 1 Co. 6:14; 1 Co. 12:10; 1 Co. 12:28; 1 Co. 12:29; 1 Co. 14:11; 1 Co. 15:24; 1 Co. 15:43; 1 Co. 15:56; 2 Co. 1:8; 2 Co. 4:7; 2 Co. 6:7; 2 Co. 8:3; 2 Co. 12:9; 2 Co. 12:12; 2 Co. 13:4

In the cross, sin is cursed and cancelled.

In the cross, grace is victorious and available.

G. Campbell Morgan

## HOW TO HAVE VICTORY IN EVERY SPIRITUAL BATTLE

The Cross is the "secret" to victory over our three [inveterate](#) mortal enemies, the [world](#) (1Jn 5:19+), the [flesh](#) (1Pe 2:11+) and the [devil](#) (1Pe 5:8+). Why? Because in the Cross there is power, the word of the Cross is the power ([dunamis](#)) of God for those of us who are being saved (progressively being sanctified, being transformed from glory to glory into the image of Jesus - 2Co 3:18+). Our enemies are like the strong Canaanites which Joshua was charged to eradicate so that Israel might possess their possessions (See notes on Joshua 1). In light of the strong enemies we face, let me encourage you to listen to a sermon by C H Spurgeon (I have listened to it 6+ times as it is a message I continually need to hear that I might live it out in the power of the Spirit and for the glory of God) -- [Driving Out the Canaanites and Their Iron Chariots](#). You will not regret listening to this great message. May God our Father grant you victory enabled by His Spirit over every Canaanite in your life, for the glory of the Lamb of God. Amen

### VICTORY OVER THE WORLD

John 16:33 "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world ."

1Jn 5:4-5+ For whatever is (perfect tense - our state now) born of God ([nikao](#) in present tense - continually overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome ([nikao](#)) the world—our faith. 5 Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Galatians 6:14+ But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

1 Jn 2:15-17+ Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

James 4:4+ You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Play and ponder the Biblically sound lyrics of this modern song - [To the Cross I Cling](#)

No day of my life has passed that has not  
Proved me guilty in your sight  
The best I have to offer are these filthy rags  
And yet you love me

All things in me call for my rejection  
All things in You plead my acceptance

I am guilty but pardoned by grace I've been set free  
I am ransomed through the blood you shed for me  
I was dead in my transgressions, but life you brought to me  
I am reconciled through m e r c y,  
To the cross I cling

No more am I a slave to sin but  
Bought with a price  
Redemption that was purchased through the blessed cross  
That You bore for me

The cross is where I find death, is where I find life, where mercy found me

I am guilty but pardoned by grace I've been set free  
I am ransomed through the blood you shed for me  
I was dead in my transgressions, but life you brought to me  
I am reconciled through mercy  
To the cross I cling, to the cross I cling

## VICTORY OVER THE FLESH -

Romans 6:3-6 (cf similar truth in Gal 2:20+) Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? 4Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our **old self (FLESH) was crucified (THE CROSS) with Him**, in order that our **body of sin might be done away with**, so that we would **no longer be slaves to sin**;

**COMMENT** - Because we said "Yes" to Jesus, we can say "No" to the flesh. But we still need to rely on the supernatural power of the Spirit to say "No." Before we were believers, we chased after sin, but now sin chases after us!

Galatians 5:16-17+ But I say, **walk** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 For the flesh (continually) sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in (continually) opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

**COMMENT** - Note that you are ALWAYS in a war for your soul (not to be saved now but to be sanctified progressively).

Galatians 5:24-25+ Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

**COMMENT** - The implied exhortation in Galatian 5:24 is to reckon this crucifixion to have taken place in our lives, realize that we are dead to the flesh, consider that to be true, and live in this truth in the power of the Spirit (Ro 8:13, Php 2:13). Don't be mastered by the flesh (Ro 6:12-14). It is a defeated enemy (Ro 6:6). That's the implication of Paul's statement in verse 24.

There are two ways that this verse has been interpreted and there are excellent expositors and commentators on both sides: (1) believers have been crucified (past tense) with Christ and are in union with and identified with Christ; (2) believers are to (effectively) "crucify" or mortify the flesh which, although crucified in the past when we died with Christ, is still active in every believer.

The victory over sin which the Lord Jesus procured for us at the Cross, is made actual and operative in our lives as we yield to the Holy Spirit and trust Him for that victory. It is the Holy Spirit's ministry that applies the salvation from (and victory over) the power of the sinful nature which God the Son procured at the Cross for us

(1) speaks of a believer's position in Christ, while (2) speaks of the the believer's experience made possible because of our position in Christ. To a degree both interpretations are reasonable, and are like two inseparable sides of a coin. However, if one examines the context closely, interpretation (1) which speaks of our position in Christ is followed immediately by a verse that speaks of our experience in Christ and exhorts us to live out that experience by keeping in step with the Spirit (our experience), something that would not be possible if we had not been crucified with Christ (our position).

Romans 8:13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit (see Php 2:13 below) you are (present tense - continually) putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Philippians 2:13NLT+ for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

Matthew 26:41+ (ARMOR TO AID BATTLE AGAINST FLESH) - **Keep watching** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) and **praying** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

## VICTORY OVER THE DEVIL

Hebrews 2:14-15+ Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death (THE CROSS) He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

Colossians 2:13-15+ When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, **having nailed it to the cross.** 15 When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

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**ILLUSTRATION** - A Bible-believing Christian was assailed by an infidel who said, "I don't understand how the blood of Jesus Christ can wash away my sin, nor do I believe it." "You and Saint Paul agree on that," answered the Bible student. "How so?" "Turn to the first chapter of 1 Corinthians and read verse 18: 'For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of God,'" The infidel looked startled and began to study the Bible, which he soon found to be the power of God unto salvation. (Zodhiates)

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## A W Tozer - Cross: foolishness of

At the heart of the Christian system lies the cross of Christ with its divine paradox. The power of Christianity appears in its antipathy toward, never in its agreement with, the ways of fallen men. The truth of the cross is revealed in its contradictions. The witness of the church is most effective when she declares rather than explains, for the gospel is addressed not to reason but to faith. What can be proved requires no faith to accept. Faith rests upon the character of God, not upon the demonstrations of laboratory or logic.

The cross stands in bold opposition to the natural man. Its philosophy runs contrary to the processes of the unregenerate mind, so that Paul could say bluntly that the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness. To try to find a common ground between the message of the cross and man's fallen reason is to try the impossible, and if persisted in must result in an impaired reason, a meaningless cross and a powerless Christianity.

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**Alan Redpath** - I heard an eminent professor of theology say to students in his seminary class, "Gentlemen, I ask you to remember that you are called upon to know something of the foolishness of preaching, not the preaching of foolishness." In my heart I retorted, "He is wrong! The word of the cross is absolute foolishness." It says so in my text: to those who are perishing, the word of the cross is foolishness. It stands in contradiction to all the philosophy, education, and knowledge of this world, for the preaching of the cross puts the sentence of death upon them all. It is the word of absolute power, but it is also the word of absolute weakness.

With the shoes off our feet, and with heads bowed reverently, let us go up a green hill outside a city wall and hear the word of the cross: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34+). Here is a cry of unutterable anguish from the heart of our Redeemer, coming through pain and suffering, but the prayer was heard!

"Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43+). A dying Man, crucified and helpless, turns to a fellow sufferer and speaks the word of victory, and the word was heard!

"Woman, behold thy son. [Son,] Behold thy mother" (John 19:26-27). Heartbreak and loneliness, a sword going into the soul of Mary, but the concern of her Son in the hour of His death introduces her to a new and wonderful relationship.

"My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). Alone in the darkness, utterly cut off from God, He is introducing a countless multitude to glory; this is victory through isolation.

"I thirst!" (John 19:28+). Out of the agony of lips that are parched there flow rivers of living water to men and women like you and me.

"It is finished!" (John 19:30+). Obedient unto the very death of the cross, Jesus Christ fully accepted all the will of God. He has been forsaken by friend and foe, but now it is all finished, the price is paid, the last drop of the cup is drunk. The outcome — resurrection!

**What is the word of the cross in your life and mine? It is power through weakness, life through death, resurrection through crucifixion.**

**What does that involve in terms of personal experience? How can you make contact with that word of the cross?** It is only when you get to the end of every attempt to do anything without Jesus Christ, when you lay aside your ambitions, crucify your prejudices, die to your so-called intellectual approach, and humble your pride that you can look up into His lovely face and say, "Lord Jesus, I live; yet not I . . ." (Galatians 2:20+).

It may sound easy to say, but it is mighty hard to face! We have to get to the place where we can say to Him,

**"O Lord, I yield to Thee. I am willing to be nothing. I recognize that this self in me with all its pride, its haughtiness, its self-righteousness and self-importance is only worthy of crucifixion."**

At the moment we agree with His knowledge of ourselves, then we come into contact with His throne and begin to touch omnipotence and receive power.

If you need to get rid of impure thoughts, burn the books and pictures that incite such thoughts. If you would break the habit of drink, throw it all out of your house. **If you want to touch the power of the cross, cut off every friendship that is leading you into sin; stop every habit that is pulling you down. Look into the Lord's face and say, "Lord, I know this thing is sin. I am going to get rid of it today, and I will never allow it again."** (ED: BY THE ENABLING POWER OF YOUR SPIRIT! AMEN)

**Which direction are you going? Deep down in your heart is the direction downward?** You may be a Sunday school teacher or a Christian worker of long standing, and you want desperately to touch the place of omnipotence and stop the drift. (ED: SEE BACKSLIDING)

Outwardly you are one person, but inwardly you are quite another.

Outwardly you are perhaps theologically correct and sound, but inwardly far away from God.

Now you want to look up into the face of the Lord Jesus and tell Him that you agree with His verdict upon self, your utter weakness and bankruptcy.

It is time to take action.

Are you prepared to break that unworthy friendship?

Are you prepared to finish with that habit, leaving no possible line of retreat?

Are you prepared to go to your room and clear out those books and trashy magazines that only incite you to sin?

"Therefore . . . let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1+, cf 1 Pe 1:17+). (Ibid)

#### **Cleanse me from my sin, Lord:**

Put Thy power within, Lord;

Take me as I am, Lord, and make me all Thine own.

Keep me day by day, Lord;

Underneath Thy sway, Lord;

Make my heart Thy palace and Thy royal throne.

— R. Hudson Pope

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**THE OLIVE TREE AND THE FIG TREE** - Aesop's fables give keen insight into the human condition; they expose the folly of human vanity and pride, laziness and trickery. A lesser-known fable, that of the olive tree and fig tree, warns against boasting due to the possibility of reversals of fortune: the olive tree taunts the fig tree for having lost all her leaves in the winter. She brags of her own year-round beauty. As she boasts, a thunderbolt strikes her and burns her to ashes, while the fig tree stands safe and sound (See [the original version of the fable](#)). The Bible is full of reversals of fortune like the one suffered by the olive tree. The story of Jesus Christ is the most powerful of all. God the King is born as a baby in a dirty stable into a carpenter's family. He enjoys no superior privilege, position, or education. He chooses ordinary fishermen and despised tax collectors to follow Him and preach His message. And eventually, He dies a criminal's death. The resurrection and exaltation of Jesus is the ultimate reversal in all of history. The good news of this God-Man's story subverts everything that the world esteems.

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#### **Lead Them To The Cross**

God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. —Galatians 6:14



Today's Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Many heart-touching stories were circulated after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. None seems more spiritually significant than that of ironworker Frank Silecchia. As he was helping to recover bodies, Frank noticed two steel beams in the shape of a cross standing upright in the middle of all the debris.

Appointing himself as the curator of that striking symbol of God's love, he often took heartbroken visitors to see it. Many of them were comforted by the silent testimony to the divine Presence in the worst of tragedies. One day when journalist Barbara Walters came with tearful friends who had lost a son in the catastrophe, Frank simply led them to the cross.

The answer to the world's terrible pain and evil is not a philosophical argument or a theological treatise. The all-sufficient answer is Calvary's cross, where in fathomless grace Jesus, the incarnate God, took upon Himself the burden of our sins and bore them "in His own body on the tree, that we . . . might live for righteousness" (1 Peter 2:24).

If you have not been led to Calvary's cross, let me take you there. He died for you and then rose again. Believe in Him and you will be saved (1 Cor. 1:21). By: Vernon Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

They are nailed to the cross, they are nailed to the cross!

O how much He was willing to bear.

With what anguish and loss, Jesus went to the cross,

But He carried my sins with Him there.

—Breck

The pathway to heaven begins at the foot of the cross.

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**A FASHION STATEMENT OR A FAITH STATEMENT?** Os Guinness tells of a Jewish man, imprisoned 15 years by Soviet authorities for political dissidence, who became a Christian while in the terrible Gulag. He was sustained throughout that long ordeal by his faith in the Savior, and by the memory of his 4-year-old son he hoped to see again one day. When he was finally released, the man anticipated the reunion with heart-pounding excitement. How thrilled he was to notice as they hugged each other that his son was wearing a cross! After they had talked about many things, he asked his son, now 19 years old, just what the cross meant to him. His heart was crushed by the answer: "Father, for my generation the cross is just a fashion statement." The apostle Paul saw the cross as a symbol of the very core of his faith. It bore witness to his radically transformed life. He testified, "God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal. 6:14+).

In the cross of Christ I glory,  
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;  
All the light of sacred story  
Gathers round its head sublime.  
—Bowring

Many who wear the cross never think of the Christ of the cross.

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**Bob Utley** - There are only two kinds of people; those who are perishing and those who are being saved (cf. 2 Cor. 2:15; 4:3). The term "perishing" does not mean physical annihilation, but permanent loss of fellowship with God, for which they were created. Modern interpreters have taken the Hebrew euphemisms and literalized them. Two examples are

1. "sleep" = death, not unconsciousness until resurrection
2. "perish" = spiritual loss, not annihilation

Some say that annihilation (cessation of life) is more humane than a permanent hell. The problem arises when the same word used to describe hell is used of heaven ("eternal," cf. Matt. 25:46). Yet it is not God who sends people to hell, but their own rejection of (1) the light they have (Ps. 19:1–6; Rom. 1–2) or (2) the gospel (the unpardonable sin and the sin unto death). Unbelief in this life affects eternity.

The NT describes salvation as a (See also [Three Tenses of Salvation](#))

1. past decisive volitional act (AORIST TENSE, Acts 15:11; Rom. 8:24; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5)
2. a process which continues through life (PRESENT TENSE, 1 Cor. 1:18; 15:2; 2 Cor. 2:15)
3. a past event which becomes a state of being (PERFECT TENSE, Eph. 2:5, 8)
4. a future consummation (FUTURE TENSE, Rom. 5:9, 10; 10:9; 13:11; 1 Cor. 3:15; Phil. 1:28; 1 Thess. 5:8–9; Heb. 1:14;

The theological danger is to isolate any one of these as “the” essence of salvation. We must always be on guard against an easy believism which emphasizes the initial act only or perfectionism which emphasizes the product only. Salvation is an initial, volitional response to God’s free offer in Christ which issues in a daily Christlikeness. It is not only a person to welcome, but a message about that person to be received and a life in emulation of that person to live. It is not a product, an insurance policy, a ticket to heaven, but a growing relationship with Jesus. The NT does not emphasize making a decision, but being a disciple (cf. Matt. 28:19–20).

The real mystery is that when the gospel is presented, some say “yes” and are saved, but some say “no” and their rebellion is reaffirmed (cf. Luke 2:34; John 9:39; 1 Pet. 2:7). It does not surprise me that people say yes, but I am amazed that with (1) the desire of God for all to be saved; (2) the finished work of Christ; (3) the wooing of the Spirit; (4) the felt guilt of humanity; and (5) the purposelessness of life without God that people say “No”! This is the mystery of election (cf. 2 Cor. 3:14; 4:4; 11:3). ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

## Higher Wisdom

How difficult it is for some highly intelligent people to admit that in their own wisdom they can’t answer life’s ultimate questions.

The well-known astrophysicist [Fred Hoyle](#) said: “A common-sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a superintellect has monkeyed with physics, as well as with chemistry and biology, and that there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature.” Yet he remains an unbeliever.

The late [Carl Sagan](#) spoke of “some kind of force or power” that enabled the universe to create itself. But he was “opposed to any kind of revealed religion.”

The majority of us as Christians may feel unqualified to debate such intellectual giants. But it’s not God’s purpose to refute human wisdom with intellectual arguments. Instead, He confounds human wisdom and power by displaying His greater wisdom and power. He does this by saving ordinary people like you and me through the “message of the cross” (1 Corinthians 1:18). The truth that Jesus died for our sins and rose again is viewed as foolishness by the world.

God’s best evidence to refute worldly wisdom is a transformed life. What a privilege to bear this message! What a challenge to live it! ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

No wisdom gained through arduous quest  
Can set a sinner free,  
But God in wisdom sent His Son  
To die for you and me.  
—D. De Haan

True wisdom begins and ends with God.

## Controversy Of The Cross

Read: 1 Corinthians 1:17-25

The message of the cross is ... the power of God. —1 Corinthians 1:18

A case before the US Supreme Court focused on whether a religious symbol, specifically a cross, should be allowed on public land. Mark Sherman, writing for the Associated Press, said that although the cross in question was erected in 1934 as a memorial to soldiers who died in World War I, one veteran’s group that opposed it called the cross “a powerful Christian symbol” and “not a symbol of any other religion.”

The cross has always been controversial. In the first century, the apostle Paul said that Christ had sent him “to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1:17-18). As followers of Christ, we see the cross as more than a powerful Christian symbol. It is the evidence of God’s power to free us from the tyranny of our sin.

In a diverse and pluralistic society, the controversy over religious symbols will continue. Whether a cross can be displayed on public property will likely be determined by the courts. But displaying the power of the cross through our lives will be decided in our hearts. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Christ takes each sin, each pain, each loss,  
And by the power of His cross  
Transforms our brokenness and shame  
So that our lives exalt His name.  
—D. De Haan

Nothing speaks more clearly of God's love than the Cross.

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### A Fatal Omission

When a group of churches advertised their Easter celebration, no reference was made to the cross. The omission was deliberate. One church official explained, "The cross carries too much cultural baggage."

The cross has always been offensive to some. The apostle Paul explicitly mentioned that "the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing" (1 Cor. 1:18). To be saved eternally by the unjust execution of a Jew centuries ago—what an offense to human pride, goodness, and self-sufficiency! Without that cross, however, the empty tomb would be meaningless. That is why Paul gratefully exclaimed, "God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6:14).

Every year the Easter season brings great blessing to believers. As we remember our Lord's death on the cross, our hearts are filled with love and gratitude. But we don't linger on that Palestinian hillside where death seems to have triumphed. We hasten on to resurrection morning with its jubilant hallelujahs of victory. All the events of Holy Week are woven into an awesome tapestry of grace. The blood-stained tree and the empty tomb belong together. To leave the cross out of Easter is a fatal omission. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The **empty** cross and the **empty** tomb provide a **full** salvation.

### PLAY AND PONDER THE WORDS OF THIS OLD HYMN

#### IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST I GLORY

John Bowring (1792-1872)

In the cross of Christ I glory,  
Tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time;  
All the light of sacred story  
Gathers round its head sublime.

When the woes of life o'ertake me,  
Hopes deceive, and fears annoy,  
Never shall the cross forsake me,  
Lo! It glows with peace and joy.

When the sun of bliss is beaming  
Light and love upon my way,  
From the cross the radiance streaming  
Adds more luster to the day.

**Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,  
By the cross are sanctified;  
Peace is there that knows no measure,  
Joys that through all time abide.**

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### Try Out My Tiger

Read: 1 Corinthians 1:17-29

To us who are being saved it is the power of God. —1 Corinthians 1:18

There's a Chinese tale about a young man who captured a tiger cub, brought it home, and raised it in a cage. When it was full grown, the man loved to brag about how ferocious and powerful it was. "That tiger isn't wild anymore," scoffed his friends. "He's as tame as an old house cat." This went on until a wise old man overheard them and said, "There's only one way to know whether this

tiger is ferocious or not. Open the cage!" The young man smiled, placed his hand on the latch, and challenged his friends, "Want to try out my tiger?"

Many people view the gospel of Jesus Christ as a tame and powerless fantasy. Yet in 1 Corinthians 1:18 the apostle Paul called it "the power of God." He used the Greek word *dunamis*, which is the root for our word dynamite. Paul said that to an unbeliever the gospel is foolishness, but anyone who is willing to believe it will experience the "dynamite" of God. A tiger's strength, of course, is destructive and can bring death, but the power of the gospel always leads to life and freedom. It destroys guilt and breaks the stranglehold of sinful habits.

If we have experienced this power, let's challenge others to "try out our tiger." ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Stir me now, I long to know You,  
Know the fullness of Your power;  
Help me, Lord, to yield completely  
Day by day and hour by hour.  
—Hallan

To experience God's power, we must first admit that we are weak.

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### The Foolish Way of New Life

The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 1 Corinthians 1:18

Today's Scripture & Insight: 1 Corinthians 1:20–31

Some things just don't make sense until you experience them. When I was pregnant with my first child, I read multiple books about childbirth and listened to dozens of women tell their stories of labor and delivery. But I still couldn't really imagine what the experience would be like. What my body was going to do seemed impossible!

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians that birth into God's kingdom, the salvation that God offers us through Christ, seems equally incomprehensible to those who haven't experienced it. It sounds like "foolishness" to say that salvation could come through a cross—a death marked by weakness, defeat, and humiliation. Yet this "foolishness" was the salvation that Paul preached!

It wasn't what anyone could have imagined it would be like. Some people thought that salvation would come through a strong political leader or a miraculous sign. Others thought that their own academic or philosophical achievements would be their salvation (1 Corinthians 1:22). But God surprised everyone by bringing salvation in a way that would only make sense to those who believed, to those who experienced it.

God took something shameful and weak—death on a cross—and made it the foundation of wisdom and power. God does the unimaginable. He chooses the weak and foolish things of the world to shame the wise (v. 27).

And His surprising, confounding ways are always the best ways. By: Amy Peterson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

How is God surprising you today? Why is it true that God's ways are better than your ways?

God, with Isaiah I pray, as high as the heavens are above the earth, so are Your ways higher than my ways.

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**Alan Redpath on being saved** - These days the word "salvation" is rather like a well-worn coin, which is being passed from hand to hand until it is almost unrecognizable. In many instances it has been reduced to a convenient little formula, and if you fit the formula you are all right. But in the New Testament sense, the word "salvation" has both a negative and a positive implication. Negatively, it means being saved from danger, being made secure; positively, it is emancipation from sin: sanctification. It is deliverance from guilt and the forgiveness of all our sins by virtue of the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord shed for us on Calvary.

Joy abounds in a forgiven sinner as he realizes the blessedness of his experience. He is very glad to be able to announce to everybody, "I have been saved!" But it is not long before such a man begins to recognize that the sins from which he has been forgiven are only the symptoms of a disease that goes far deeper. Soon he begins to cry out to God, "Is there no deliverance from this fire still burning in my life, this untamed passion in my soul?" He prays from the depths of his heart in the words of the psalmist, "Create in me a clean heart, O God!" (Psalm 51:10).

Can his prayer remain unanswered? Is the man forgiven from his past sins to continue to live unsatisfied, defeated, impure? Let me remind you that the pardoned man does not change his circumstances, neither his home conditions nor his job. He does not run away from his past situation in life — if he attempts to do so, he cuts the very nerve of the refining process that would make him a saint. But in his life he begins to discover that the demands upon him as a Christian are absolutely overwhelming; they are impossible for him to meet by himself. There comes from his heart a deep cry, “O God, give me power — power over myself, power over my sin, power over what I am by nature.” He is a forgiven sinner, but he is a defeated man.

Am I exposing a basic need in your life? Are you conscious of feeling that you are only half delivered? You know you have forgiveness from sins, but there is a cry in your heart, “Is there no answer to the problem of what I am?”

In the New Testament sense of the word, “salvation” is not merely a negative thing, the forgiveness of sins. That which leaves a man stumbling and defeated, impure and unholy, is an incomplete and imperfect redemption. Praise God, salvation is more than this! When the Lord saves a man He does not bar the gate through which sins enter and attack him, but He opens the gate through which Holy Spirit power can come in to make him holy. When God saves a soul, He does not simply blot out the memory of past sin — it is that, thank God. Nor does He simply see that man with a righteousness that Christ imputes to him — it is that, thank God, but it is not only that! Salvation is positive: taking a man who has been twisted and bent by the disease of which sins are the symptoms and causing him to glory in complete deliverance....

One thing that will characterize the life of every genuine believer in the Lord Jesus, truly born of the Spirit of God, is growth, development. He will not talk about having arrived; he does not say he has had a tremendous second experience of sanctification; he would not boast in his holiness, nor exalt his own experience, but there are evidences of his growth in his behavior. As he is more and more filled with the Spirit, he grows more gracious, more gentle, more Christlike, and as we stand back and watch his life, we see God working a miracle. As the clay in the hand of the potter, so the man’s life is being molded, shaped, and conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus.

May I say kindly, yet firmly, that unfortunately many professing Christians show no evidence of such growth at all. In fact, do I exaggerate if I dare to say that it is the majority of them? They may have been saved, perhaps, for twenty years, but they are still as mean, hot-tempered, selfish, jealous, unkind, impure, and worldly as ever. There are no marks of maturity, no evidences of becoming more like the Lord Jesus.

The moment we accept forgiveness through the blood of the Lord Jesus we are obligated by bearing His name to stand for righteousness, purity, and holiness. Our business in life is to seek to win somebody else for Jesus; the redemptive ministry of the love of God should be expressed through our lives in service to others. That is the mark of the real thing. How desperately we all need power to stand for the right, power to speak for the Lord Jesus, power to live for Him day by day.

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#### **Question - [What is the meaning of the cross?](#)**

**Answer:** Simply put, the meaning of the cross is death. From about the 6th century BC until the 4th century AD, the cross was an instrument of execution that resulted in death by the most torturous and painful of ways. In crucifixion a person was either tied or nailed to a wooden cross and left to hang until dead. Death would be slow and excruciatingly painful; in fact, the word *excruciating* literally means “out of crucifying.” However, because of Christ and His death on the cross, the meaning of the cross today is completely different.

In Christianity, the cross is the intersection of God’s love and His justice. Jesus Christ is the [Lamb of God](#) who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). The reference to Jesus as the Lamb of God points back to the institution of the Jewish Passover in Exodus 12. The Israelites were commanded to sacrifice an unblemished lamb and smear the blood of that lamb on the doorposts of their homes. The blood would be the sign for the Angel of Death to “pass over” that house, leaving those covered by blood in safety. When Jesus came to John to be baptized, John recognized Him and cried, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29), thereby identifying Him and God’s plan for Him to be sacrificed for sin.

One might ask why Jesus had to die in the first place. This is the over-arching message of the Bible—the story of redemption. God created the heavens and the earth, and He created man and woman in His image and placed them in the Garden of Eden to be His stewards on the earth. However, due to the temptations of Satan (the serpent), Adam and Eve sinned and fell from God’s grace. Furthermore, they have passed the curse of sin on to their children so that everyone [inherits their sin and guilt](#). God the Father sent his one and only Son into the world to take on human flesh and to be the Savior of His people. Born of a virgin, Jesus avoided the curse of the fall that infects all other human beings. As the sinless Son of God, He could provide the unblemished sacrifice that God requires. God’s justice demanded judgment and punishment for sin; God’s love moved Him to send His one and only Son to be the [propitiation](#) for sin.



Because of Jesus' atoning sacrifice on the cross, those who place their faith and trust in Him alone for salvation are guaranteed eternal life (John 3:16). However, Jesus called His followers to take up their cross and follow Him (Matthew 16:24, cf Mk 8:34-38+). **This concept of "cross-bearing" today has lost much of its original meaning.** Typically, we use "cross-bearing" to denote an inconvenient or bothersome circumstance (e.g., "my troubled teen is my cross to bear"). However, we must keep in mind that Jesus is calling His disciples to engage in radical self-denial. The cross meant only one thing to a 1st-century person—death. "Whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matthew 16:25). Galatians reiterates this theme of death of the sinful self and rising to walk in new life through Christ: "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20+).

There are places in the world where Christians are being persecuted, even to the point of death, for their faith. They know what it means to carry their cross and follow Jesus in a very real way. For those of us who are not being persecuted in such fashion, our job is still to remain faithful to Christ. Even if we are never called to give the ultimate sacrifice, we must be willing to do so out of love for the One who saved us and gave His life for us. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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### **James Smith - THE POWER OF THE CROSS 1 CORINTHIANS 1:18**

Note the place the Cross had in Paul's preaching (1 Cor 1:17).

I. What is Meant by the Cross? The atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. What is Meant by the Preaching of the Cross? Holding up Christ's death as the Divine remedy for the sins and souls of men. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness.

III. What are the Effects of a Preached Cross?

1. "FOOLISHNESS" to them that believe not.
2. "POWER OF GOD" to them that believe. Power to save and satisfy.

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### **James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - THE APPEAL OF THE CROSS. 1 Corinthians 1:18-31**

The preaching, or message, of the Cross, is treated in these days much in the same way as Christ Himself was treated in the days of His humiliation and sorrow (v. 18). The worldly wise sneered, and official dignity denied Him. By the preaching of Christ crucified the Cross is still making its appeal.

I. To them that are Perishing it is Foolishness (v. 18). A man must be sinking into the blackness of final despair who thinks God's method of salvation is "foolishness." He might as well call it foolishness to expect light from the sun.

II. To them that are being Saved it is the Power of God (v. 18). To them who are being plucked out of the fire, like brands from the burning, and being delivered from the dominion of sin, and translated into the Kingdom of His dear Son, and being taught by His Holy Spirit and satisfied with His grace it is the power of God.

III. To the Jew it is a Stumbling block (v. 23). The poor Jew, blinded by unbelief has been stumbling over the Cross ever since Christ rose from the dead. The Cross of Christ lies right across his path. He cannot possibly get it out of his way. Some of the things spoken of by this prophet have been literally fulfilled by the life and death of this Man called Jesus, the Christ (Isaiah 53), whom they crucified. They as a nation will go on stumbling until the Lord Comes, and they look upon Him whom they have pierced (Zechariah 12:10).

IV. To the Greek it is Foolishness (v. 23). The Greeks seek after wisdom, but the message of the Cross, which is the embodiment of the wisdom of God, is to those worldly-wise ones "foolishness." Surely the "foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of the wisest men" (v. 25). "The age by its wisdom knew not God" (v. 21). There are many in our own day, like those Greeks, who are earnestly seeking after wisdom, and yet deliberately pausing by Him who is the wisdom of God (v. 24).

V. To the Christian, whether Jew or Greek, Christ and Him Crucified is the power of God and the wisdom of God (v. 24). The Gospel of Christ is the power of God to save to the uttermost of man's need, and the wisdom of God to satisfy to the uttermost man's search for truth. To know God as revealed in His Word is to be made wise unto salvation. Our view of Christ in relation to God may be a great thing, but God's view of Christ in relationship to us His people is a much greater thing. It is with His reckoning we have specially to do. For by the reckoning of Almighty Grace Christ is made of God unto us—

1. "Wisdom" for the Mind. The quality of being wise belongs more to character than to thought. He has given us capacity to understand spiritual things. He can make us to abound in this wisdom (Ephesians 1:8), so that we might be filled (Colossians 1:9).

2. "Righteousness" for the Heart. This righteousness comes not by the "works of the law," but by the reckoning of grace. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." To get right with God means, "Not I, but Christ."

3. "Sanctification" for the Work. Set apart, not as a recluse, but as a worker-together with Him. Jesus said: "On their behalf I consecrate Myself, in order that they may become perfectly consecrated in truth" (John 17:19, Weymouth). We are not saved as a miser saves his money, but as a wise father saves his son, by giving him fitness for his life's work.

4. "Deliverance" for our Assurance. This promise may well put cheer and confidence in our hearts, that He will work deliverance for us, whether as tempted and tried pilgrims, or as warriors for the truth. "Lo, I am with you always."

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**D L Moody** - Damascen likened the cross of Christ to a key of gold which if accepted opens paradise for us; but, if unaccepted, it becomes an iron key, and opens the gates of hell before us.

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**VERITAS CHRISTO ET ECCLESIAE** - WHEN Harvard University was founded, its motto was **Veritas Christo et Ecclesiae**—"Truth for Christ and the Church." Its crest showed three books, one face down to symbolize the limitation of human knowledge. But in recent decades that book has been turned face up to represent the unlimited capacity of the human mind. And the motto has been changed to **Veritas**— "Truth."

The pursuit of knowledge is praiseworthy, yet learning can lead to pride and a refusal to acknowledge the limits of our mental abilities. When that happens, people ignore biblical truth.

What, then, is the truth about truth? A wise king wrote centuries ago, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7). We must recognize the relationship between God and truth. They are inseparable. Without the work of God's Spirit and the instruction of God's Word, people will be ever "learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 3:7). When we acknowledge and obey His truth, however, we will be set free from spiritual ignorance and error (John 8:32; 17:17). The reason we must be diligent in studying the Bible (2 Timothy 2:15) is because it is the only book that tells the truth about truth.—Vernon Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**1 Corinthians 1:19 For it is written, "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE."**

Amplified - For it is written, I will baffle and render useless and destroy the learning of the learned and the philosophy of the philosophers and the cleverness of the clever and the discernment of the discerning; I will frustrate and nullify [them] and bring [them] to nothing.

Wuest - For it has been written and is at present on record, I will destroy the wisdom of those who are wise, and the discernment of those who have the ability to discern I will frustrate. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:19 For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and I will thwart the cleverness of the intelligent."

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:19 As the Scriptures say, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and discard the intelligence of the intelligent."

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:19 For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:19 For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate."

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:19 γ γράπτει γ ρ, πολ τ ν σοφ αν τ ν σοφ ν κα τ ν σ νεσιν τ ν συνετ ν θετ σω.

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:19 for it hath been written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the intelligence of the intelligent I will bring to nought;'

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And the discernment of the discerning will I bring to nought.

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:19 For it is written: I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and I will set aside the understanding of the experts.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:19 For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:19 For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:19 For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the learning of the learned I will set aside."

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:19 As scripture says: I am going to destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing the understanding of any who understand.

- 1Co 3:19 Job 5:12,13 Isa 19:3,11 Isa 29:14 Jer 8:9
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Isaiah 29:14 Therefore **behold**, I will once again deal marvelously with this people, wondrously marvelous; **And the wisdom of their wise men will perish** (NOTE WHERE THEIR HEARTS WERE - Isa 29:13 quoted in Mk 7:6-7+), **And the discernment of their discerning men will be concealed.**

**Comment by Larry Walker** on Isaiah 29:14 - Their leaders made plans without consulting God (**ED**; HUMAN WISDOM), because in their eyes human wisdom seemed sufficient. Only true worship produces wisdom; false worship destroys it. When wisdom and understanding are missing from a people, they become fools. So God will "astound these hypocrites with amazing wonders" of punishment and reveal that "the intelligence of the intelligent will disappear" (Isa 29:14), a passage quoted by Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:19. (Cornerstone Bible Commentary)

**Graham Ogden** - In this verse God gives his reaction to the insincere worship of His people. With the word **behold** he tells them to pay close attention to what He will do. Do marvelous things, wonderful, and marvelous render the same Hebrew root. This repetition in such a short sentence makes the Hebrew text very emphatic. The Hebrew root here normally refers to extraordinary things God does for the *benefit* of His people. However, in this context of punishment, God uses it sarcastically.... Revised English Bible is more explicit with "*I shall shock this people yet again, adding shock to shock*;" And the **wisdom** of their wise men shall perish is the outcome of the shocking things Yahweh will do. **The wise people in Judah will lose their wisdom**....Those who are discerning will lose their ability to do so. \*(UBS - Handbook on Isaiah)

**S. Lewis Johnson** notes that in context Paul's quote from Isaiah 29:14 represent "God's denouncement of the policy of the 'wise' in Judah in seeking an alliance with Egypt when threatened by Sennacherib." (Wycliffe Bible Commentary)

**Gary Smith** - They (LEADERS OF JUDAH) act contrary to the wise instructions of God. There will be no wisdom found in all the shrewd political scheming of the so-called "*intelligentsia*." In every era, God's ways are marvelous and totally beyond natural human reasoning, yet they are plainly explained for all to understand in His revelation. If people would only listen to what God says and trust Him, the disastrous results of blindness could be avoided. (NAC -Isa)

**Stanley Horton** - Because of this hypocrisy and spiritual blindness, God will do something amazing and supernatural that will destroy human wisdom and intelligence and cause it to vanish because it is ineffective. Isaiah probably had in mind the Israelites' trust in Egypt and their plan to rebel against Assyria....**And godless people today still think they can solve the world's problems.** (Isaiah-Logion Press)

**Stedman** has a more in depth comment on Paul's use of Isaiah 29:14 writing "If you look that up in the book of Isaiah you will find that it came at a time when Judah was being confronted with an invasion. The northern borders of the land were being attacked by the Assyrian army, and all the statesmen and politicians of the day, including King Hezekiah, were trying to find a way out of this dilemma. (It reads very much like the present day crisis in the Middle East.) They were trying to find a way by human ingenuity and political scheming to either make a mutual defense treaty with Egypt, or somehow turn off the wrath

of the Assyrian army and escape imminent invasion. But God spoke through the prophet Isaiah and announced that he would deliver his people without any help from the politicians. This is the way he put it, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will thwart," (Isaiah 29:14). The book of Isaiah goes on to record how God did that very thing, (Isaiah 37). The Assyrian army came right up to the gates of Jerusalem and surrounded the city. King Hezekiah could see the hordes of Assyrians, their tents surrounding the city, mocking and taunting the Israelites. Their leader, Sennacherib, sent a letter to the king ordering him to surrender, but the king spread it out before the Lord and prayed over it. And God answered. He sent an angel who in one night slew 185,000 of the Assyrian soldiers. (History says that a plague broke out in the Assyrian camp and overnight 185,000 died. The Authorized Version puts it in a rather remarkable way: "When they woke up in the morning, behold, they were all dead," (Isaiah 37:36 KJV).) God did exactly what he said he would do. He did not ask for any human help. He did it, and the land was delivered. ([1 Corinthians 1:18-25 God's Nonsense](#))

## THE FOLLY AND FINALITY OF HUMAN WISDOM!

**For** (gar) is a term of explanation. What is Paul explaining. In context he is quoting the OT to emphasize the final outcome of human wisdom. It will not be good as they say! **HCSB Study** note says "Paul supported this truth by quoting Isa 29:14, where God warned the unbelieving leaders of Jerusalem who considered themselves wise. God's judgment will expose all pretensions to human wisdom not anchored in Christ."

**Hodge** - 1 Cor 1:18 contains the reason why Christ sent the apostle to preach, and why Paul preached the doctrine of the cross, and not human wisdom. That reason is: only the doctrine of the cross effects salvation. He proceeds to establish this proposition by a series of arguments designed to prove that the wisdom of the world cannot save people. His first argument is derived from the express declaration of the Word of God to this effect. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** notes that "Paul proceeds (1:19–2:5) to give five reasons why God's wisdom is superior to man's: its permanence, its power, its paradox, its purpose, and its presentation." ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**It is written - Written** (1125) is [grapho](#) in the perfect tense which means it was written in the past and stands written, written and applicable for every age, yea, for all time. In Ro 15:4+ Paul affirms the value of the OT writing "For whatever was **written** in earlier times (LIKE Isaiah 29:14) was **written** for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." It is interesting that this is the first of 14 clear quotations from the Old Testament in 1 Corinthians.

**Utley** observes that "This is a quote of Isa. 29:14 from the Septuagint. It is an example of OT synonymous parallelism. The emphasis is on the folly of human wisdom without God (cf. Isa. 29:13; Eccl. 1:12–18; 12:12)." ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**I WILL DESTROY** ([apollumi](#)) **THE WISDOM** ([sophia](#)) **OF THE WISE** - Amplified = "will baffle and render useless and destroy the learning of the learned." This is in a sense a prophecy which will be consummated at the return of Christ when fallen man's [specious](#) wisdom will be demolished forever (cf Da 2:34-35+). Note that **will destroy** is [apollumi](#) which is translated **perishing** in the previous passage. God will "ruin" **the wisdom of the wise**, the very thing the Corinthians so highly prized! God will [confute](#) their **wisdom**. It is interesting that Paul begins and ends his argument against man's wisdom with OT quotes (nothing much has changed!), quoting here from Isaiah 29:14 (See comments above on Isaiah 29:14) and in 1 Cor 1:31 from Jer 9:24

**MacArthur** - Isaiah's teaching will have its ultimate fulfillment in [the last days](#), when all men's philosophies and objections to the gospel will be swept away. (**ED**: cf Da 2:34-35+) Christ will reign unopposed and unobstructed as Lord of lords and King of kings (Rev. 17:14+), and all of man's wisdom will become ashes....Men are all inclined to try to solve their problems and fight their battles by their own ingenuity and in their own power. But human ingenuity and power only get in God's way. Men's own efforts hinder God in His work rather than help Him. ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**AND THE CLEVERNESS** ([sunesis](#)) **OF THE CLEVER** ([sunetos](#)) **I WILL SET ASIDE** - ESV = "the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." NLT - "discard the intelligence of the intelligent" ESV - "the discernment of the discerning I will thwart" KJV = "bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."

**TECHNICAL NOTE** - It is interesting that while Paul is quoting the Septuagint of Isaiah 29:14, he does not use the Septuagint's "[krupto](#)" (to hide) but substitutes [atheteo](#) which fits better with "**destroy**" for [atheteo](#) conveys a parallel thought in emphasizing God's intentional rejection of men's cleverness!

**Morris on wisdom...cleverness** - Properly the former denotes mental excellence in general, the latter the intelligent critical understanding of 'the bearings of things' ([The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians](#))

**Lenski** - The quotation (Isa 29:14) is very much to the point with its statement in regard to the wisdom of the wise, etc. This "wisdom" of Hezekiah's advisers was exactly like that which was trying to magnify itself in Corinth. It emanated, not from God, but from godless thinking. The "prudence" of their tricky scheming failed to take into account God's promise and his power and was thus fit only to be cast aside and to be utterly forgotten. Paul would have his readers conclude from this quotation that what God did with this kind of wisdom in the days of old he does with all wisdom of this kind: he will destroy it and bring it to nought. ([The Interpretation of I Corinthians](#))

**Schreiner** - God has determined to frustrate the wisdom of those who claim knowledge, just as he did in Isaiah's day, since their hearts are far from God (cf Isa 29:13). ([1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

**Robertson** - The **wisdom of the wise** is often **folly**, the understanding of the understanding is often rejected. There is such a thing as the ignorance of the learned, the wisdom of the simple-minded. God's wisdom rises in the Cross above human philosophizing which is still scoffing at the Cross of Christ, the consummation of God's power. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.  
-- Proverbs 14:12

There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.  
-- Proverbs 16:25

**Arnold** - Men have always thought their way was right, but God reduces their reasoning to nothing. He destroys it.

**George Brooks** - Paul was conveying to his readers that people are inclined to try to resolve their problems and fight their battles by their own wisdom and in their own power. But human wisdom and power only get in the way of God as he works. Man's own efforts stand in the way of God in his work rather than help him.

**Wisdom** - see [sophia](#) - This is a **KEY WORD** in 1 Cor 1:18-31 - 1 Co. 1:17; 1 Co. 1:19; 1 Co. 1:20; 1 Co. 1:21; 1 Co. 1:22; 1 Co. 1:24; 1 Co. 1:30 and also in chapter 2 = 1 Co. 2:1; 1 Co. 2:4; 1 Co. 2:5; 1 Co. 2:6; 1 Co. 2:7; 1 Co. 2:13;

Paul's main point is do not "mix" God's perfect Gospel with fallen men's fallible wisdom!

**Wise** (4680) ([sophos](#)) is the practical application of acquired knowledge. Friberg says *sophos* generally describes "acquired intelligence characterized by the ability to use knowledge for correct behavior. Jesus uses **sophos** to describe worldly wisdom (Mt 11:25, cp Lk 10:21, 1Cor 1:19-20), emphasizing that what the world refers to as "**wise**" does not allow one to see spiritual truth. In Ro 1:14, Paul refers to the Greeks as the "**wise**" (although not in spiritual matters). Paul then refers to self-deceived persons who profess they are **wise**, (Ro 1:22), but in fact have jettisoned the clear evidence (Ro 1:19-20) of the natural revelation of God (and mock the truth of a Creator and substitute the lie of Evolution). Used 19x in NT - Mt. 11:25; Mt. 23:34; Lk. 10:21; Ro 1:14; Ro 1:22; Ro 16:19; Ro 16:27; 1 Co. 1:19; 1 Co. 1:20; 1 Co. 1:25; 1 Co. 1:26; 1 Co. 1:27; 1 Co. 3:10; 1 Co. 3:18; 1 Co. 3:19; 1 Co. 3:20; 1 Co. 6:5; Eph. 5:15; Jas. 3:13

**Cleverness** (4907) ([sunesis](#) from [suniemi](#) = to comprehend, reason out in turn derived from **sun** = with or together + **hiemi** = send) literally is a sending together or a bringing together. **Sunesis** describes the putting together, grasping or exhibiting quick comprehension. **Sunesis** is the ability to understand concepts and see relationships between them and thus describes the faculty of comprehension, intelligence, acuteness, shrewdness. It identifies people who demonstrate the ability to understand something quickly, almost intuitively. It is a person with "street smarts" (Thiselton) without the formal education of one who is wise. This is what the people call the 12-year-old Jesus in the Temple in Luke 2:47+. Used 7x in NT - Mk. 12:33; Lk. 2:47; 1 Co. 1:19; Eph. 3:4; Col. 1:9; Col. 2:2; 2 Tim. 2:7

**Clever** (4908) ([sunetos](#) from [suniemi](#) = understand) is an adjective describing a person with good sense, one who is wise, one who is able to understand. Used 4x in NT - Matt. 11:25; Lk. 10:21; Acts 13:7; 1 Co. 1:19

**Set aside** (nullify) (114) ([atheteo](#) from **áthetos** = not placed from **a** = without + **thetós** = placed) means to do away with what has been laid down, to set aside and thus to regard as nothing, to declare invalid, to not recognize, to annul (make ineffective, inoperative or nonexistent), to spurn or to despise. In the papyri **atheteo** was used of loans which were repaid and cancelled and for the rejection of certain officials who were described as inefficient and incapable of doing their duty. **Atheteo** was also used of grain rejected by the inspector as unfit for food. Used 12x in NT - Mk. 6:26; Mk. 7:9; Lk. 7:30; Lk. 10:16; Jn. 12:48; 1 Co. 1:19; Gal. 2:21; Gal. 3:15; 1 Thess. 4:8; 1 Tim. 5:12; Heb. 10:28; Jude 1:8

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**Spurgeon - 1 Cor 1:19** - THIS verse is a threatening so far as the worldly-wise are concerned, but to the simple believer it is a promise. The professedly learned are for ever trying to bring to nothing the faith of the humble believer, but they fail in their attempts. Their arguments break down, their theories fall under their own weight, their deep-laid plots discover themselves before their purpose is accomplished. The old gospel is not extinct yet, nor will it be while the Lord liveth. If it could have been exterminated it would have perished from off the earth long ago.

We cannot destroy the wisdom of the wise, nor need we attempt it, for the work is in far better hands. The Lord himself says, "I will," and he never resolves in vain. Twice does he in this verse declare his purpose, and we may rest assured that he will not turn aside from it.

What clean work the Lord makes of philosophy and "modern thought" when he puts his hand to it! He brings the fine appearance down to nothing; he utterly destroys the wood, hay, and stubble. It is written that so it shall be, and so shall it be. Lord, make short work of it. Amen, and Amen. ([Faith's Checkbook](#))

**1 Corinthians 1:20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?**

Amplified - Where is the wise man (the philosopher)? Where is the scribe (the scholar)? Where is the investigator (the logician, the debater) of this present time and age? Has not God shown up the nonsense and the folly of this world's wisdom?

Wuest - Where is a philosopher, skilled in letters, cultivated, learned? Where is a man learned in the sacred scriptures? Where is a learned sophist of this age, fallacious reasoner that he is? Did not God prove foolish the wisdom of this world system? ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:20 Where is the wise man? Where is the expert in the Mosaic law? Where is the debater of this age? Has God not made the wisdom of the world foolish?

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:20 So where does this leave the philosophers, the scholars, and the world's brilliant debaters? God has made the wisdom of this world look foolish.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:20 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?

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:20 πο σοφ ς; πο γραμματε ς; πο συζητητ ς το α νο ς το του; ο χ μ ρανεν θε ς τ ν σοφ αν το κ σμου;

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:20 where is the wise? where the scribe? where a disputer of this age? did not God make foolish the wisdom of this world?

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:20 Where is the philosopher? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this age? Hasn't God made the world's wisdom foolish?

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:20 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?

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:20 Where is the wise one? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made the wisdom of the world foolish?

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:20 Where are the philosophers? Where are the experts? And where are the debaters of this age? Do you not see how God has shown up human wisdom as folly?

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:20 Where is the wise person? Where is the scholar? Where is the persuasive speaker of our time? Hasn't God turned the wisdom of the world into nonsense?

- **the wise:** Isa 33:18 53:1
- **Has not:** 1Co 1:19 2Sa 15:31 16:23 17:14,23 Job 12:17,20,24 Isa 44:25 Ro 1:22
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Personification of Wisdom  
at Library of Celsus in Ephesus

## THE IMPERMANENCE OF HUMAN WISDOM

The statue of the goddess [Sophia](#) will one day crumble, when the wisdom of God personified in the **Stone** (Christ Jesus) finally and forever crushes all of man's wisdom, power and pride. Have you fallen on (believed in) the Stone, for if not, one day the Stone will fall on you!

"You continued looking until a **STONE** was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and **crushed** them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were **crushed** all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that **not a trace of them was found**. But the **STONE** that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. (Daniel 2:34-35+)

NLT paraphrases it "So where does this leave the philosophers, the scholars, and the world's brilliant debaters? God has made the wisdom of this world look foolish." (1Co 1:20NLT)

**Where** is repeated to introduce three rhetorical questions all expecting a negative response. Human Wisdom Cannot Refute the Wisdom of God.

**Alan Johnson** - Paul's point that may relate to us is that those persons who are highly acclaimed by the world as the pundits, commentators, experts, pop philosophers of the day all belong to this age and are nothing in the light of God's great act accomplished in the crucified Messiah. God has swept the pundits of this world all away with his own wisdom. ([1 Corinthians](#))

**Where is the wise man?** (the philosopher?) - NLT - "So where does this leave the philosophers?" One can almost envision Paul pointing his finger at the crowd of conflicting converts at Corinth asking them these three questions! Paul apparently is taking this question from Isaiah 19:12 which begins "Well then, where are your wise men?" referring "to the wise men of Egypt—the soothsayers, mediums, and wizards—who always promised but never produced good counsel." (MacArthur) The **wise man** is either Jew or Gentile/Greek.

One is reminded of the words in Jeremiah 8:9

"The wise men are put to shame, They are dismayed and caught; Behold, they have rejected the word of the LORD, And what kind of wisdom do they have?

**Comment:** Rejection of the Word of God, leaves one's wisdom empty, futile and foolish (cf Ro 1:21-22+).and this principle still holds true in our day.

**Arnold** - What human wisdom could Babylon, Egypt, Greece and Rome add to God's wisdom and His way of salvation? None. The wise man may be a general reference to secular scholars who think they have all the answers to difficult problems. ([1 Corinthians 1:17-24 The Foolishness Of The Cross](#))

**Wise** ([4680](#)) see [sophos](#) = clever and skillful in ability to use acquired knowledge.

**Where is the scribe?** (the scholar?) - NLT - "So where does this leave...the scholars?" **Scribe** is [grammateus](#) and probably refers to the Jewish scribe (cf. Matt. 2:4; 16:21; Mark 8:31; 10:33; Acts 23:9). This question seems to relate to Isaiah 33:18 "**Where is he who counts?** (Septuagint = **grammatikos** [see grammateus below] = one who knows his letters, scholarly) Where is he who weighs? Where is he who counts the towers?" **NET Note** explains that these descriptions in context of Isaiah 33 "refer to various Assyrian officials who were responsible for determining the amount of taxation or tribute Judah must pay to the Assyrian king."

**Arnold** - The Jews approached wisdom and knowledge from a study of ancient writings and Scripture. This would correspond to scholarly people, men and women, of letters in our society. But what can they add to God's way of salvation in Christ? Nothing. ([1 Corinthians 1:17-24 The Foolishness Of The Cross](#))

**Scribe** (1122) ([grammateus](#) from [grapho](#) = to write) was one skilled in Jewish law and theology scribe, expert, scholar (Mt 2.4). **Grammateus** also referred to a chief executive officer of a governmental entity such as a town official secretary, town clerk (Acts 19.35).

**A T Robertson** - Paul makes use of Isa. 33:18 without exact quotation. The sudden retreat of Sennacherib with the annihilation of his officers. "On the tablet of Shalmaneser in the Assyrian Gallery of the British Museum there is a surprisingly exact picture of the scene described by Isaiah" (Robertson and Plummer). Note the absence of the Greek article in each of these rhetorical questions though the idea is clearly definite.

**MacArthur** sums up this passage - Where are all the smart people that have the answers?" How much closer to peace is man than he was a century ago—or a millennium ago? How much closer are we to eliminating poverty, hunger, ignorance, crime, and immorality than men were in Paul's day? Our advances in knowledge and technology and communication have not really advanced us. It is from among those who are intelligent and clever that the worst exploiters, deceivers, and oppressors come. We are more educated than our forefathers but we are not more moral. We have more means of helping each other but we are not less selfish. We have more means of communication but we do not understand each other any better. We have more psychology and education, and more crime and more war. We have not changed, except in finding more ways to express and excuse our human nature. Throughout history human wisdom has never basically changed and has never solved the basic problems of man. ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Where is the debater of this age** ([aion](#))? (the logician, the debater) - ([Wuest](#)) "Where is a learned sophist of this age, fallacious reasoner that he is?" NLT - "So where does this leave...the world's brilliant debaters?" (*sunzētētēs*) suits both the Greek and the Jewish disputant and doubter (Acts 6:9+ = argued; Acts 9:29+ = arguing; Acts 17:18+; Acts 28:29+). **Debater** (*suzetetes* only here in NT. Derived from [suzeteo](#) = to examine together, to disputer) means one skilled in arguing, one who questions, disputes or debates, one adept at winning public and private arguments, the closest contemporary equivalent being a lawyer. They are not skilled enough however to argue or debate with God's wisdom in the Cross of Christ! (cf Ro 3:19+ "every mouth may be closed!")

The Greek word for **age** is [aion](#) describing this present evil age ([aion](#)) (Gal 1:4+), which is passing away (AS IS ALL OF MAN'S "WISDOM") and which will pale in comparison to the "powers ([dunamis](#)) of the **age** ([aion](#)) to come." (Heb 6:5+, Eph 1:21+, Eph 2:7+). Indeed, the next **age** is the glorious reign of the Messiah Who will rule the earth for 1000 years.

**Arnold** - This refers to the Greek philosophers who loved to debate the philosophies of their day and it would correspond to all the learned men of our day. But what can they add to God's way of salvation in Christ? Nothing. ([1 Corinthians 1:17-24 The Foolishness Of The Cross](#))

**Guzik** - The point is plain: There is no wise man, no scribe, and no debater who can do what Jesus Christ has done. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**William MacDonald** - Did God consult them when He devised His plan of salvation? Could they ever have worked out such a plan of redemption if left to their own wisdom? Can they rise to disprove anything that God ever said? The answer is an emphatic "No!" (Believer's Bible Commentary)

**Has not God made foolish** ([moraino](#)) **the wisdom** ([sophia](#)) **of the world** ([kosmos](#))? - Amplified = "Has not God shown up the nonsense and the folly of this world's wisdom?" This question begins with a strong negative (*ouchi*) which calls for a resounding "Yes!" God has indeed made dumb the world's wisdom. God has exposed the foolishness of human wisdom.

**Johnson** answers Paul's question - God has indeed done this by the startling act of redemption effected by the despised, weak Jewish carpenter who was crucified as a criminal. By this act God has reversed the world's values. The self-styled, success-oriented, status-seeking wisdom and rhetorical skill of the wise has been dethroned and made foolish itself. So why would you want to bring this alien view of life into the church and split into factions over it? Paul might well ask. ([1 Corinthians](#))

**Schreiner** - Paul is not denying the intellectual or rhetorical gifts of those under consideration. His point is that their intellectual capacities are ultimately foolish if they do not know the God of the universe, the one true God who created and sustains them. ([1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

**Leon Morris** - His point is that no human wisdom can avail before God, and he uses three typical terms for the learned and acute of this world. There is a glance at the transitory nature of human wisdom in the use of this age ([aion](#); cf. NEB, 'limited, all of them, to this passing age'). This **world** is but a passing show and its wisdom passes with it (cf 1 Jn 2:17+; 1 Cor 7:31). God has not simply disregarded this wisdom or shown it to be foolish; he has made it foolish. Paul leaves not the slightest doubt that God has rejected all that rests on merely human wisdom. ([The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians](#))

**Arnold** - Man's wisdom in God's sight is foolishness. The best of man's wisdom is folly. Even in the categories where human wisdom

is valid, it has proven faulty. Human wisdom raises the right questions but does not have the right answers. Human solutions are temporary and not permanent; it sounds impressive, radiates optimism, and does seem to temporarily work in some situations, but ultimately it solves nothing. This is why every generation wrestles with the same problems, and that remains true as far back as we can go into human history. This is why one generation never seems to learn from another. Men still go hungry; there is social injustice; there is war; there is greed; there is political maneuvering. Look at the wisdom of man in the failure of the United Nations. See the wisdom of man in the hopelessness of the ghettos of the city of New York. Watch the panic of the world as it tries to solve a global economic crisis. See the wisdom of man in the USA and western culture as it crumbles away morally, grasping at every straw to solve the AIDS epidemic. Look at the wisdom of man in the blood-soaked streets of Bosnia. If the wisdom of man is faulty in the categories where it is supposed to work, then this is proof positive that human wisdom most assuredly cannot work in the area of salvation. ([1 Corinthians 1:17-24 The Foolishness Of The Cross](#))

**Winston Churchill** - Certain it is that while men are gathering knowledge and power with ever-increasing speed, their virtues and their wisdom have not shown any notable improvement as the centuries have rolled. Under sufficient stress, starvation, terror, warlike passion, or even cold, intellectual frenzy, the modern man we know so well will do the most terrible deeds, and his modern woman will back him up"

As **MacArthur** asks "Could the apostle have written anything more appropriate for our own day? Where have our great thinkers—our philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, economists, scientists, and statesmen—brought us? Never before has mankind been so fearful of self-destruction or been so self-consciously perplexed, confused, and corrupt. Modern human wisdom has failed just as ancient human wisdom failed, except that its failures come faster and spread farther. The outer life improves in a material way, while the inner life seems to have correspondingly less meaning. The real issues are not solved." ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Made foolish** (3471) ([moraino](#) from **morós** = foolish; English **moron** = people are dumb in the sense that they are obtuse or dense to what is plain and obvious - in this case the Word of the Cross) refer in the present context to one's intellectual life. It means to make or show to be foolish. In Mt 5:13 it means to make useless, which could be applied to the ultimate value of men's wisdom! 4x in NT - Matt. 5:13; Lk. 14:34; Ro 1:22; 1 Co. 1:20.

In Romans 1:21-22+ Paul writes "even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they **became fools**."

**Wisdom** - see [sophia](#)

**World** (2889) ([kosmos](#) related to the verb [kosmeo](#) = to order or adorn, to put in order [Mt 25:7 = "trimmed"], to adorn literally [1Ti 2:9], to adorn figuratively [Titus 2:9+]) describes something that is well-arranged, which has order or is arranged harmoniously. Generally **kosmos** does not refer to the material earth per se but the ordering forces that hold it together, including the involvement of humankind in culture and society. It follows that "Often kosmos has a negative force associated with human sinfulness and moral depravity and stands in opposition to God, but it will ultimately be destroyed. Thus, its association in this context with human foolishness is not surprising." (Baker) **Kosmos** is used in James 4:4+ with this negative meaning. **Kosmos** in the letters to the Corinthians (NOTE 4X IN CHAPTER 1) - 1 Co. 1:20; 1 Co. 1:21; 1 Co. 1:27; 1 Co. 1:28; 1 Co. 2:12; 1 Co. 3:19; 1 Co. 3:22; 1 Co. 4:9; 1 Co. 4:13; 1 Co. 5:10; 1 Co. 6:2; 1 Co. 7:31; 1 Co. 7:33; 1 Co. 7:34; 1 Co. 8:4; 1 Co. 11:32; 1 Co. 14:10; 2 Co. 1:12; 2 Co. 5:19; 2 Co. 7:10

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## The Wisdom In God's Word

Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? . . . Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world. — 1 Corinthians 1:20

Today's Scripture: Proverbs 8:12-21

We treasure Scripture. It's God's inspired Word, and it teaches us the way to abundant life in this world and eternal life in the world to come. Indeed, it is the source of a wisdom that goes beyond that of the wisest philosophers (1 Corinthians 1:20). But this fact is rarely acknowledged in our culture.

So I was glad to read an article by The New York Times columnist David Brooks extolling biblical wisdom. He praised Martin Luther King Jr. for insight into human nature derived from Scripture. He felt that King "had a more accurate view of political realities than his more secular liberal allies because he could draw on biblical wisdom about human nature. Religion didn't just make civil rights leaders stronger—it made them smarter." And Brooks said further: "Biblical wisdom is deeper and more accurate than the wisdom offered by the secular social sciences."

Are we drawing on that source of wisdom in our own lives? We need Scripture's wisdom to deal with our personal problems and political issues. If we study and obey the Bible, we will be able to humbly testify with the psalmist, "I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation" (Psalm 119:99). By: Vernon Grounds

The Bible is God's Word to us,  
Still fresh through all the ages;  
And if we read it we will find  
God's wisdom on its pages.  
—Sper

One truth from the Bible is worth more than all the wisdom of man.

**1 Corinthians 1:21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.**

Amplified - For when the world with all its earthly wisdom failed to perceive and recognize and know God by means of its own philosophy, God in His wisdom was pleased through the foolishness of preaching [salvation, procured by Christ and to be had through Him], to save those who believed (who clung to and trusted in and relied on Him).

Wuest - For, in view of the fact that, in the wisdom of God, the world system through its wisdom did not come to have an experiential knowledge of God, God saw fit through the aforementioned foolishness of the previously alluded-to proclamation to save those who believe, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:21 For since in the wisdom of God the world by its wisdom did not know God, God was pleased to save those who believe by the foolishness of preaching.

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:21 Since God in his wisdom saw to it that the world would never know him through human wisdom, he has used our foolish preaching to save those who believe.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:21 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.

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:21 παιδ γ ρ ν τ σοφ το θεο ο κ γνω κ σμος δι τ ς σοφ ας τ ν θε ν, ε δ κησεν θε ς δι τ ς μω ρ ας το κη ρ γματος σ σαι το ς πιστε οντας·

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:21 for, seeing in the wisdom of God the world through the wisdom knew not God, it did please God through the foolishness of the preaching to save those believing.

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:21 For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe.

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:21 For since, in God's wisdom, the world did not know God through wisdom, God was pleased to save those who believe through the foolishness of the message preached.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe.

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:21 For since in the wisdom of God the world did not come to know God through wisdom, it was the will of God through the foolishness of the proclamation to save those who have faith.

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:21 Since in the wisdom of God the world was unable to recognise God through wisdom, it was God's own pleasure to save believers through the folly of the gospel.

- **God the world:** Mt 11:25 Lu 10:21 Ro 1:20-22,28
- **the foolishness:** 1Co 1:18
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Daniel 2:20+ Daniel said, "Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, For wisdom and power belong to Him.

Romans 11:33+ Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!

## GOD'S GOOD PLEASURE PROCLAMATION OF A FOOLISH MESSAGE

**MacDonald** - Godet says that verse 21 contains a whole philosophy of history, the substance of entire volumes. We should not hurry over it quickly, but ponder deeply its tremendous truths. (BBC)

**Hodge** - This and the following verses contain the apostle's second argument in support of the insufficiency of human wisdom. The argument is this: experience having shown the insufficiency of human wisdom, God set it aside and declared it to be worthless (**ED**: REGARDING HOW ONE IS SAVED) by adopting the foolishness of preaching as the means of salvation. This argument, therefore, includes two distinct arguments—first, that derived from experience; and, second, that derived from God's having appointed the Gospel, as distinguished from human wisdom, to be the means of saving people. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**For** (gar) - Term of explanation. Paul explains his answer to "**has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?**" Yes, He has **FOR**...then introduces his explanation of how God accomplished His objective.

**Since** - "This particle, though the Greek writers generally use it for time, is almost always in the New Testament used in a causal sense. This is its meaning here. "For inasmuch as or because." (Hodge)

**In the wisdom** ([sophia](#)) **of God** (in context = the Cross of Christ, the Gospel) **the world** ([kosmos](#)) **through its wisdom** ([sophia](#)) **did not** (ouk = absolute negation) **come to know** ([ginosko](#) by experience, know intimately, personally) **God** - Amplified = "the world with all its earthly wisdom failed to perceive and recognize and know God by means of its own philosophy, " **Know** ([ginosko](#)) speaks of an intimate relationship which is not possible through worldly **wisdom**. The point is that even the highest IQ, the greatest intellect, the wisest man, cannot know God intimately and personally except through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. While [natural revelation](#) is clear, irrefutable proof that God exists as Creator of the Cosmos, men cannot be saved by natural revelation and indeed most even choose to deny God's part in natural revelation (read Ro 1:18-32+ especially "Professing to be wise, they became fools!"). They must hear and believe the foolish message of the Gospel in order to be saved. This thought echoes Paul's words in 1 Cor 3:18+ "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, he must become foolish (THAT IS RECOGNIZE MAN'S WISDOM IS FOOLISHNESS BEFORE GOD!), so that he may become wise (**ED**: THE ULTIMATE "WISDOM" IS TO BELIEVE IN THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST)." As **MacArthur** says "When we come down (in the world's eyes) to the cross, God will raise us up to eternal life."

One truth from the Bible is worth more than all the wisdom of man.

**Hodge** on in the **wisdom of God** - "In the wisdom of God, although surrounded by the manifestations of the divine wisdom in creation and providence, man failed to attain any saving knowledge of God." ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Swindoll** - Even in our own day, many brilliant astronomers peer into space with the most powerful telescopes ever invented, yet their intensive scouring of the universe never leads them beyond the created realm to the Creator Himself. On the other extreme, many scientists focus their powerful microscopes on the smallest particles of matter, seeking some kind of explanation for the order, the complexity, and the beauty of the physical universe, yet they also fail to find the all-powerful and all-wise Orderer Himself. ([Insights on 1 & 2 Corinthians](#))

**Ray Stedman** - What is the major fault of the wisdom of man? Well, despite his pretentious claims to have penetrated the secrets of life, he has failed to discover and acknowledge the greatest fact of all -- God Himself. The great Being behind all that exists is God, and for man to ignore and leave out of His thinking the most important fact of all is nothing but stupidity!...No wonder **T. S. Elliot** says, "All our knowledge only brings us closer to our ignorance, and all our ignorance closer to death, but closer to death, no nearer to God." Then he asks the question that hangs over this whole generation: "Where is the life we have lost in living?" (**ED**: Of course the answer is that real life is found only in belief in the real death of the real risen Christ!) ([1 Corinthians 1:18-25 God's Nonsense](#))



**Spurgeon** - "It is certain that a blind man is no judge of colours, a deaf man is no judge of sound, and a man who has never been quickened into spiritual life can have no judgment as to spiritual things." ([The Word of the Cross](#))

**Bob Utley** on **did not come to know God** - Fallen humanity cannot discover God, but God has chosen to reveal Himself through Christ, (the Living Word), and through the Bible (the written Word), as well as through redeemed humanity (the established word)! ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Brian Bell** - Brilliant astronomers chart the orbits & shapes of the stars & planets. But their telescopes never lead to God.. Astronauts some of the finest specimens of humanity, explore our universe. But they don't discover God (ED: UNLESS THE STEP OUT OF THEIR SATELLITE AND OUT OF THEIR SPACESUIT!) Scientists peer through their microscopes & record the details of a world invisible to human eyes, scrutinizing, analyzing, hypothesizing, theorizing. But their spiritual lenses are also microscopic, so they never see God.. Intellectual Educators read & study & probe the classics. But in all their humanistic research, they, too, never find God. No, the world through its wisdom has not come to know God. ([1 Corinthians 1 - Bell's Commentary on the Bible](#))

Paul encountered the best of the world's wisdom in Athens and declared that despite their great wisdom they **did not come to know God**...

"For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, '**TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.**' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you (READ THE FOOLISHNESS OF THE MESSAGE PAUL PREACHED TO THE ATHENIANS - Acts 17:24-30, 31+ THEN READ THEIR RESPONSE! Acts 17:32+). (Acts 17:23+)

**Comment** - As **MacArthur** says "They made for themselves many gods, but the God who had made them they did not know."

**Baker** says **know** (ginosko) "is not limited to intellectual understanding but includes the kind of knowing that comes from active engagement and experience. With humans, it is knowledge based on personal, even intimate, relations." (CBC-1 Cor)

**Jack Arnold** - In His plan, God decreed that men, with all their wisdom, would not come to know God through that wisdom. Why has God allowed human wisdom then? To give us prestige? To help us make money? To give us power? To better society? To bring peace on earth? According to Paul, the ultimate purpose of wisdom was to bring people to God. It was allowed to show men the utter futility of human wisdom to save themselves. Human wisdom fails to show men their need of God. Paul is saying that man, by his own reasoning, may try and try but his efforts will never bring anyone to God. Therefore, why should anyone trust in that which is doomed to failure? Man's wisdom is faulty because it fails to recognize God as He is revealed in Christ through Scripture. God is behind all that exists, and to leave Him out is the folly of follies. This is why God is left out of the American public school system. No one dares to mention God's name, for to do so would be to admit that He is the God of all true knowledge. This is one of the reasons our children should be exposed to Christian education so they can learn to relate God to every area of life. Only an education that is Christian can really do this. ([1 Corinthians 1:17-24 The Foolishness Of The Cross](#))

**MacArthur** - Every time a person looks at a mountain he should think of God's greatness ([natural revelation](#)). Every time he sees a sunset he should think of God's glory. Every time he sees a new life come into the world he should see God's creative hand at work. Yet an astronomer can look through his telescope and see a hundred thousand stars, and not see God's greatness. A natural scientist can look through his microscope and see intricacies of life beyond description, yet not see God's creation. A nuclear physicist can produce a thousand megatons of destruction, yet not recognize God's power. ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

#### **Related Resources:**

- [How did people know about God before the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is natural revelation? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is general revelation and special revelation? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Wiersbe** - When we trace human history, we discover a record of man gaining more and more knowledge, but less and less real wisdom, especially about spiritual matters. ([Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament](#))

**Spurgeon** - You have only to study the history of the world at the time when Paul was writing, and you will see that the "world, by wisdom knew not God." It had made itself exceedingly philosophical and sage, but if you weigh its wisest conclusions you will find that they were only polished folly. There is nothing left us of all the wisdom of that period. Time itself has proved it: nay, has disproved it. God, in his infinite wisdom, raised up a number of philosophers just about the time of the coming of Christ, and a little before that great event. If ever there were great minds upon the earth, it was then; yet these men, with all their schools of thought, knew not God, and the people did not follow after them, so that the earthly wisdom turned out to be a failure. ([1 Corinthians 1](#))

**Wisdom** (4678) see preceding note on [sophia](#)

**God was well-pleased** ([eudokeo](#)) **through the foolishness** ([moria](#)) **of the message preached** ([kerugma](#)) **to save** ([sozo](#)) **those who believe** ([pisteuo](#) in the present tense - continually believe) - The **foolishness of the message preached** is tantamount to the Gospel. The act of preaching is not foolish, but to the unsaved world the content of the message preached seems to be utter foolishness. And so the **foolishness** is only foolishness to natural, spiritually dead men (1 Cor 2:14+). To those who have ears to hear the **foolishness** of God is the glorious truth revealing God's way of salvation for **those who believe** (present tense). Don't misunderstand Paul. He is not giving approval to one who preaches *foolishly*. The **foolishness of the message preached** is the pure, profound truth of the Gospel WITHOUT any additives (i.e., without addition of man's wisdom, cleverness of speech, etc), and ultimately is **Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God**. (1 Cor 1:24, cf 1 Cor 2:2+= "Jesus Christ and Him crucified").

The cross is a symbol of freedom,  
From sin, separation, and shame;  
For there our redemption was purchased—  
Salvation in Christ's holy name.  
—Fitzhugh

**MacArthur** - It is not through philosophy, intellectual understanding, or human wisdom that salvation comes, but through believing. God saves only those who believe. Men cannot "figure out" salvation; they can only accept it in faith. ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** - There are some sciences that may be learned by the head, but the science of Christ crucified can only be learned by the heart. ([The Evil and its Remedy](#))

**Henry Morris** on **foolishness of the message preached** - To the wisdom of the ungodly, "foolish preaching" is preaching the crucifixion of the world's Creator by his creation. ([1 Defender's Study Bible](#))

In 1 Cor 2:4+ Paul says "my message and my **preaching** ([kerugma](#)) were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

**Well-pleased** (took pleasure) (2106)([eudokeo](#) from **eu** = well, good + **dokeo** = to think) means literally to think well of and so to be well pleased, to take pleasure or delight in, the very word the Father used to affirm His Son (Mt. 3:17+, Mk 1:11+; Lk. 3:22+). The idea is to find satisfaction in something or someone or to view with approval. This verb should overwhelm us with gratitude, that God should take delight in sinners (Ro 5:8+), His enemies (Ro 5:10+) and bestow on us His love in sending His Son (Jn 3:16+) to be the propitiation for our sins (1 Jn 4:10+). **Eudokeo** - 21v in the NT - Mt. 3:17; Mt. 12:18; Mt. 17:5; Mk 1:11; Lk. 3:22; Lk. 12:32; Ro 15:26; Ro 15:27; 1 Co. 1:21; 1 Co. 10:5; 2 Co. 5:8; 2 Co. 12:10; Gal. 1:15; Col. 1:19; 1 Thess. 2:8; 1 Thess. 3:1; 2 Thess. 2:12; Heb. 10:6; Heb. 10:8; Heb. 10:38; 2 Pet. 1:17

**Foolishness** (3472) see [moria](#)

**Message preached** (2782)([kerugma](#) where **-ma** means the result of <> from **kerusso** = to proclaim or announce in public) means not so much the presentation of the message, but the content of the message (WHICH NATURAL MEN FIND "FOOLISH" AND IN THIS CONTEXT = THE GOSPEL). The preacher is like the ancient Greek [kerux](#), a public servant vested with authority, who was to summon the ekklesia (1577) the town gathering. The **kerux** would also cry out state messages such as a declaration of war or "publication" of honors or victories. **Kerugma** is used only 8x in NT - Mt. 12:41; Lk. 11:32; Ro 16:25; 1 Co. 1:21; 1 Co. 2:4; 1 Co. 15:14; 2 Ti 4:17; Titus 1:3

**To save** (4982) see preceding note on [sozo](#). To save sinners, rescuing them from the power of sin, the danger of eternal death, restoring them to spiritual health and preserving them safe and secure until the end of their life.

**Believe** (4100)([pisteuo](#) from [pistis](#)) means to consider something (IN THIS CASE THE "FOOLISHNESS PREACHED") to be true and therefore worthy of one's trust. It describes a firm conviction as to the goodness, efficacy, or ability, in the case of the Gospel, the ability of Jesus to save forever (Heb 7:25+). **W E Vine** defines **belief** as consisting of

(1) a firm conviction which produces full acknowledgment of God's revelation of Truth - (2Th 2:11+ -"in order that they all may be judged who did not **believe** [pisteuo] the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.")

(2) a personal surrender to the Truth (Jn 1:12+ "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who **believe** [pisteuo] in His name") and

(3) a conduct inspired by and consistent with that surrender (See the [obedience of faith](#))

**Pisteuo** in the Corinthians letters - 1 Co. 1:21; 1 Co. 3:5; 1 Co. 9:17; 1 Co. 11:18; 1 Co. 13:7; 1 Co. 14:22; 1 Co. 15:2; 1 Co. 15:11; 2 Co. 4:13

**Charles Swindoll** on the root of **pisteuo**, the noun **pistis** - This word denotes confidence in the reliability of a person or thing and can describe one's trust in a person's word, a compact or treaty, or a deity (or deities). The term implies both knowledge and action. One may receive knowledge of a certain truth and may even offer verbal agreement, but **"trust" or "confidence" is not said to be present until one's behavior reflects that truth.** In the Hellenistic period, this word came to connote the conviction that gods do exist and are active. The Greeks worshiped and feared their gods, but they did not have a relationship with them. NT readers, however, would also have known the word from the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament), where it—and related words, like [pisteuo](#), "to believe," "to accept as truth," "to commit one's trust"—is linked to the relationship with Israel's covenant-keeping God. For the Jew, and therefore the Christian, **pistis** became a description of the means by which someone relates to God—so much so that the participial form came to designate members of the church as "believers" (e.g., Acts 2:44; 4:32; 5:14). ([Insights on Luke](#))

It has well been said that **faith** is not believing in spite of evidence—that's superstition—but obeying in spite of circumstances and consequences.

As **pistis** relates to God, it is the conviction that God exists and is the Creator and Ruler of all things well as the Provider and Bestower of eternal salvation through Christ. As faith relates to Christ it represents a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through Whom we obtain eternal salvation and entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. Stated another way, eternal salvation comes **only** through belief in Jesus Christ and no other way.

A good acronym for saving F.A.I.T.H. is...

- Forsaking
- All
- I
- Trust
- Him

**Wayne Grudem** defines **faith** that saves one's soul - **Saving faith** is trust in Jesus Christ as a living person for forgiveness of sins and for eternal life with God. This definition emphasizes that saving faith is not just a belief in facts but personal trust in Jesus to save me... The definition emphasizes personal trust in Christ, not just belief in facts about Christ. Because saving faith in Scripture involves this personal trust, the word "trust" is a better word to use in contemporary culture than the word "faith" or "belief." The reason is that we can "believe" something to be true with no personal commitment or dependence involved in it. (See online version of [Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine](#) - **SCROLL DOWN TO PAGE 617**) (Bolding added)

#### **Related Resource:**

- [What is easy believism? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is lordship salvation? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the relationship of faith, works, and security in salvation? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why is faith without works dead? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What are some of the signs of genuine saving faith? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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See study on the **Power of God's Word**

[The Word of God - Quotations and Illustrations](#)

God's Word is a **word**...

- ... of Thy lips - Ps 17:4<sup>+</sup>
- ... of this salvation - Acts 13:26<sup>+</sup>
- ... of God - Acts 13:44<sup>+</sup>, et al
- ... of the Lord - Acts 13:48<sup>+</sup>, et al
- ... of His Grace - Acts 14:3, 20:32
- ... of the Gospel - Acts 15:7<sup>+</sup>
- ... of promise - Romans 9:9 <sup>+</sup>
- ... of faith Romans 10:8 <sup>+</sup>
- ... of Christ - Romans 10:17 <sup>+</sup>
- ... of the Cross - 1 Co 1:18<sup>+</sup>
- ... of reconciliation - 2 Co 5:19 <sup>+</sup>
- ... of truth - 2 Co 6:7<sup>+</sup>, Col 1:5 <sup>+</sup>, 2Ti 2:15 <sup>+</sup>, James 1:18<sup>+</sup>
- ... of life - Philippians 2:16 <sup>+</sup>
- ... of God's message - 1Th 2:13 <sup>+</sup>
- ... of His power - Heb 1:3 <sup>+</sup>
- ... of righteousness - Heb 5:13 <sup>+</sup>
- ... of the oath - Heb 7:28 <sup>+</sup>
- ... of exhortation - Heb 13:22 <sup>+</sup>
- ... (living and abiding) - 1Pe 1:23 <sup>+</sup>
- ... of Life - 1Jn 1:1 <sup>+</sup>
- ... of My perseverance - Rev 3:10<sup>+</sup>

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## Go Beyond The Cross

The message of the cross is . . . the power of God. — 1 Corinthians 1:18

Today's Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

In central India in the mid-20th century, tensions were running high between non-Christians and Christians. A young man was told to climb to the top of a 3-story building and tear down the cross from its roof. He was not successful, though. In fact, he fell off the roof to the street below and was severely injured. When he was taken to the hospital, he was placed on a cot next to a patient who was a Christian.

When the believer told the injured man what the cross represents and what Jesus did for him on the cross, his heart was touched. He cried out, "Lord Jesus! Forgive me! I didn't mean to do it. They made me."

No matter what people try to do to eliminate the symbols of Christianity, we know that they cannot stop its message. Paul said, "The message of the cross . . . is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18). Jesus said that even the gates of hell would not prevail against the church (Matthew 16:18).

The cross stands as the symbol of Christianity. But its symbolism has no value to someone who doesn't understand what Christ did on that cross. He died there to provide forgiveness (Colossians 2:13-14), not to create an icon.

Have you gone beyond the symbol of the cross and trusted the Son of God who died there? If not, do it today! — Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The cross is a symbol of freedom,  
 From sin, separation, and shame;  
 For there our redemption was purchased—  
 Salvation in Christ's holy name.  
 —Fitzhugh

The pathway to heaven begins at the foot of the cross.

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## A Powerful Message

The gospel of Christ . . . is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes. —Romans 1:16

Today's Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Bible teacher [Lehman Strauss](#) was brought to Christ through the power of the Word when he was young. At his girlfriend's

suggestion, he read Romans 3:23, 5:8, and 10:13. As he did, he was convicted of his sin. He wept and believed.

When his son Richard was 7 years old, he asked his father how to be saved. Lehman used the same verses that his girlfriend (who was now his wife) had used years earlier. His son believed too, and eventually became a pastor.

God's Word has tremendous power! The first recorded time God spoke, He created light (Gen. 1:3). He spoke a promise to Abraham (17:15-19) and enabled his 90-year-old wife Sarah to bear a child (21:1-2). God still speaks with power today, and all who hear and believe the gospel are saved (Rom. 1:16).

Yes, the message of Christ and His saving work on the cross can change the direction of a person's life. It has the power to reach the heart of that person you love and have prayed for many times.

So don't give up in your witness. Be consistent in your daily walk. Keep praying and sharing the gospel with others. It's a powerful message! By: David C. Egnor

Sweetly echo the gospel call—  
Wonderful words of life;  
Offer pardon and peace to all—  
Wonderful words of life.  
—Bliss

Our words have power to influence; God's words have power to save.

Play and listen to the powerful hymn by [Phillip Bliss](#)....

### **Wonderful Words of Life**

Sing them over again to me, wonderful words of life,  
Let me more of their beauty see, wonderful words of life;  
Words of life and beauty teach me faith and duty.

#### **Refrain**

Beautiful words, wonderful words, wonderful words of life,  
Beautiful words, wonderful words, wonderful words of life.

Christ, the blessèd One, gives to all wonderful words of life;  
Sinner, list to the loving call, wonderful words of life;  
All so freely given, wooing us to Heaven.

#### **Refrain**

Sweetly echo the Gospel call, wonderful words of life;  
Offer pardon and peace to all, wonderful words of life;  
Jesus, only Savior, sanctify us forever.

#### **Refrain**

Our words have power to influence; God's words have power to save.

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### **Which Way?**

January 17, 2007

Read: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. —1 Corinthians 1:18

Every night, Howard and Mel frequented the cheap bars in Grand Rapids, Michigan, hoping to drown away another miserable day. Finally, the pain of a wasted life was too much, so Mel hopped a train for Chicago, where he hoped to end it all. But as he walked barefoot through a Chicago snowstorm in 1897, heading for a self-imposed demise in Lake Michigan, he was stopped by a worker from the Pacific Garden Mission. Mel went inside, heard the gospel, and accepted Christ as his Savior. Later, Mel went back to Grand Rapids to start a mission. Howard heard that he was saved and sober. But instead of trusting Jesus, Howard just laughed at "Old Mel." To him, "the message of the cross [was] foolishness" (1 Cor. 1:18). Finally, the drinking took its toll on Howard, and he committed suicide. More than 100 years later, the [Mel Trotter Mission](#) still welcomes people who need a place to stay and who

need Jesus. And 100 years later, our family is still saddened by Howard's demise. He was my wife's grandfather.

Like Mel and Howard, we have a choice. "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3:36). What do you choose? ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Which way will you take? The question is clear—  
The choice you must make with a heart sincere;  
To Jesus the Lord you now are inclined—  
Today is the day to make up your mind. —Hess

To choose Christ now is a choice for eternity.

## 1 Corinthians 1:22 For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom;

Amplified - For while Jews [demandingly] ask for signs and miracles and Greeks pursue philosophy and wisdom,

Wuest - for, both, Jews are constantly demanding an attesting miracle and Greeks are constantly searching for wisdom. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:22 For Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks ask for wisdom,

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:22 It is foolish to the Jews, who ask for signs from heaven. And it is foolish to the Greeks, who seek human wisdom.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom,

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:22 Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:22 παιδ κα ουδα οι σημει α α το σιν κα αληνες σοφ αν ζητο σιν,

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:22 Since also Jews ask a sign, and Greeks seek wisdom,

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:22 Seeing that Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom:

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:22 For the Jews ask for signs and the Greeks seek wisdom,

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom;

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom,

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:22 While the Jews demand miracles and the Greeks look for wisdom,

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:22 Jews ask for miraculous signs, and Greeks look for wisdom,

- **Jews:** Mt 12:38,39 16:1-4 Mk 8:11 Lu 11:16,20 Joh 2:18 4:28
- **Greeks:** Ac 17:18-21
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## TWO GROUPS REPRESENTING ALL UNBELIEVING MANKIND

Paul encompasses all of humanity in these two terms, **Jews** and **Greeks**, the latter being all people who were not Jew.

**John MacArthur** comments that "The two groups Paul mentions here are representative of all of unbelieving mankind. Whether, like the typical Jew, they demand proof by a supernatural sign or, like the typical Greek, they want proof by natural wisdom, **unbelievers will find an excuse for rejecting the gospel.**" ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#) (Bold added)

**For** - Term of explanation - Paul is explaining why the **message preached** seems foolish to the unregenerate.

**Indeed Jews** ([Ioudaios](#)) **ask** ([aiteo](#) in present tense = habitually, continually ask) **for signs** ([semeion](#)) - "Show me a supernatural



sign and I will believe in the supernatural." That sounds logical, even reasonable, but that is not reality! Jesus demonstrated 100's to 1000's of supernatural **signs** to the **Jews** and what did they do to Him? They crucified Him! They did not believe in Him, John writing "He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him." (John 1:11+) **Signs** don't save anyone! Only the Word of the Cross, the Gospel saves a human soul! **MacArthur** concludes that "The gospel is both supernatural and sensible. But it cannot be discovered through supernatural signs or appropriated through natural wisdom apart from a willing heart. It will save only those who believe." ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Matthew** records an example of **Jews** asking for **signs** writing "Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You. But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a **sign** ([semeion](#)); and yet no **sign** ([semeion](#)) will be given to it but the **sign** ([semeion](#)) of Jonah the prophet." (Mt 12:38-39+, cf Mk 8:11+, Lk 11:16+, Jn 2:18+)

**Johnson** makes a good point that **Jews** "already had access to wisdom from God in the Scriptures and needed only confirmations of the times in which they were living (cf. Mt 12:38–39; 16:1–4; Jn 2:18)."([1 Corinthians](#))

As **Barrett** says "To ask for a sign implies a refusal to take God on trust." (As Paul says in in 2 Cor 5:7- "we walk by faith, not by sight" - Does this describe your Christian life? It should.)

**Arnold** - Many times the Jews said to Christ, "Show us a sign" and then they would believe. Christ showed them many signs but they still didn't believe because of the hardness of their hearts....They rejected the greatest of all signs—the Lord's resurrection. The modern religious man is always looking for a sign, always looking for a feeling, always looking for a new experience, always getting security somehow from a miracle or a shrine or a cathedral to confirm his or her faith. A very recent sign of this nature is the [Shroud of Turin](#) which is supposedly the burial shroud of Jesus. This has evoked much attention in some circles. Another example is the search for [Noah's Ark](#) somewhere in Turkey. Still another is the insatiable desire for miracles (signs and wonders) in our day to somehow strengthen our faith. Why all this fuss over signs? Because something in us says if God will give some sign we will believe. We need no signs, only the crucified and resurrected Christ. ([1 Corinthians 1:17-24 The Foolishness Of The Cross](#))

#### Related Resources:

- [Is the Shroud of Turin authentic? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Would the discovery of Noah's Ark be important? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why do so many people seek after signs and wonders? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**And Greeks** (synonymous with Gentiles) **search** ([zeteo](#) in present tense = habitually, continually seek) **for wisdom** ([sophia](#)) - Luke gives us good example writing "And also some of the [Epicurean](#) and [Stoic philosophers](#) were conversing with him. Some were saying, "What would this idle babbler wish to say?" Others, "He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities,"—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. 19 And they took him and brought him to the [Areopagus](#), saying, "May we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming? 20 "For you are bringing some strange things to our ears; so we want to know what these things mean." 21 (Now all the Athenians and the strangers visiting there used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new.(AKA = SEARCH FOR WISDOM) (Acts 17:18-21+) As **MacArthur** says "The wisdom they sought, as illustrated by the Athenian philosophers, was not divine truth but intellectual novelty."

**A T Robertson** - "The Jews claimed to possess the truth: the Greeks were seekers, speculators" (Vincent) as in Acts 17:23+. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Hodge on Greeks** - They required rational evidence. They would receive nothing as true if they could not understand it and see its rational grounds. These (JEWS AND GREEKS) are permanent classes of people. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Schreiner** - Wisdom in and of itself is not to be despised, as even a cursory reading of the wisdom literature in the Old Testament reveals, but the wisdom in view here is bound up, as the context indicates, with Greek rhetoric, with praise being lavished on human beings for their stunning abilities. ([1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

**Pritchard** - The Jews said, "Show us a sign." Paul said, "I give you the sign of the cross." The Greeks said, "Show us wisdom." Paul said, "I will show you Jesus, the very wisdom of God."

**Arnold** - The unsaved, intelligent Greek took great pride in his wisdom and reveled in his speculative philosophy. Herodotus said, "All Greeks were zealous for every kind of learning." He too was spiritually blind. The modern intellectual is much like the ancient Greek who wanted to talk and talk and yet not say much. The more complex and confusing a subject is made, the more learned it obviously appears. Therefore, the intellectual man rationalizes and talks himself away from God. If the gospel did not make rational, logical sense to the Greek, he wanted nothing to do with it. Any touch of the supernatural was mocked as madness. ([1 Corinthians 1:17-24 The Foolishness Of The Cross](#))

## Related Resources:

- [What is Epicureanism? What did Epicurus teach? | GotQuestions.org](#)
  - [What is Stoicism? What did the Greek Stoics teach? | GotQuestions.org](#)
  - [What happened at Mars Hill in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
  - [Who is the unknown god in Acts 17:23? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- 

## James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - THE OFFENCE OF THE CROSS (1 Cor. 1:22–24).

“As for me,” says the Apostle in writing to the Galatians, “If I am still a preacher of circumcision”—as a condition of salvation, to please those Judaizing teachers—“how is it that I am still suffering persecution?” How is it that those who teach that we must obey the whole law of Moses to be saved still persecute me? “In that case the Cross has ceased to be a stumbling-block” (Gal. 5:11). The inference is clearly this: that if we are faithful to the truth of God as revealed in the Cross of Christ, it will be an offence and a stumbling-block to those who are trying to be saved by their works. The Cross proclaims liberty, without the deeds of the law; the law is a task-master, whose service is the yoke of slavery (Gal. 5:1). But the Cross of Christ can never be anything else than a stumbling-stone in the way of those who refuse to be saved by grace alone. It will be a fearful fall to stumble over His Cross into hell. In looking at this aspect of the Cross we shall try and answer two questions. The first is—

I. Why is the Cross of Christ a Stumbling-Block? Was it not meant to take the stumbling-block of sin out of our way? Then, why should the Cross itself become a stumbling-block?

Death can seldom ever be said to be attractive, but the death of the Cross was the most ignominious of all. That the holiest of men should suffer the most shameful of deaths is in itself a staggering thought to those who believe in the over-ruling providence of a Personal God. The Cross was the death-blow to human pride and worldly honour and glory, and to be identified with one who suffered on a cross was also to suffer loss.

When the divine mystery of the Cross of Christ is not understood, it is looked upon as a shame, a misfortune, or a martyrdom—one who suffered because of his principles. The fact is, some can be very religious and see nothing attractive in the Cross of our Lord and Saviour. They rather shun it, its every shadow is offensive to them, because there is no place for it in their heart and life. The high priests, with the Scribes and elders of old, cried out, “Let Him come down from the Cross and we will believe on Him.” Like many to-day, they would have a Christ without the Cross, but the Cross and the Christ, in the gracious purpose of God, have been eternally nailed together. There is now no Christ but the Christ who was crucified; even in Heaven He is known as “the Lamb that was slain.” When the Lord Jesus came within sight of His Cross, some of His own disciples “forsook Him and fled.” The Cross of Christ is a stumbling-block to those who are satisfied with a religious self-life, because if we would follow Him fully, we must be willing to be crucified with Him. Ah! this is the rock of offence. We do not wish these little self-governed barques of ours to make shipwreck by dashing themselves to pieces against the riven Rock of Ages. But he that loseth his life here shall save it. The next question is—

II. To whom is the Cross of Christ a Stumbling-Block? Paul preached Christ crucified—“to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness.” The Jews and Greeks may be looked upon as typical and representative classes. The first stands for religious works, the second for worldly wisdom. To the one the Cross of Christ is a stumbling-block, to the other a laughing-stock. Neither the proud religionist nor the worldly wise can possibly pass the Cross without being affected in some way by it. It knocks the feet from the legalist, and pricks the gaudy bubble of fleshly wisdom.

1. WHO IS THE JEW? Whom does he represent? He is the man who has been brought up religiously he is quite in the habit of saying prayers; he regularly attends public worship; he gives of his means for the upkeep of the church; he is quite orthodox in his beliefs; he has no fellowship with drunkards or gamblers; he is a son of the church, and bears a blameless name among his fellows; he is a very righteous and religious man, but the Cross of Christ to him is of none effect: he may hear about it, and wonder at it, but he cannot see any need for it—to him it is a stumbling-block. He has no sense of sin, no felt need of atoning Blood. It is nothing to him. The Cross is a manifestation of the mercy of God, but he does not need mercy. It is a declaration of the righteousness of God, but he is righteous, and has no need of God’s righteousness. It is an offer of the riches of God, but he has need of nothing. When the meaning of the Cross is pressed upon Him, he is stumbled, for it makes his own righteousness as filthy rags, and sets no value at all upon his prayers and performances. For him to accept the Cross, would mean the crucifixion of his own goodness. There is no self that dies so hard as religious self. To the self-religious man the Cross of Christ is a stumbling-block.

2. WHO IS THE GREEK, to whom the Cross of Christ is foolishness? The Greek represents those who give themselves to art, philosophy, and physical culture. All good in themselves, but when these things become the objects of life and the hope of all future good, then the Cross of Christ is foolishness. In the days of Paul, Athens was the “City of Schools,” even Roman youths, who sought

to distinguish themselves, came here to study. "All the Athenians and their foreign visitors used to devote their whole leisure to telling or hearing about something new" (Acts 17:21). But all human culture and philosophy are of themselves utterly incompetent to appreciate the Cross of Christ, because no flesh can glory in its presence. Every product and achievement of the unspiritual man withers and fails as soon as they come within reach of the power of the Cross. To all materialists and rationalists the Cross is foolishness, because to them it is incomprehensible. But this thing, which is foolishness in the eyes of the worldly wise, who walk in the light of the sparks of their own kindling, is, in deed and truth, "the wisdom of God." For the preaching of Christ crucified is to them who obey the call, "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:24). Think now of—

III. What the Cross Really Is. Not the Cross apart from Christ, but as representing Him who was crucified.

1. IT IS THE POWER OF GOD. It is not the preaching that is the power of God, but the "Christ crucified" who is preached. The Cross of Christ is God's dynamic (power) in operation for the salvation of the world. All the force that God can bring to bear upon the redemption of men from sin and death is here in the Cross of Christ.

2. IT IS "THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS of His power to us-ward who believe" (Eph. 1:19). It takes the power of God to save, and this almighty power can only work through the death of His Son. To believe in that death is to put yourself in touch with the power of God, that delivers from all iniquity and saves with an everlasting salvation.

3. IT IS ALSO THE WISDOM OF GOD. It is only after we have experienced the saving power of God through the Cross that we can really see it to be "the wisdom of God"—the manifestation of infinite skill. The planning of man's redemption by the gift of His Son and Blood of His Cross, was a revelation of the wisdom of God as well as the love of God. When we get a true vision of the Crucified One we are constrained to say, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God." To flee to that Cross is to put your helplessness and weakness into His power—your foolishness and ignorance into His wisdom. "Then shall you be strong, and wise, and safe in Christ Jesus your Lord."

"The Cross, it takes our guilt away,  
It holds the fainting spirit up;  
It cheers with hope the gloomy day,  
And sweetens every bitter cup.

It makes the coward spirit brave,  
And nerves the feeble arm for fight  
It takes the terror from the grave.  
And gilds the bed of death with light.  
The balm of life, the cure of woe,

The measure and the pledge of love;  
The sinner's refuge here below,  
The angels' theme in Heaven above."

"God forbid that I should glory in anything except the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6:14).

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For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified (1 Corinthians 1:22-23).

When the Lord Jesus came to live on the earth, He came at the Word of the Father (John 1). Everything He said and did was in obedience to God's will and therefore was a true expression of His Father's loving heart. Yet it was not by Christ's great teaching nor through His astounding miracles that He best represented the eternal purposes of God. Rather, He proclaimed the Father's love most eloquently by His sacrificial death on the cross.

A furniture maker trying to explain the theory of his designs to a blind [yeoman](#) said that he believed he could express himself best through his craft.

"Artists," he said, "express themselves in colors, in words, in stone; well, I don't see why a man can't express himself in wood."

The yeoman, with unusual spiritual insight, responded, "In wood? It has been done, sir; yes, the mightiest expression of a man ever the world knew has been in wood!"

"What, yeoman?" asked the craftsman.

"Sir," the yeoman replied, "the cross of Christ!"

(Arthur Hutchinson, One Increasing Purpose).

The sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus was the supreme expression of a loving God. That death, that sacrifice, that proclamation of unending love, was for you and for me. —D C Egnér

Christ took the guilt of our sin that we might have the gift of His salvation.

## 1 Corinthians 1:23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness,

Amplified - But to those who are called, whether Jew or Greek (Gentile), Christ [is] the Power of God and the Wisdom of God.

[This is] because the foolish thing [that has its source in] God is wiser than men, and the weak thing [that springs] from God is stronger than men.

Wuest - But as for us, we are proclaiming a Christ, one who has been crucified; to Jews, on the one hand, an offense, to Greeks, on the other hand, folly, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:23 but we preach about a crucified Christ, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles.

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:23 So when we preach that Christ was crucified, the Jews are offended and the Gentiles say it's all nonsense.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:23 but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:23 με ς ὃ κηρ σομεν Χριστ ν σταυρωμ νον, ουδα οισ μ ν σκ νδαλον, θνεσιν ὃ μωρ αν,

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:23 also we -- we preach Christ crucified, to Jews, indeed, a stumbling-block, and to Greeks foolishness,

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:23 but we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumblingblock, and unto Gentiles foolishness;

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness,

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:23 but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:23 but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:23 we are preaching a crucified Christ: to the Jews an obstacle they cannot get over, to the gentiles foolishness,

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:23 but our message is that Christ was crucified. This offends Jewish people and makes no sense to people who are not Jewish.

- **we preach:** 1Co 1:18 2:2 Lu 24:46,47 Ac 7:32-35 10:39-43 2Co 4:5 Ga 3:1 6:14 Eph 3:8
- **to Jews** Isa 8:14,15 Mt 11:6 13:57 Lu 2:34 Joh 6:53-66 Ro 9:32-33 Ga 5:11 1Pe 2:8
- **foolishness:** 1Co 1:28 2:14
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Romans 9:32-33+ Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, 33 just as it is written, "**BEHOLD**, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF

STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF **OFFENSE** ([skandalon](#)), AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

Romans 11:9+ And David says, "LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP, AND A **STUMBLING BLOCK** ([skandalon](#)) AND A RETRIBUTION TO THEM.

Galatians 5:11+ But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the **stumbling block** ([skandalon](#)) of the cross has been abolished.

1 Peter 2:8+ - and, "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF **OFFENSE** ([skandalon](#))"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed

Deuteronomy 21:23 His corpse shall not hang all night on the tree (Lxx = [xulon](#) used by Peter for "cross" in 1 Pe 2:24+), but you shall surely bury him on the same day (**for he who is hanged is accursed of God**), so that you do not defile your land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.

Galatians 3:13+ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "**CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE**"—

## THE CRUX: PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED

The word [crux](#) denotes a cross and means the crucial point, the vital truth, the central or critical point, the heart, the core, the essence. As **Johnson** says **Christ crucified** "is the heart (**ED**: aka "[crux](#)") of Paul's message and his whole understanding of God's matchless wisdom. All else follows from this central core; without it, all else is a rabbit trail that leads nowhere, a powerless gospel. But a crucified Christ is a stumbling block to Jews." (Ibid)

**But** - Term of contrast. The great divide. It is like the rain that falls on the Rockies, some raindrops going to the Pacific and others to the eastern rivers, and similarly this "**but**" presents us with the "great continental divide" between man's wisdom and God's wisdom, one message leading to eternal punishment and the other to eternal life (cf Mt 25:46, Mt 7:13, 14+, Ps 1:6+).

**Wiersbe** has an excellent summary of this section - God's wisdom is revealed primarily in the cross of Jesus Christ, but not everybody sees this. Paul pointed out that there are three different attitudes toward the cross. Some **stumble** at the cross (v. 23a)....Some **laugh** at the cross (v. 23b)....Some **believe** and experience the power and the wisdom of the cross (v. 24). ([The Wiersbe Bible Commentary](#))

**We preach Christ crucified** ([stauroo](#)), **to Jews a stumbling block** (a [skandalon](#) > A "**SCANDAL**") - This is the truest of all signs the Jews sought (but did not have spiritual eyes to see) -- Christ crucified, and it is authenticated by the greatest sign, Christ's resurrection from the dead. In fact these truths became a **stumbling block** ([skandalon](#)) for the Jews or as **Lenski** bluntly put it were like a "deathtrap!" **Preach** ([kerusso](#)) is present tense signifying this was Paul's (and whoever "**we**" is) habitual practice. As Paul wrote later to the Galatians, to the Jews, the cross was a **stumbling block** (Gal 5:11+). Christ tripped up the Jews and they stumbled over the Messiah because they were looking for a conquering King, not a suffering Lamb (Jn 1:29+, Isaiah 53+). The preacher is just a conduit (a Word filled and Spirit filled vessel) through whom the message from God is heralded.

**Guzik** has an interesting thought - **Christ** (Messiah) meant power, splendor, and triumph. **Crucified** meant weakness, defeat, and humiliation. **Christ crucified** was the ultimate [oxymoron](#), and this was what Paul preached! If the cross doesn't seem strange to you, then you either don't understand how the cross was seen in Jesus' day, or you don't understand who Jesus is. You don't understand the tension between Christ and crucified. The great Roman statesman Cicero said: "The cross, it speaks of that which is so shameful, so horrible, it should never be mentioned in polite society." ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Wiersbe** rightly says that the **Jews** in the first century "did not understand their own sacred Scriptures. They looked for a Messiah Who would come like a mighty conqueror and defeat all their enemies. He would then set up His kingdom and return the glory to Israel. The question of the Apostles in Acts 1:6+ ("Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?") shows how strong this hope was among the Jews....Because the Jews were looking for power and great glory, they stumbled at the weakness of the cross. How could anybody put faith in an unemployed carpenter from Nazareth who died the shameful death of a common criminal? But the Gospel of Jesus Christ is "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). Rather than a testimony of weakness, the cross is a tremendous instrument of power! After all, the "weakness of God [in the cross] is stronger than men" (1 Cor. 1:25). ([The Wiersbe Bible Commentary](#): (See the Discovery House Booklet "[The Jewish Tradition Of Two Messiahs](#)")

Paul was not a sign-loving Jew,  
nor a wisdom-loving Greek,  
but a Savior-loving Christian!



**Robertson on preach** - We proclaim, "we do not discuss or dispute" (Lightfoot). Papyri examples (OF STUMBLING BLOCK) mean trap or snare which here tripped the Jews who wanted a conquering Messiah with a world empire, not a condemned and crucified one (Matt. 27:42; Luke 24:21). ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Arnold** - To the Jew, the death of the Messiah would be the ultimate contradiction. Why? For them, Messiah meant power, splendor, and triumph but crucifixion meant weakness, humiliation, and defeat. A crucified Messiah was the ultimate stumbling block (scandal). For a person to hang from a tree was for a Jew to be placed under a curse. "...because anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse" (Deut. 21:23). Messiah would be for them a despised criminal -- a total contradiction to the Jewish mind. ([1 Corinthians 1:1-3 Our Position In Christ](#))

**Uttley** - The Jews rejected Christ because of the crucifixion (cf. Deut. 21:23). They were expecting the Messiah to be a conquering military leader (and He will be when He returns!) The Jews did not recognize a Suffering Messiah (cf. Ge 3:15; Ps. 22; Isa. 52:13-53:12) and a two-stage coming (incarnation and glorious return). ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Gordon Fee** - It is hard for those in the christianized West, where the cross for almost nineteen centuries has been the primary symbol of the faith, to appreciate how utterly mad the message of a God who got himself crucified by his enemies must have seemed to the first-century Greek or Roman. But it is precisely the depth of this scandal and folly that we must appreciate if we are to understand both why the Corinthians were moving away from it toward wisdom and why it was well over a century before the cross appears among Christians as a symbol of their faith." ([The First Epistle to the Corinthians](#))

**Crucified (stauroo)** is in the **perfect tense** which describes Christ's crucifixion at a point in time on that historical day on Calvary and now with the continuing effect of His crucifixion. Praise God that Christ's crucifixion is eternally efficacious! In other words, even the ascended Lord Jesus remains the "Crucified One!" As Isaiah 53:5+ declared "He was pierced through for our transgressions," and those scars remain on Him. John alludes to this in Rev 5:9+ where "they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You **were slain** ([sphazo](#) - AT A POINT IN TIME IN THE PAST), and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation." And again in Rev 5:12+ John records the praise in all heaven declaring "Worthy is the Lamb that **was slain** ([sphazo](#) IN THE PERFECT TENSE) to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." In short, Jesus bears and will bear forever the marks of His crucifixion as testimony to the eternality of the New Covenant in His blood.

**And to Gentiles** (Greeks) **foolishness** - TEV = "nonsense to the Gentiles" **Christ crucified** was considered foolish, folly, intellectually weak, irrational. In truth, **Christ crucified** is paradoxically the only "**foolishness**" which will save a soul!

As stated earlier notice that by mentioning **Jews and Gentiles** Paul includes all of mankind as rejecting the crucifixion of Christ, the exception of course being those who are **the called** (1 Cor 1:24).

Recall their reaction in Acts 17:32 Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer, but others said, "We shall hear you again concerning this." **Sneer** is [chleuazo](#) (from [chleúe](#) = joke, jest related to [cheilos](#) = a lip) means to throw out the lip and thus to mock, scoff, deride or sneer. To **sneer** stresses insulting another by contemptuous facial expression, phrasing, or tone of voice. To **scoff** stresses insolence, disrespect, or incredulity as motivating the derision. It means to make fun of someone by joking or jesting. In truth these Greeks are the ultimate fools for one day in the future " at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE (INCLUDING MOCKING GREEK PHILOSOPHERS) **WILL BOW**, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue **will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father." (Php 2:10-11+)

**THOUGHT** - Who is Christ to you? A stumbling block, a scandalous name? Or is He foolishness? Belief today and bow while today is still today (2 Cor 6:2), for one day you will bow and sadly then "burn" forever in eternal punishment.

**Arnold** - To the intellectual Greek, a crucified Christ was a brainless superstition, pure madness, moronic. Any belief in a miraculous death and a supernatural resurrection was folly to the closed Greek mind. The whole story of the Cross was absurd. Until the intellectual skeptic humbles himself and gives up reliance on his own insight and understanding, the gospel will always be nonsense. The message of Christ trips up the religious man and it is absurd to the rational man. If the gospel was a stumbling block and foolishness, why didn't Paul water it down and get rid of the offensive elements? Why didn't he make it attractive so he could have a big church? If he would have watered it down, then it would not have been a means of salvation to sinners. To compromise the gospel is to give up the gospel. To give up the gospel is to give up Christianity. ([1 Corinthians 1:17-24 The Foolishness Of The Cross](#))

**Uttley** has an interesting thought - The Greeks rejected Christ because the concept of resurrection did not fit their preconceived philosophical ideals. This statement of Paul also shows that the supposed "dying and rising redeemer" of the fertility cults and mystery religions was not a major tenet of Greek thought and surely not the source of Paul's view of Jesus. ([1 Corinthians 1](#)



## [Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** - Those who thus veil an unwelcome truth imagine that they make disciples, whereas they are only paying homage to unbelief, and comforting men in their rejection of divine propitiation for sin. Whatever the preacher may mean in his heart, he will be guilty of the blood of souls if he does not clearly proclaim a real sacrifice for sin....Certain divines tell us that they must adapt truth to the advance of the age, which means that they must murder it and fling its dead body to the dogs ... which simply means that a popular lie shall take the place of an offensive truth." ([The Word of the Cross](#))

**Preach** (proclaim) (2784) (**kerusso** from **kerux/keryx** = a herald - one who acts as the medium of the authority of one who proclamation he makes) means to proclaim publicly or to herald or act as a public crier - the town official who would make a proclamation in a public gathering. **Kerusso** was used of the official whose duty it was to proclaim loudly and extensively the coming of an earthly king, even as **our gospel** is to clearly announce the coming of the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:16+)! The Imperial Herald would enter a town in behalf of the Emperor, and make a public proclamation of the message which his Sovereign ordered him to give, doing so with such formality, gravity, and authority as to emphasize that the message must be heeded! (Think about this in regard to the Gospel of God instead of the decree of a man! cf 1Th 2:13+). He gave the people exactly what the Emperor bade him give, nothing more, nothing less. He did not dare add to the message or take away from it. To preach, proclaim, publish, always with the suggestion of formality, gravity and an authority which must be listened to and obeyed. The idea is to preach or proclaim with the goal to persuade, urge or warn to comply.

**Kerusso** in the Corinthian letters - 1 Co. 1:23; 1 Co. 9:27; 1 Co. 15:11; 1 Co. 15:12; 2 Co. 1:19; 2 Co. 4:5; 2 Co. 11:4

**Crucified** (4717)(**stauroo** from **stauros** = cross, in turn from **histemi** = to stand) means literally to nail or fasten to a cross and so to crucify -- literal death by nailing to and hanging from a cross (a stake). **Stauroo** in the Corinthian letters - 1 Co. 1:13; 1 Co. 1:23; 1 Co. 2:2; 1 Co. 2:8; 2 Co. 13:4.

**Stumbling block** (SCANDAL)(4625)(**skandalon** from a root meaning jump up, snap shut) was originally the piece of wood that kept open a trap for animals. When the animal stumbled over the stick, the trap would shut. Outside the Bible it is not used metaphorically, though its derivative skandalethron (e.g. a trap set through questions) is so used. The English word **scandal** is derived from the noun via the Lat. **scandalum**. Thus **skandalon** was literally, that movable part of a trap on which the bait was laid, and when touched caused the trap to close on its prey. **Skandalon** thus came to mean any entanglement of the foot. Figuratively, as used most often in Scripture, **skandalon** refers to any person or thing by which one is drawn into error or sin. **Skandalon** has two meanings. (a) It originally meant the bait-stick in a trap. (b) It then came to mean any stumbling-block placed in a man's way to trip him up. It is ironic that Jesus called the Jews themselves skandalon! (Mt 18:7)

**Skandalon** - 13x in NT - Matt. 13:41; Matt. 16:23; Matt. 18:7; Lk. 17:1; Rom. 9:33; Rom. 11:9; Rom. 14:13; Rom. 16:17; 1 Co. 1:23; Gal. 5:11; 1 Pet. 2:8; 1 Jn. 2:10; Rev. 2:14

**Foolishness** (3472) see [moria](#)

Play **Michael Card's** powerful song [Scandalon](#)...

The seers and the prophets had foretold it long ago  
That the long awaited one would make men stumble  
But they were looking for a king to conquer and to kill  
Who'd have ever thought He'd be so weak and humble

Chorus

He will be the truth that will offend them one and all  
A Stone that makes men stumble  
And a Rock that makes them fall

Many will be broken so that He can make them whole  
And many will be crushed and lose their own soul  
Along the path of life there lies a stubborn Scandalon  
And all who come this way must be offended  
To some He is a barrier, To others He's the way

For all should know the scandal of believing

Chorus

It seems today the Scandalon offends no one at all  
The image we present can be stepped over  
Could it be that we are like the others long ago  
Will we ever learn that all who come must stumble

Repeat Chorus

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**ILLUSTRATION** - Let every pulpit rightly say, "**we preach Christ crucified!**" A strong church once inscribed these words on an archway leading to the churchyard. Over time, two things happened: the church lost its passion for Jesus and His gospel, and ivy began to grow on the archway. The growth of the ivy, covering the message, showed the spiritual decline. Originally it said strongly, **we preach Christ crucified**. But as the ivy grew, one could only read **we preach Christ**, and the church also started preaching "Jesus the Great Man" and "Jesus the Moral Example" instead of Christ crucified. The ivy kept growing, and one could soon only read, **we preach**. The church also had even lost Jesus in the message, preaching religious platitudes and social graces. Finally, one could only read **we**, and the church also just became another social gathering place, all about **we** and not about God. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

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**To the Greeks the message of the Cross was foolishness. There are at least two reasons according to William Barclay:**

"(a) To the Greek idea the first characteristic of God was apatheia. That word means more than apathy; it means total inability to feel. The Greeks argued that if God can feel joy or sorrow or anger or grief it means that some man has for that moment influenced God and is therefore greater than he. So, they went on to argue, it follows that God must be incapable of all feeling so that none may ever effect him. A God who suffered was to the Greeks a contradiction in terms.

They went further. Plutarch declared that it was an insult to God to involve him in human affairs. God of necessity was utterly detached. The very idea of incarnation, of God becoming a man, was revolting to the Greek mind. Augustine, who was a very great scholar long before he became a Christian, could say that in the Greek philosophers he found a parallel to almost all the teaching of Christianity; but one thing, he said, he never found, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." **Celsus**, who attacked the Christians with such vigour towards the end of the second century A.D., wrote,

"God is good and beautiful and happy and is in that which is most beautiful and best. If then 'He descends to men' it involves change for him, and change from good to bad, from beautiful to ugly, from happiness to unhappiness, from what is best to what is worst. Who would choose such a change? For mortality it is only nature to alter and be changed; but for the immortal to abide the same forever. God would never accept such a change." (See [note in Wikipedia](#))

To the thinking Greek the incarnation was a total impossibility. To people who thought like that it was incredible that one who had suffered as Jesus had suffered could possibly be the Son of God.

(b) The Greek sought wisdom. Originally the Greek word sophist meant a wise man in the good sense; but it came to mean a man with a clever mind and cunning tongue, a mental acrobat, a man who with glittering and persuasive rhetoric could make the worse appear the better reason. It meant a man who would spend endless hours discussing hair-splitting trifles, a man who had no real interest in solutions but who simply gloried in the stimulus of "the mental hike."

Dio Chrysostom describes the Greek wise men. "They croak like frogs in a marsh; they are the most wretched of men, because, though ignorant, they think themselves wise; they are like peacocks, showing off their reputation and the number of their pupils as peacocks do their tails."

It is impossible to exaggerate the almost fantastic mastery that the silver-tongued rhetorician held in Greece. Plutarch says, "They made their voices sweet with musical cadences and modulations of tone and echoed resonances." They thought not of what they were saying, but of how they were saying it. Their thought might be poisonous so long as it was enveloped in honeyed words. Philostratus tells us that Adrian, the sophist, had such a reputation in Rome, that when his messenger appeared with a notice that he was to lecture, the senate emptied and even the people at the games abandoned them to flock to hear him.

Dio Chrysostom draws a picture of these so-called wise men and their competitions in Corinth itself at the Isthmian games. "You

might hear many poor wretches of sophists, shouting and abusing each other, and their disciples, as they call them, squabbling; and many writers of books reading their stupid compositions, and many poets singing their poems, and many jugglers exhibiting their marvels, and many sooth-sayers giving the meaning of prodigies, and ten thousand rhetoricians twisting lawsuits, and no small number of traders driving their several trades." The Greeks were intoxicated with fine words; and to them the Christian preacher with his blunt message seemed a crude and uncultured figure, to be laughed at and ridiculed rather than to be listened to and respected.

It looked as if the Christian message had little chance of success against the background of Jewish or Greek life; but as Paul said, "What looks like God's foolishness is wiser than men's wisdom; and what looks like God's weakness is stronger than men's strength." ([Daily Bible Study - 1 Corinthians 1](#))

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### **Spurgeon - Christ crucified 1 Corinthians 1:23, 24**

I do not believe it is preaching Christ and him crucified, to give our people a batch of philosophy every Sunday morning and evening, and neglect the truth of this Holy Book. I do not believe it is preaching Christ and him crucified, to leave out the main cardinal doctrines of the Word of God, and preach a religion which is all a mist and a haze, without any definite truths whatever. I take it that a man does not preach Christ and him crucified, who can get through a sermon without mentioning Christ's name once; nor does that man preach Christ and him crucified who leaves out the Holy Spirit's work, who never says a word about the Holy Ghost, so that indeed the hearers might say, "We do not so much know whether there be a Holy Ghost." And I have my own private opinion that there is no such thing as preaching Christ and him crucified, unless you preach what nowadays is called Calvinism. I have my own ideas, and those I always state boldly. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else. I do not believe we can preach the gospel, if we do not preach justification by faith, without works; nor unless we preach the sovereignty of God in his dispensation of grace; nor unless we exalt the electing, unchangeable, eternal, immutable, conquering, love of Jehovah; nor do I think we can preach the gospel, unless we base it upon the peculiar redemption which Christ made for his elect and chosen people; nor can I comprehend a gospel which lets saints fall away after they are called, and suffers the children of God to be burned in the fires of damnation after having believed. Such a gospel I abhor. The gospel of the Bible is not such a gospel as that. ([1 Corinthians 1:23 Preaching Christ Crucified](#); [1 Corinthians 1:23-24 Christ Crucified](#))

### **1 Corinthians 1:24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.**

Amplified - But to those who are called, whether Jew or Greek (Gentile), Christ [is] the Power of God and the Wisdom of God.

[This is] because the foolish thing [that has its source in] God is wiser than men, and the weak thing [that springs] from God is stronger than men.

Wuest - but to those themselves who have been divinely summoned into salvation, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, God's power and God's wisdom, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:24 But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:24 But to those called by God to salvation, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:24 but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:24 α το ς δ το ς κλητο ς, ουδα οισ τε κα λλησιν, Χριστ ν θεο δ ναμιν κα θεο σοφ αν·

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:24 and to those called -- both Jews and Greeks -- Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God,

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:24 but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:24 Yet to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is God's power and God's wisdom,

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:24 but to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:24 but to those who have been called, whether they are Jews or Greeks, a Christ who is both the power of God and the wisdom of God.

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:24 But to those Jews and Greeks who are called, he is Christ, God's power and God's wisdom.

- **the called:** 1Co 1:2,9 Lu 7:35 Ro 8:28-30 9:24
- **the power:** 1Co 1:18 Ro 1:4,16
- **the wisdom:** 1Co 1:30 Pr 8:1,22-30 Col 2:3
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Corinthians 1:2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by **calling**, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:

1 Corinthians 1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were **called** into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 8:30+ and these whom [He predestined](#), He also **called**; and these whom He **called**, He also justified (DECLARED RIGHTEOUS); and these whom He justified, He also glorified (NOTE:FUTURE GLORIFICATION SO SURE THAT PAUL DESCRIBES IT IN THE PAST TENSE AS IF ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED!).

2 Th 2:13-14+ But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has **chosen** you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth (WHAT IS THE TRUTH IN CONTEXT? THE GOSPEL). 14 It was for this He **called** you (HOW WERE THEY CALLED?) through our gospel, (WHY WERE THEY CALLED?) that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## THE CALLED RECEIVE THE GOSPEL AS POWER AND WISDOM

**Johnson** - this is how Christ is to be seen by those who belong to him. God's power is revealed in the crucified Jesus, God's wisdom is inseparable from the cross. ([1 Corinthians](#))

**but** - Term of contrast. The rejection of the Gospel by Jews and Greeks is here contrasted with the reception by the called Jews and Greeks.

**to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks** (= "Gentiles" - 1 Cor 1:23) - Paul repeats **called** from 1 Cor 1:1-2, the verbal adjective [kletos](#) which includes the ideas of invited, welcomed, appointed and originally was used to designate those invited to a banquet (1Ki 1:41, 49). Here in 1 Cor 1:24 [kletos](#) refers to an "invitation" by God presented in the form of the proclamation of the Gospel. **The called** speaks of an **effectual call** to salvation (cf Ro 1:1,6,7, Ro 8:28, 1Co 1:2,24, Jude 1:1, Rev 17:14). The call has gone out to both **Jews and Greeks**, that is, to all of humanity, but only **the called** receive the **Word of the Cross**, experience the power of God and are born again.

To reiterate the **called** are those who the Spirit of God draws to Himself, Jesus put it this way -- "No one can come to Me unless the Father Who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day." (Jn 6:44) And again Jesus declared "For this reason I have said to you, that no one (oudeis = absolute negation) can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father." (Jn 6:65). As **called** is used by Paul (and Jude and John) **the called** are those who have heard the preaching of the Gospel and responded to it by exercising saving faith. In this understanding **the called** are virtually synonymous with "the elect" (see [Who are the elect of God? | GotQuestions.org](#))

**Jack Arnold on the called** - In the word "**called**" we have the key to Christianity. This refers to the sovereign, efficacious, irresistible call of God to salvation. ([1 Corinthians 1:17-24 The Foolishness Of The Cross](#))

**Called** (2822) see previous note on [kletos](#)

#### Related Resources:

- [See Note above](#) for 13 Scriptural truths that relate to **the called**
- [What is the effectual calling/call? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God** - Earlier Paul said the **Word of the Cross** was the **power of God** (1 Cor 1:18+). **Christ** is the Word (Jn 1:1+), the Word of God (Rev 19:13+), and thus the **Word of the Cross** is the word about the Word and it is a Word energized by **the power of God**. As **Schreiner** says "The message of the cross transforms those who are called, and what is identified as foolishness, according to the world, is embraced as wisdom by those who belong to God."

**James** describes the **wisdom of God** which as "from above (and) is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits (ED: ONE "GOOD FRUIT" IN CONTEXT OF 1 CORINTHIANS IS TO MAKE A SINNER A SAINT = " a kind of **first fruits** among His creatures." James 1:18+), unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." (Jas 3:15-18+) This godly wisdom is made available to godless men through the God-Man, Christ Jesus.

**Leon Morris** on **power of God** - Those **called** know that the crucified Christ means power. Before the call they were defeated by sin; now there is a new power at work in them, the **power of God**. (cf Ro 6:11-14+, Ro 6:17-18+, Ro 8:13+) ([Full text of "1 Corinthians TNTC Leon Morris"](#))

**John MacArthur** - For those who believe in His Son, the crucified Christ is both the power of God and the wisdom of God. He who is a stumbling block to the unbelieving Jew is Savior of the believing, and the One who is foolishness to the unbelieving Gentile is Redeemer to the believing. In mentioning God's foolishness and weakness the apostle is, of course, speaking from the unbeliever's point of view. Ironically, and tragically, the very part of God's plan and work that seems most ridiculous and useless from man's natural standpoint actually exhibits His greatest power and greatest wisdom. ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Arnold** on **power** and **wisdom** - Christianity is supernaturally based on God's calling of sinners to Himself. We are Christians because God did a supernatural work in our hearts to bring us to faith in Christ. Christianity is not anti-intellectual but it is supernatural. As Christians, we understand that Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God because we are experiencing the effects of the crucified and resurrected Savior in our lives.

Paul writes that in Christ "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col 2:3+)

**Power** (1411) see above note on [dunamis](#) - speaks of inherent power to accomplish supernatural feats and is often translated miracles in the NT. In the present context it speaks of the Gospel's supernatural power to circumcise a heart and made a sinner a saint, a new creation in Christ (2 Cor 5:17+). *Dunamis* is the inherent power residing in Christ and His Gospel by virtue of His nature and the intrinsic nature of the Gospel described in Ro 1:16+ (i.e., the "power of God").

**Wisdom** - see [sophia](#)

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**John Piper's explanation of calling** - [God Calls the Spiritually Dead to Life](#) (using Ephesians 4:1 as the base passage). Watch John Piper's explanation of **calling** which he first illustrates by using Jesus' call to Lazarus (John 11:43-44) to "Come out" (or "come forth"). Piper's point is that "dead men" like Lazarus do not hear, so that Jesus' call to Lazarus came with the gift of life to enable Lazarus to hear and come forth. Then Piper demonstrates the principle of **calling** using 1 Corinthians 1:22-24. He points out that both Jews and Gentiles heard Paul **preach Christ crucified**, but to the Jews it was a **stumbling block** and to the Gentiles it was foolishness. Then he talks about the response of those **who are the called** in 1 Corinthians 1:24.

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**Jack Arnold's summary of 1 Cor 1:17-24** - What lessons are we Christians to learn from this section of Scripture?

**First**, only the gospel of Christ is God's message of salvation, and there is no other way to God except through Christ.

**Second**, human philosophy only empties the Cross of its real meaning; therefore, the gospel should never be presented in philosophical terminology.

**Third**, when preaching the gospel, we must never hide it by toning it down or obscure it by eloquence. Our goal should not be to have people go away from a gospel presentation saying, "What a brilliant preacher! What a splendid personality! What a dynamic

orator! Oh, he made me feel so good inside!” No, our desire should be to get the facts of the Cross to people so they might say, “What a guilty sinner I am, and how amazing is the love of God that sent His Son to die for sinners such as me.”

**Fourth**, as Christians, we must make a declaration of the whole gospel to men, for the gospel is not a system or a philosophy to be debated, but a message about a person who died for sinners. How often in a gospel presentation are we sidetracked in philosophical discussions, the right or wrong of evolution, or the inequities of social justice in the world, and we forget to present Christ crucified to men.

**Fifth**, while no human reasoning can save anyone, a Christian is not to commit intellectual suicide by throwing out intellectual pursuits. He must be intellectually alert and know the thinking and philosophies of secular minds in order to destroy worldly thinking by showing its inadequacy to save a man.

**Sixth**, we must be careful about wanting intellectual respectability with the unsaved world, for in getting it we will have to compromise the faith somewhere. We are not here to please men but to please God.

**Seventh**, the cure for divisiveness and dissension in a local church is a proper understanding and appreciation of the gospel. Believing the gospel is not only the means by which we become Christians, it is also the means by which we are delivered in our Christian experience from all causes of disagreements, factions and dissensions. The Cross makes us focus on what we Christians have in common and not on our differences on secondary theological issues and petty personal preferences. ([1 Corinthians 1:17-24 The Foolishness Of The Cross](#))

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#### **C H Spurgeon - Christ—the power and wisdom of God 1 Corinthians 1:24**

Christ is the power of God, for he is the Creator of all things, and by Him all things exist. But when he came to earth, took upon himself the fashion of a man, tabernacled in the inn, and slept in the manger, he still gave proof that he was the Son of God; not so much so when, as an infant of a span long, the immortal was the mortal, and the infinite became a babe; not so much so in his youth, but afterwards when he began his public ministry, he gave abundant proofs of his power and godhead. The winds hushed by his finger uplifted, the waves calmed by his voice, so that they became solid as marble beneath his tread; the tempest, cowering at his feet, as before a conqueror whom it knew and obeyed; these things, these stormy elements, the wind, the tempest, and the water, gave full proof of his abundant power. The lame man leaping, the deaf man hearing, the dumb man singing, the dead rising, these, again, were proofs that he was the “power of God.” When the voice of Jesus startled the shades of Hades, and rent the bonds of death, with “Lazarus come forth!” and when the carcass rotten in the tomb woke up to life, there was proof of his divine power and godhead. A thousand other proofs he afforded; but we need not stay to mention them to you who have Bibles in your houses, and who can read them every day. At last he yielded up his life, and was buried in the tomb. Not long, however, did he sleep; for he gave another proof of his divine power and godhead, when starting from his slumber, he affrighted the guards with the majesty of his grandeur, not being held by the bonds of death, they being like green twigs before our conquering Samson, who had meanwhile pulled up the gates of hell, and carried them on his shoulders far away. ([1 Corinthians 1:24 Christ--The Power and Wisdom of God](#))

#### **1 Corinthians 1:25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.**

Amplified - [This is] because the foolish thing [that has its source in] God is wiser than men, and the weak thing [that springs] from God is stronger than men.

Wuest - because that aforementioned folly of God is wiser than men and that aforementioned weakness of God is stronger than men. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:25 This foolish plan of God is wiser than the wisest of human plans, and God's weakness is stronger than the greatest of human strength.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:25 τι τ μωρ ν το θεο σοφ τερον τ ν νθρ πων στ ν κα τ σθεν ς το θεο σχυρ τερον τ ν νθρ πων.



KJV 1 Corinthians 1:25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:25 because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men;

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:25 because God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:25 For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:25 God's folly is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:25 God's nonsense is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

- **the foolishness:** 1Co 1:18,27-29 Ex 13:17 14:2-4 Jos 6:2-5 Jud 7:2-8 15:15,16 1Sa 17:40-51 1Ki 20:14-22 Zec 4:6,7 12:7,8 Ro 11:33-36
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Isaiah 55:8-9 For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.

## THE PARADOXES OF GOD

A **paradox** is defined as a seemingly absurd or self-contradictory statement that is actually true. It is a statement that contradicts itself. In the Bible spiritual paradoxes abound and confound the secular unsaved mind. In fact the wise of this world consider believers to be fools for Christ's sake.

**Because the foolishness** (literally "the foolish thing" - see Morris' note below) **of God** (cf **wisdom of God** in v24) **is wiser than men** - ([Wuest](#)) - "because that aforementioned folly of God." NLT = "This foolish plan of God." Of course God is not foolish, but to the spiritually deaf and dumb natural man the Cross appears absolutely absurd. In a sense, the world and it's wisdom are what are absurd to God and are "upside down." When the Cross is proclaimed it turns the world's wisdom right side up (so to speak) for those who have ears to hear (aka "**the called**").

**Leon Morris** has an interesting point on **foolishness of God** noting that "Paul does not use the word **foolishness**' ([moria](#)) as in 1 Cor 1:18, 21, 23, but says '*the foolish thing*' ([moros](#)), i.e. the cross. So with the **weakness**; the cross is 'the weak thing' of God that is stronger than anything man can produce." ([Full text of 1 Corinthians TNTC Leon Morris](#))

**Thomas Schreiner** - Human beings reject the message of the cross as foolish and weak, but what is foolish in human eyes is actually the wisdom of God. Similarly, what is weak according to human standards—the cross—actually unleashes the power of God, and hence God's 'weak thing' is stronger than anything human beings can muster. ([1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

**Foolishness** (3474)([moros](#)) conveys the root meaning of one who is mentally dull, sluggish in understanding, foolish, morally worthless, useless, silly or stupid (English = "moron"). Absurd (ridiculously unreasonable, unsound, or incongruous). Jesus used **moros** giving us a good description of foolish when he declared "Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish ([moros](#))

man who built his house on the sand." (Mt 7:26+) That is foolish! All 12 NT uses - Mt 5:22; Matt. 7:26; Mt 23:17; foolish describes "foolish" virgins in Mt. 25:2, 3, 8; 1 Co. 1:25; 1 Co. 1:27; 1 Co. 3:18; 1 Co. 4:10; 2 Ti 2:23 = foolish speculations; Titus 3:9 = foolish controversies.

**MacArthur** explains **foolishness** and **weakness of God** this way - Paul is also saying that, even if God could possess any sort of foolishness, it would be wiser than man's greatest wisdom. And if God were able to have any weakness, it would be stronger than the greatest strength men could muster. ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**William MacDonald** says it this way "Actually there is neither foolishness nor weakness with God. But the apostle is saying in verse 25 that what seems to be foolishness on God's part, in the eyes of men, is actually wiser than men at their very best. Also, what seems to be weakness on God's part, in the eyes of men, turns out to be stronger than anything that men can produce." ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**And the weakness ([asthenes](#)) of God** (cf **power of God** in v24) **is stronger than men** - The [omnipotent](#) God is not weak and His Gospel has the supernatural power to break the bondage of sin and the devil and set men free so that they are free indeed.

The **foolishness of God** and **weakness of God** was manifest to fallen men in the Cross of Christ, but was the ultimate divine paradox for it reflected

**God's infinite wisdom** and **omnipotent power** conquering sin and death!

**A T Robertson** on **weakness of God** - The Cross seemed God's defeat (ED: WHICH IS LOGICAL BECAUSE DEATH MARKS THE END FOR MORTAL MEN). It is conquering the world and is the mightiest force on earth. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Leon Morris** - The sign-seeking Jews were blind to the significance of the greatest sign of all when it was before them. The wisdom-loving Greeks could not discern the most profound wisdom of all when they were confronted with it. [Full text of 1 Corinthians TNTC Leon Morris](#))

**Spurgeon** - And yet you will perceive that the church is always looking after wise men after the flesh. If it can find these, it immediately cringes before them, and asks these learned doctors to teach it something more than the simplicities of Christ. This is the old disease of the church. May God cure her yet. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Alan Johnson** - The last verse (25) in this section further compares "God's foolishness" ("the foolish thing," i.e., the crucified Christ), and "God's weakness" (the self-effacing way of the cross) with "human wisdom" (the self-promoting, status building, rhetoric enhancing way of the world) and "human strength" (self-achievement, boastful success and self-help) that breeds the "party splits" in the community. God's great act of self-effacement on the cross outshines anything attained or attainable by human wisdom or strength. ([1 Corinthians](#))

#### **Related Resource:**

- [Spiritual Paradox in the Christian Life](#)

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### **Surprised by Wisdom**

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! Romans 11:33

Today's Scripture & Insight: 1 Corinthians 1:18–25

"It seems like the older I get, the wiser you become. Sometimes when I talk to my son I even hear your words coming out of my mouth!"

My daughter's candor made me laugh. I felt the same way about my parents and frequently found myself using their words as I raised my kids. Once I became a dad, my perspective on my parents' wisdom changed. What I once "wrote off" as foolishness turned out to be far wiser than I had thought—I just couldn't see it at first.

The Bible teaches that "the foolishness of God is wiser" than the cleverest human wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:25). "For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness" of the message of a suffering Savior to [rescue "those who believe"](#) (v. 21).

God always has ways of surprising us. Instead of the triumphant king the world would expect, the Son of God came as a suffering servant and died a humbling death by crucifixion—before He was raised in unsurpassable glory.

In God's wisdom, humility is valued over pride and love shows its worth in undeserved mercy and kindness. Through the cross, our unconquerable Messiah became the ultimate victim—in order to "save completely" (Hebrews 7:25) all who place their faith in Him!

By: James Banks ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Sign in to track your progress!

When have God's ways left you confused? How does it help to know His ways are not our own?

Heavenly Father, I praise You for the wisdom of Your ways. Help me to trust You and walk humbly with You today.

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## Amateur Christians

June 28, 2008

Read: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

The love of Christ compels us. —2 Corinthians 5:14

The word amateur has been redefined over the years and has lost the luster of its original meaning. The English word comes from the Latin word *amare*, which means "to love." An amateur is someone who does something simply for the love of it.

In today's way of thinking, receiving payment moves you into a "higher" category—that of a professional. The reasoning is that if someone is willing to pay for your service, you must be really good. An amateur, therefore, is considered to have less skill or talent.

As I read my Bible, however, I see a different hierarchy of values. During the time of Jesus, the religious professionals were using their position to gain power and prestige for themselves, not to serve the people. Jesus didn't choose those who were wise, mighty, or noble by human standards (1 Cor. 1:26). He sought those willing to follow Him and be trained for loving service.

In today's world, the scene is much the same. God is still looking for "amateurs," those who will serve the Lord for the sheer love of it. Compelled by our love for Jesus, may we, like the disciples and apostles before us, proclaim the love of God for the world by following Christ's example of loving and serving others. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

### I love Thee because Thou hast first loved me

And purchased my pardon on Calvary's tree;  
I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow:  
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.  
—Featherstone

One proof of our love for God is our love for our neighbor.

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**D A Carson** has a convicting comment on this verse in his book ["The Cross and Christian Ministry"](#): Leadership Lessons from 1 Corinthians."

Western evangelicalism tends to run through cycles of fads. At the moment, books are pouring off the presses telling us how to plan for success, how "vision" consists in clearly articulated "ministry goals," how the knowledge of detailed profiles of our communities constitutes the key to successful outreach. I am not for a moment suggesting that there is nothing to be learned from such studies. But after a while one may perhaps be excused for marveling how many churches were planted by Paul and Whitefield and Wesley and Stanway and Judson without enjoying these advantages. Of course all of us need to understand the people to whom we minister, and all of us can benefit from small doses of such literature. But massive doses sooner or later dilute the gospel. Ever so subtly, we start to think that success more critically depends on thoughtful sociological analysis than on the gospel; Barna becomes more important than the Bible. We depend on plans, programs, vision statements—but somewhere along the way we have succumbed to the temptation to displace the foolishness of the cross with the wisdom of strategic planning. Again, I insist, my position is not a thinly veiled plea for obscurantism, for seat-of-the-pants ministry that plans nothing. Rather, I fear that the cross, without ever being disowned, is constantly in danger of being dismissed from the central place it must enjoy, by relatively peripheral insights that take on far too much weight. Whenever the periphery is in danger of displacing the center, we are not far removed from idolatry.

Called of God, Christians have always fastened their confidence to the **cross of Jesus Christ**. That is why we still sing, for instance, this hymn from the Middle Ages: (Following version sung by **Fernando Ortega**)

[O sacred head! sore wounded,](#)

With grief and shame bowed down,  
Now scornfully surrounded  
With thorns, Thy only crown!  
How pale art Thou with anguish,  
With sore abuse and scorn!  
How does that visage languish,  
Which once was bright as morn!

What Thou, my Lord, hast suffered,  
Was all for sinners' gain:  
Mine, mine was the transgression,  
But Thine the deadly pain:  
Lo! here I fall, my Saviour;  
'Tis I deserve Thy place;  
Look on me with Thy favour,  
Vouchsafe to me Thy grace.

What language shall I borrow  
To thank Thee, dearest friend,  
For this, Thy dying sorrow,  
Thy pity without end?  
O make me Thine for ever;  
And should I fainting be,  
Lord, let me never, never  
Outlive my love to Thee!

Be near me when I'm dying,  
O show Thy cross to me,  
And, for my succour flying,  
Come, Lord, and set me free!  
These eyes, new faith receiving,  
From Jesus shall not move;  
For he who dies believing,  
Dies safely through Thy love.

[Bernard de Clairvaux](#) (1090–1153)

**1 Corinthians 1:26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;**

Amplified - For [simply] consider your own call, brethren; not many [of you were considered to be] wise according to human estimates and standards, not many influential and powerful, not many of high and noble birth.

Wuest - For, take a good look at your divine summons [into salvation], brethren, that not many wise men according to human standards, not many men of dignity and power, not many who are of royal or aristocratic lineage are given that divine summons [into salvation], ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:26 Think about the circumstances of your call, brothers and sisters. Not many were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were born to a privileged position.

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:26 Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:26 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.

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:26 Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:26 Βλ πετε γ ρ τ ν κλ σιν μ ν, δελφο , τι ο πολλο σοφο κατ σ ρκα, ο πολλο δυνατο ,

ο πολλο εγενε ς·

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:26 for see your calling, brethren, that not many are wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:26 For behold your calling, brethren, that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:26 Brothers, consider your calling: Not many are wise from a human perspective, not many powerful, not many of noble birth.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:26 Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:26 Consider your own calling, brothers. Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:26 Consider, brothers, how you were called; not many of you are wise by human standards, not many influential, not many from noble families.

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:26 Brothers and sisters, consider what you were when God called you to be Christians. Not many of you were wise from a human point of view. You were not in powerful positions or in the upper social classes.

- **that:** 1Co 1:20 2:3-6,13 3:18-20 Zep 3:12 Mt 11:25-26 Lu 10:21 Joh 7:47-49 Jas 3:13-17
- **not many mighty:** Lu 1:3 Lu 18:24,25 Joh 4:46-53 19:38,39 Ac 13:7,12 Acts 17:34 Php 4:22 Jas 1:9-11 James 2:5 2Jn 1:1
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Matthew 11:25-26+ At that time Jesus said, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. 26"Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.

James 2:5+ Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the **poor** of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?

### NOT MANY OF YOU CORINTHIANS ARE "GREAT"

**Johnson** - To further bolster his case against human wisdom and achievement as the way for Christians to express their faith in Christ, Paul points to the social composition of the redeemed community in Corinth as it was when he wrote. (Ibid)

Queen Elizabeth I, who was a Bible-believing, Christ-loving Christian said that she never read this verse without stopping and praising God for the fact that she, cultured and a person of power and noble birth, was among the "not many" who were called by God for salvation.

**Ray Stedman** - The Greek custom of philosophizing about everything had penetrated the church and they were dividing into various factions, following certain men, quarreling, boasting, dividing, glorying in men's ability and men's power, men's insight and men's wisdom. To answer this the apostle shows us how God works. He sets it in very simple contrast and he uses these Corinthians themselves as his Exhibit A. He says, "Look at yourselves, consider your own call, look what has happened in your own life." He then points out two rather obvious, but very important, facts they were evidently overlooking in their thinking. (Not many wise, mighty, noble). ([1 Corinthians 1:26-31 God's Tools](#))

**Arnold** - In 1 Cor 1:26-31 Paul is going to show human wisdom had nothing to do with the salvation of the Corinthian believers. These Christians were saved by the sovereign grace of God, a way which is totally foreign and contrary to human reason. In fact, it was not human wisdom but divine wisdom which saved them. To prove his point that human wisdom, works or acts have no saving merit, Paul used the Corinthians as "Exhibit A." He said, "Look at yourselves; consider how you were called. Take a good look at

your own lives; see what kind of people you are by nature and social standing, and this will prove to you that human wisdom does not save." The word "**called**" is the key to this section. This is God's sovereign or efficacious call to salvation which deals with the **divine side of salvation**. To appreciate the full impact of our salvation, we must understand God called us to be saved. He took the initiative. Our salvation is gracious and supernatural from beginning to end. The Bible declares that all men are dead in trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1+) and are incapable of understanding divine truth (1 Cor 2:14+, cf Lk 24:45+). How then can men believe in Christ, love God and become Christians? They must be called by God (cf Jn 6:44, 65). The Cross will always be foolishness to a person until God irresistibly calls him or her to Christ. ([1 Corinthians 1:26-31 Gods Call To Salvation](#))

**For** (gar) (term of explanation) - **S Lewis Johnson** says "**For** introduces the "unanswerable [argumentum ad hominem](#)" (ICC, p. 24). "Why, look at your own ranks, my brothers," is Moffatt's rendering. A glance at their own church would prove Paul's point, for there were not many of the wise and mighty among them." Guzik quipped Paul was saying in essence "Look at yourselves. You're no great bargain."

**Consider** ([blepo](#)) **your calling** ([klesis](#)), **brethren** - ([Wuest](#))- "For, take a good look at your divine summons [into salvation], brethren." Some interpret **consider** ([blepo](#)) as a command in the [present imperative](#) and others as simply present tense, but either way Paul is calling for them to keep these truths in their remembrance (a good practice for all of us for our high calls comes with a holy purpose!) **Brethren** is [adelphos](#) and is the fourth use in chapter 1 (1 Cor 1:1, 10, 11, 26). Paul keeps reminding them of their **calling**, which is when they became believers (v21), and is a truth which clearly emphasizes God's sovereign initiative in salvation of spiritually dead sinners. This is the sixth mention of the great doctrinal truth of calling (1 Cor 1:1 = [kletos](#) 1 Cor 1:2 = [kletos](#) 1 Cor 1:9 = [kaleo](#) 1 Cor 1:24 = [kletos](#) 1 Cor 1:26). Why does he do this? At the risk of being too simplistic, the saints at Corinth were thinking wrongly and too highly of themselves (cf arrogant 1 Cor 4:6, 18, 19, 5:2, 8:1 13:4). Paul wanted them to remember that God had called them out of spiritual darkness and into the light and fellowship with Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:9). They had been headed straight for Hell but God called them securely to Heaven, a truth which should serve to shelve their (and our) pride for they did nothing to merit God's gracious heavenly call!

"I deserve to be damned; I deserve to be in hell; but God interfered!"

-- Dying remark of John Allen of the Salvation Army,

**Arnold** - Notice that Paul was speaking to "**brethren**," those who love the Lord and have respect for scripture. The sovereignty of God in salvation is primarily a Christian family truth to cause us to **brethren** appreciate our salvation in Christ. The truths of an efficacious call, divine predestination and sovereign election cannot be understood or appreciated by the non-Christian. In scripture there are **two kinds of calls**. The **general call** goes out to all, inviting them to believe in Christ and be saved. There is the [efficacious call](#) of a person to salvation through Christ. This call comes when one hears the message of Christ and the Holy Spirit enlightens the mind, jiggles the will and moves the emotions so that a person trusts in Christ as Savior and Lord. The [efficacious call](#) is referred to here in 1 Cor 1:26, and it is this call that makes Christianity supernatural from beginning to ending. ([1 Corinthians 1:26-31 Gods Call To Salvation](#))

**MacArthur** has an interesting thought - Paul possibly went over the membership of the Corinthian church in his mind as he wrote verse 26. He reminded them that they had very few who were famous, wealthy, highly educated, powerful, or influential when they believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is likely that, when they became Christians, they lost a great deal of the prestige, influence, and income they did have ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Johnson** - God did not call them to be his people because they were acclaimed, influential or elite in the eyes of the world. Why would they now want to make social status the criterion of spirituality and create factions around their self-achieved status improvement? ([1 Corinthians](#))

**Utley** - This passage was not meant to be a put down to the early church and its leaders, but an affirmation of the love and power of God. It was meant to shatter the pride of this arrogant church. The early church was made up mostly of the "have nots" of society. However, one of the factions in Corinth was apparently made up of Roman patrons and the culturally elite. By using these who have no worldly status, God magnifies His power. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**That there were not many wise** ([sophos](#)) **according to the flesh** ([sarx](#)) - Notice he does not say "not any" but "**hot many**." **According to the flesh** reflects the world's human (imperfect) standards (cf "worldly wisdom"), which are far different than God's (perfect) standard. Paul is reminding the saints of Corinth that when God called most of them out of spiritual darkness and death they were not from the upper echelons of society in brain power, political power or social power. The wise, mighty and noble are not interested in the foolishness of the Cross, for they are focused on all the things they possess in this world. They think the Cross is for losers, when paradoxically the Cross is for the only ones who in the end will be "winners" (sinners made winners at the Cross!) They were not called by God based on any merits or prestige they may have with other men, because basically they did not have any merits or prestige. The point is that God saved them in spite of who they were (or perhaps better "who they weren't!"). As Jesus said ""It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." (Mt 10:25+).



In God's service, our greatest **ability** is our avail-**ability**!

Dear follower of Jesus, your Owner, are you available to Him for His use?

As an aside Paul is describing human attributes/accolades (wisdom, power, nobility) that effectively impede or prevent fallen men from falling on their face before the cross. This speaks to me for I was a successful, well-off physician at age 39 when God called me out of darkness (My Testimony). I was the proverbial "camel" that the Holy Spirit "threaded" through the eye of God's "salvation needle." (cf Acts 13:7,12+ Acts 17:34+, cf Sosthenes and Crispus who had been chief rulers in the synagogue. Erastus was city treasurer.)

**ILLUSTRATION - THE RICH YOUNG RULER** - Luke 18:18-27+ A ruler questioned Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 19 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone. 20 "You know the commandments, 'DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.'" 21 And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth." 22 When Jesus heard this, He said to him, "One thing you still lack; sell all that you possess and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." 23 **But when he had heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich.** (cf Mt 19:22) 24 And Jesus looked at him and said, **'How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God! 25 "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."** 26 They who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" 27 But He said, **"The things that are impossible with people are possible with God."** (Mk 10:27+)

**Comment** - He wanted eternal life but not at the expense of his riches and reputation. And so we see 1 Cor 1:16 played out in some many lives around us in wealthy America. Just look at Jesus' ministry as the prototype -- the elites for the most part rejected Him, but the social outcasts and downtrodden were open to His message of Good News. Things have not changed beloved. Share the Gospel with your wealthy, successful friends and praise God if one of them receives Jesus as Lord and Savior, for you have just witnessed an incredible miracle!

#### Related Resources:

- [1 Corinthians 1:26-29 Why Did God Choose the "Foolish Things of the World to Shame the Wise"?](#)- Question/Answer from John MacArthur
- [1 Corinthians 1 Conversions of the Rich and Famous](#) - Question/Answer from John MacArthur

**Arnold - Not many** of these kinds of upper-class people are called because they see no need for a Savior from sin as they exalt themselves in their own efforts and attainments. Paul's point was that the things which elevate men in the world, knowledge, influence and rank, are not the things which motivate God to call men to salvation. Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the **poor**" (Lk. 4:18+). The Apostle James taught the same truth: "Has not God chosen those who are **poor** in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him" (Jas. 2:5+)?...The privileged classes are less likely to admit they are sinners and need someone to save them. They want to save themselves by working their way to heaven, but they cannot do it. God calls the sinner not the righteous. He chooses to work His marvels through people who are, from a human viewpoint, the most unpromising. He takes hell-deserving sinners and makes them trophies of His grace, transforming them into the image of Christ. This is contrary to all human logic and reasoning. ([1 Corinthians 1:26-31 Gods Call To Salvation](#))

**Craig Blomberg** makes an interesting point - "Of course, it is possible to be rich and Christian, but frequently at the times the church has been least compromised with culture and politics, the majority of believers have not come from the upper classes of the world. From the pre-Constantinian era to the Radical Reformation, from religiously motivated immigration to America in the past centuries to the rapid spread of Christianity in the Two-Thirds World today, this trend has proved surprisingly recurrent. For it is precisely the well-to-do who are often likely not to sense any need for God, because they believe they can buy or manipulate their way into meeting all their needs" Conversely, Scripture nowhere guarantees salvation for all people under a certain socioeconomic level. But it does consistently reflect God's special concern for the poor, oppressed, and marginalized people of the world. James 2:5 parallels 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 in pointing out the sociological makeup of much of early Christianity. But when God "chose the poor" they were also "those who loved him," who recognized their need for help and their personal inadequacy and hence turned to the true and living God. One of the key Hebrew terms for "poor," the anawim, combines precisely these two elements—material poverty and spiritual piety. Historically, Christians have had to guard against the twin errors of spiritualizing "the poor," as if they could include the materially wealthy, and of politicizing the term, as if salvation could be claimed apart from explicit faith in Christ. (NIV Application Commentary - [1 Corinthians](#))

**Lowell Johnson** - God's Calling is not According to Intelligence. Why? Because those who are wise after the flesh have a tendency to think independently of God. Greek culture placed high value on learning and wisdom; yet, as you look around, most saved folks don't fit the category of "wise according to the flesh". Many who fit in the category "wise according to the flesh" reject the gospel of Christ because their worldly wisdom is too great a barrier for faith. When I think of foolish people that God uses, I think of [Billy Sunday](#) (or [Wikipedia](#)), one of the greatest who ever lived, but was certainly no brilliant intellectual. He was not highly educated. He would sometime break a chair over the pulpit in illustrating a point. Other times he would glide across the stage as if he were sliding into home plate to illustrate going to heaven. One biographer called Billy Sunday, "God's joke on the ministry." One night he began to preach "hell hot, heaven sweet, sin black, judgment sure and Jesus saves," and the power of God fell. Hundreds came during the invitation. One who came forward that evening was an old man with a long white beard. He was standing near the platform when he gave his heart to Jesus. For some reason, Billy was fascinated by the man's beard and couldn't take his eyes off it. Finally, temptation got the better of him. He went over to the edge of the platform, bent over, grabbed that man's beard, pulled it and said, "Honk, honk!" Yet, God used him to win over a million souls to Jesus. (Billy Sunday quote - "I want to preach the gospel so plainly," he said, "that men can come from the factories and not have to bring a dictionary.") (Sermon)

**Wiersbe** - The Corinthians had a tendency to be "puffed up" with pride (1 Cor. 4:6, 18-19; 5:2). But the Gospel of God's grace leaves no room for personal boasting. God is not impressed with our looks, our social position, our achievements, our natural heritage, or our financial status. Note that Paul wrote **many**, not **any**. In the New Testament, we do meet some believers with "high social standing," but there are not **many** of them. The description Paul gave of the converts was certainly not a flattering one (1 Cor. 6:9-11). ([Be Wise \(1 Corinthians\)](#));

**Not many mighty** ([dunatos](#)) - This refers especially to those with political or military power. They appear **mighty** to other men, but not to God.

**Lowell Johnson** - The mighty like to work independently of God. The word "mighty" means "dynamic, powerful or popular people. The mighty are often too self-reliant. They have difficulty humbling themselves before God or anyone else. (Sermon)

**Not many noble** ([eugenes](#)) - Paul alludes to those who were "**high born**," aristocratic, of noble pedigree, affluent, great wealth and influence, and high social standing. As Spurgeon said "There are a few such. The [Countess of Huntingdon](#) who had been converted under the street preaching of Roland Hill, a flaming evangelist, used to say that she was very thankful for that letter "**m**," for it does not say "not **any** noble," but "not **many** noble are called." One thinks of Jesus' words "Blessed are the poor ([ptochos](#) - beggars, paupers) in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." (Mt 5:3+). For this truth, we praise God, for most of us were far from being in the "noble" class (yours truly included!)

**D A Carson** - This is a point that our generation cannot afford to ignore. Why is it that we constantly parade Christian athletes, media personalities, and pop singers? Why should we think that their opinions or their experiences of grace are of any more significance than those of any other believer? When we tell outsiders about people in our church, do we instantly think of the despised and the lowly who have become Christians, or do we love to impress people with the importance of the men and women who have become Christians? Modern Western evangelicalism is deeply infected with the virus of triumphalism, and the resulting illness destroys humility, minimizes grace, and offers far too much homage to the money and influence and "wisdom" of our day. ([The Cross and Christian Ministry](#)- Leadership Lessons from 1 Corinthians)

**ILLUSTRATION "SAVED BY THE LETTER 'M'"** - A noblewoman once told the great Methodist preacher John Wesley that she was saved by an "**m**." When Wesley asked for an explanation, she pointed him to 1 Corinthians 1:26, which in the King James Version reads, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not **many** wise men after the flesh, not **many** mighty, not many noble, are called." "God did not say 'Not **any** noble are called,' she explained, "but 'Not many noble.' **Were it not for that letter, I might be lost.**" -Today in the Word!

**MacArthur** points out that "God's wisdom is a kind of paradox. In human thinking, strength is strength, weakness is weakness, and intelligence is intelligence. But in God's economy some of the seemingly strongest things are the weakest, some of the seemingly weakest things are the strongest, and some of the seemingly wisest things are the most foolish. The paradox is not by accident but by God's design." ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Johnson** adds that "God in fact called them to himself in that very low social condition, those who were not worthy of the world's attention (foolish, weak, lowly, despised nobodies), in order to show his love for the unworthy, the undeserving, those who could not claim any self-help or status (from the world's viewpoint). In a deliberate strategy God chose these "nobodies" for shaming the wise, the strong, the "somebodies" by human standards. So the grace message of the cross is contradictory to the Corinthian believers' seeking now to be upwardly mobile for spiritual reasons....In Roman society your value was determined by your education, wealth and breeding. Paul shows that you cannot become an insider in the world's status game by becoming a Christian, but you can become an insider in God's eyes by finding your status in Christ ([1 Corinthians](#))

**Ben Witherington** says that "Salvation in Christ is not a human self-improvement scheme, but a radical rescue from a form of slavery out of which one cannot earn or buy one's way. Paul must establish this theology of grace at the very outset of his arguments because it is on the basis of that theology that he will undercut all factors that promote factionalism. Grace is not only the great unifier but also the great leveler in the Christian community, which if taken seriously nullifies the importance of all cultural devices used to create social stratification. It can also stifle rivalries about and between Christian teachers, since it makes possible the rejoinder, "was Paul (or Apollos or whoever) crucified for you?" ([Commentary](#))

**Related Resource:**

- Spiritual Paradox in the Christian Life

**Spurgeon** - And, at this day, it is a great snare to the Church when she glories in her education, when she puts any confidence in the learning, or the wit, or the eloquence of her ministers, when she relies in any degree whatever upon an arm of flesh. The sword of the Spirit, if it be put into a velvet and embroidered scabbard, is all the worse for that; pull it out. The Word of God cannot cut while it is hampered with human wisdom and human learning half as well as when its keen edge alone is used. It is the Lord, by the power of his Spirit, who must make the Word effectual. Oh, for more faith and truer faith in him! ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Consider** (991)(**blepo**) basically means to have sight, to see, to look at, then to observe, to discern, to perceive with the eye, usually implying more especially an intent, earnest or special contemplation. It can also be used for intellectual or spiritual perception as in the present passage. Paul's uses in the letters to Corinth - 1 Co. 1:26; 1 Co. 3:10; 1 Co. 8:9; 1 Co. 10:12; 1 Co. 10:18; 1 Co. 13:12; 1 Co. 16:10; 2 Co. 4:18; 2 Co. 7:8; 2 Co. 10:7; 2 Co. 12:6;

**Calling** (2821)(**klesis** from **kaleo** = to call. See [note](#) on "the called" **kletos** in 1 Cor 1:1) means a call and was used for an invitation to a banquet. In the NT the word is used metaphorically of the call or invitation to come into the kingdom of God with all its privileges. Here "**klesis**" refers to the divine call by which Christians are introduced into the privileges of the Gospel. God's invitation (**klesis**) to man to accept the benefits of His salvation is what this calling is all about. It is God's first act in the application of redemption according to His eternal purpose (Ro 8:28). Used 11x in NT - Ro 11:29; 1 Co. 1:26; 1 Co. 7:20; Eph. 1:18; Eph. 4:1; Eph. 4:4; Phil. 3:14; 2 Thess. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:9; Heb. 3:1; 2 Pet. 1:10

**Wise** (4680) see [sophos](#) = clever and skillful in ability to use acquired knowledge, but sadly not knowledge about God.

**Mighty** (1415)(**dunatos** from **dunamai** = referring to power one has by virtue of inherent ability and resources; see study of **dunamis**) means powerful, able, strong. **Able** describes that which has sufficient or necessary power, means, skill, or resources to accomplish an objective.

**Noble** (2104)(**eugenes** from **eu** = well + **genos** = family, race) means literally of high or noble birth in this context. In Acts 17:11 eugenes figuratively describes those who were noble minded, noble sentiments, character, morals. **Eugenes** is the source of the English word "[eugenics](#)" (eugenes - well-born, from eu- + genes = born) which is the study of methods of improving the quality of the human race, especially by selective breeding! The Nazi physicians took this horrible practice to demonic levels!

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**Jack Arnold** - Election to salvation by God is a prominent biblical doctrine and it must be dealt with by every Christian. The fact of God's election is not easy to understand, but when properly understood it will bring great peace and comfort and confidence to God's children. We must never view election as a cold theological doctrine. The Greek literally says, "God chose you for Himself to be saved." He is personally interested in us. He owns us by His own loving choice. For sure, there is an element of mystery between God's sovereignty in election and man's responsibility to believe in Christ, but if we are saved, it is because God elected us to salvation. Election cannot be understood unless it is coupled with the truth of total depravity. The Bible declares all men are sinners and deserve hell. Why? People, in their natural state, do not want Christ. They are like a barrel of apples which has been in the hot sun for several months. All are rotten; there is not a good one in the bunch; all must be buried because of their condition and stench. All men are sinners and deserve nothing from God. Why God picked some out of this rotten barrel of mankind for salvation is one of the great mysteries of the scripture. If we are Christians, we can simply raise our eyes and voices to God and say, "Thank you, God, for choosing me!"

"I'm glad God chose me before the foundation of the world for salvation. For had He waited until I was born to choose me, I'm afraid He would have never chosen me, considering what a depraved, debased sinner I am" (Charles Spurgeon). ([1 Corinthians 1:26-31 Gods Call To Salvation](#))

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## A Dime Among Pennies

Read: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

We are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. —Romans 8:16-17

One day, educator and comedian Sam Levinson was standing with a group of men who seemed to tower above him. Someone asked, “Sam, don’t you feel strange surrounded by so many tall people?” He replied, “Yes, I do. I feel like a dime among a lot of pennies!”

This reminded me that we who are Christians may not be very “tall” in the eyes of some, and in fact the world often looks down on us. But in God’s sight we are of great worth!

The apostle Paul wrote, **“Not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise”** (1 Cor. 1:26-27).

We may not hold positions of prestige and power in society, but in Christ we are given a position far superior to those held by the “big shots” of this world. Because of our relationship with Christ, we have great value. Paul said in Romans 8 that “we are children of God ... and joint heirs with Christ” (vv.16-17).

Regardless of how much abuse the world may heap on us or how small we may seem compared to others, we are precious in the sight of God. Because of Christ, we have immeasurable worth. ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Not many wise has the dear Savior chosen,  
Not many noble shall enter His rest;  
Foolish, despised ones are heirs to His mercy—  
Simple in faith, by His grace they are blest.  
—HGB

The world may discount you, but in God's eyes you are priceless.

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## Forlorn Hope

John Clough was called to the harvest field while working in one. He had grown up without religious inclinations, and in college seemed resistant to evangelistic efforts by friends. His roommate tried to read the Bible and pray with him each evening, but John, growing exasperated, drew a chalk line down the middle of the room, forbidding prayer or Scripture on his side of the line.

But the Holy Spirit worked on his heart, and one evening, unable to study and overwhelmed with his need, he crossed the line and knelt by his roommate. Shortly after, hearing a missionary sermon, John wondered if God would have him overseas, and he applied. He was atop a four-horse reaper breaking off grain when a farmhand approached him with a letter from Boston. Clough wiped away his sweat and tore open the news from the Baptist Foreign Mission Board. “What do you know!” he shouted. “They want me to go to India as a missionary!”

Missions officials wanted to send him to “Forlorn Hope”—Telugu, India—where 17 years of painful, plodding effort had produced no apparent results. On November 30, 1864 Clough and his wife sailed from Boston on a tiny ship, hardly seaworthy, called the James Guthrie. It rolled and pitched its way across the ocean, finally limping into India the following April. John, leaping into service, was immediately confronted with a dilemma. The higher caste of Indians refused to attend church with the lower caste and outcasts. **Praying for wisdom, Clough randomly opened his Bible and read in 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 of God choosing the lowly. Across the room at the same moment, his wife randomly opened her Bible to the same place. Clough, amazed, took it as divine guidance. He announced that all were welcome in his church, that he would not accept a segregated congregation.** He started preaching, and conversions multiplied. Fifteen months later two Indian preachers stood in a river and began baptizing the converts. When they grew weary, other preachers relieved them. By five o’clock 2,222 had been baptized, and the baptisms continued for two more days. (On This Day - Robert Morgan)

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## God Looked Down ... 1 Co 1:26,27,

It had started on a bus in England. Gladys Aylward, a poorly educated 28-year-old parlormaid, was reading about China and the need for missionaries there; and from that moment, China became her life and passion. She applied to a missionary agency only to be turned down. Crushed with disappointment, she returned to her small servant’s room and turned her pocketbook upside down.

Two pennies fell on top of her Bible. "O God," she prayed, "here's my Bible! Here's my money! Here's me!" Gladys began hoarding every cent to purchase passage to China. She knew she couldn't afford to travel by ship, so she decided to go overland by train right across Europe and Asia, though it meant slicing through a dangerous war zone on the Manchurian border. On October 15, 1932 a little bewildered party gathered at London's Liverpool Street Station to see Gladys Aylward off for China. The journey was hair-raising and nearly cost her life. But eventually Gladys reached China, showing up at the home of an older missionary who took her in—but didn't quite know what to do with her.

And yet—to make a long story short—Gladys Aylward eventually became one of the most amazing single woman missionaries of modern history. Her missions career was so extraordinary that the world finally took notice. Her biography was made into a movie starring Ingrid Bergman. She dined with such dignitaries as Queen Elizabeth and spoke in great churches. She even became a subject of the television program "This Is Your Life."

But Gladys never grew accustomed to the limelight, for her heart was always in Asia. "I wasn't God's first choice for what I've done for China," she once said. "There was somebody else. ... I don't know who it was—God's first choice. I don't know what happened. Perhaps he died. Perhaps he wasn't willing. And God looked down ... and saw Gladys Aylward." (On This Day - Robert Morgan)

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## The Way Made Plain

February 20, 1995

Read: 1 Corinthians 1:17-31 | Bible in a Year: Leviticus 26-27; Mark 2

You see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh ... are called. —1 Corinthians 1:26

It was Abraham Lincoln who said, "God must have loved the common people, since He made so many of them." I would modify that to say, "God must have loved the common people, since He made the way of salvation plain enough to be grasped by all"—yes, even me.

One need not have a high IQ to qualify for God's favor. Nor does experiencing salvation depend on a person's ability to understand a complex philosophical presentation of religious truth. If that were necessary, few could be saved!

Receiving salvation is a matter of faith. It's believing God and accepting His Word about His Son Jesus Christ, His payment for our sins through His death on the cross, and His resurrection. It's trusting Him completely for salvation. John 1:12 tells us, "As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name."

The Bible says that the gospel "is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes" (Rom. 1:16). Whether educated or uneducated, knowledgeable or ignorant, anyone can believe. No one will be able to stand before God and say, "I'm not saved because I couldn't understand the gospel." The way has been made plain. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

A ruler once came to Jesus by night  
To ask Him the way of salvation and light;  
The Master made answer in words true and plain,  
"Ye must be born again."  
—Sleeper

Christ believed is salvation received.

**1 Corinthians 1:27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,**

Amplified - [No] for God selected (deliberately chose) what in the world is foolish to put the wise to shame, and what the world calls weak to put the strong to shame.

Wuest - but God selected out for himself those individuals among the world of sinners characterized by the aforementioned foolishness, in order that He might put to confusion those who are wise. And those individuals among the world of sinners, characterized by weakness, God selected out for himself, in order that He might put to confusion those who are characterized by strength. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:27 But God chose what the world thinks foolish to shame the wise, and God chose what



the world thinks weak to shame the strong.

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:27 Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:27 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;

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:27 ἁλ τ μωρ το κ σμου ξελ ξατο θε ς, να καταισχ ν το ς σοφο ς, κα τ σθεν το κ σμου ξελ ξατο θε ς, να καταισχ ν τ σχυρ ,

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:27 but the foolish things of the world did God choose, that the wise He may put to shame; and the weak things of the world did God choose that He may put to shame the strong;

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:27 but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong;

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:27 Instead, God has chosen what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen what is weak in the world to shame the strong.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:27 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;

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:27 Rather, God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong,

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:27 No, God chose those who by human standards are fools to shame the wise; he chose those who by human standards are weak to shame the strong,

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:27 But God chose what the world considers nonsense to put wise people to shame. God chose what the world considers weak to put what is strong to shame.

- Ps 8:2 Isa 26:5,6 29:14,19 Zep 3:12 Mt 4:18-22 9:9 11:25 Mt 21:16 Lu 19:39,40 21:15 Ac 4:11-21 6:9,10 7:35,54 17:18 Ac 24:24,25 2Co 4:7 10:4,5,10
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Cor 3:18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, he must become **foolish**, so that he may become wise.

Ephesians 1:4+ just as He **chose** ([eklego](#)) us in Him (CHRIST) before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love

### GOD'S CHOSEN: FOOLISH AND WEAK

Do you feel insignificant? Then "great," for you are in a good place to join God in His grand work. All He asks is that you believe in His Son and He will make you His masterpiece! (Eph 2:10+). As **Ray Stedman** says "if you are feeling that nobody recognizes you, you ought to rejoice that you are a Christian because power and influence are not necessary to be greatly used of God. God delights in setting aside the impressive things of men, oftentimes." ([1 Corinthians 1:26-31 God's Tools](#))

**But God** - Term of contrast. This continues the discussion of God's way of salvation, contrasting the way fallen men view the worth of mankind and the way God views mankind.

**Has chosen the foolish** ([moros](#)) **things of the world** ([kosmos](#)) **to shame** ([Kataischuno](#)) **the wise** - Amplified = "[No] for God selected (deliberately chose) what in the world is foolish to put the wise to shame" **Has chosen** ([eklego](#)) is in the aorist tense (at a



point in time) an middle voice (for Himself). In context **foolish** things refers to people that unbelievers consider to be fools (1 Cor 1:18+) because they believe a Man dying on Cross was actually God and they compounded their foolishness with the absurd belief that He actually came back to life! "He does this so the unsaved might understand that it is not human wisdom that saves, but it is a sovereign God who saves through the Cross of Christ." (Arnold) When all is said and done, those who thought these were fools with be utterly put to **shame** at the revelation of Jesus Christ (Rev 1:7+).

**Wanted: Ordinary people to do extraordinary work.**

Play and ponder the words of

[The Touch of the Master's Hand](#) by Wayne Watson

You know there's many a man with his life out of tune,  
Battered and scared with sin and he's auctioned cheap,  
To a thankless world much like that old violin,  
Oh, but then the Master comes,  
And that old foolish crowd they never understand,  
The worth of a soul and the change that is wrought,  
**Just by one touch of the Master's hand.**

The lost **world** sees believers as **foolish** because they do not know us because they do not know our Father, John writing

"**See** ([aorist imperative](#)) how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the **world** ([kosmos](#)) does not know ([ginosko](#)) us, because it did not know ([ginosko](#)) Him." (1 John 3:1+)

**William Barclay** - Somewhere about the year A.D. 178 [Celsus](#) wrote one of the bitterest attacks upon Christianity that was ever written. It was precisely this appeal of Christianity to the common people that he ridiculed. He declared that the Christian point of view was, "Let no cultured person draw near, none wise, none sensible; for all that kind of thing we count evil; but if any man is ignorant, if any is wanting in sense and culture, if any is a fool let him come boldly." Of the Christians he wrote, "We see them in their own houses, wool dressers, cobblers and fullers, the most uneducated and vulgar persons." He said that the Christians were "like a swarm of bats--or ants creeping out of their nests--or frogs holding a symposium round a swamp--or worms in conventicle in a corner of mud." (See [note in Wikipedia](#)) ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Chosen** ([1586](#)) ([eklego](#) from **ek** = out, out of, out from + **légo** = select, choose) (see also [eklektos](#)) means literally to select out, single out or choose out of. The idea in **eklego** speaks of the sizable number from which the selection is made. It implies the taking of a smaller number out of a larger. For example, in secular use, Virgil's *Eclogues* (from *eklego*) are short, selected excerpts taken from a more larger collection of poems. *Eklego* - 22x in 20v in NT - Mk. 13:20; Lk. 6:13; Lk. 9:35; Lk. 10:42; Lk. 14:7; Jn. 6:70; Jn. 13:18; Jn. 15:16; Jn. 15:19; Acts 1:2; Acts 1:24; Acts 6:5; Acts 13:17; Acts 15:7; Acts 15:22; Acts 15:25; 1 Co. 1:27; 1 Co. 1:28; Eph. 1:4; Jas. 2:5

**Grudem:** We may define **election** as follows: Election is an act of God before creation in which he chooses some people to be saved, not on account of any foreseen merit in them, but only because of his sovereign good pleasure. (See [Chapter 32 Election and Reprobation When and why did God choose us? Are some not chosen? - in online Systematic Theology](#) - scroll down to page 580)

**World** ([2889](#)) see [kosmos](#)

**Foolish** ([3474](#)) see [moros](#)

**Wise** ([4680](#)) see [sophos](#) = clever and skillful in ability to use acquired knowledge.

**ILLUSTRATION** - One of the greatest awakenings of the nineteenth century began in Cambridge University in England when D.L. Moody and his singer, Ira B. Sankey, came to that center of learning. The whole university was outraged that this **backwoods, uneducated American preacher** would dare to appear and speak in the center of culture of the English world. They well knew that he "murdered" the King's English. The students were determined to hoot him off the platform. Moody began by asking Sankey to sing. As soon as he finished, Moody stepped to the edge of the platform and, looking directly at the students who were gathered there, said, "*You gentlemen, don't ever think God don't love you, for he dd*" The students were dumbfounded by that beginning. Moody went on and in a few minutes he again said, "*Don't ever think God don't love you, for he do!*" Something about the very ungrammatical structure of these words captured them and many listened and many were converted to Christ!

**Wiersbe** - God chose the foolish, the weak, the base ("low born"), and the despised to show the proud world their need and His

grace. The lost world admires birth, social status, financial success, power, and recognition. But none of these things can guarantee eternal life. The message and miracle of God's grace in Jesus Christ utterly confounds ("puts to shame") the high and mighty people of this world. The wise of this world cannot understand how God changes sinners into saints, and the mighty of this world are helpless to duplicate the miracle. God's "foolishness" confounds the wise; God's "weakness" confounds the mighty! The annals of church history are filled with the accounts of great sinners whose lives were transformed by the power of the Gospel. In my own ministry, as in the ministry of most pastors and preachers, I have seen amazing things take place that the lawyers and psychologists could not understand. We have seen delinquent teenagers become successful students and useful citizens. We have seen marriages restored and homes reclaimed, much to the amazement of the courts. ([The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: New Testament](#))

**And God has chosen** ([eklego](#) = aorist tense middle voice) **the weak** ([asthenes](#)) **things of the world** ([kosmos](#)) **to shame** ([Kataischuno](#)) **the things which are strong** ([ischuros](#)) - Note this section emphasizes God's sovereign choosing ([eklego](#) used 3x). This is a humbling truth to prideful man. But the pride of man will be put to shame when the final curtain falls on this present evil age and these "wise" and "strong" people will be utterly and completely humiliated, disgraced and for to "blush," when they see Jesus the King of kings! And not only will they feel overwhelming shame (and fear) when they see the glorified Jesus, they will be eternally disgraced and suffer the wrath of God because they treated flippantly and rejected His gospel, His Word, and His children. Those who today stand with heads raised in snooty pride will one day bow them in disgrace before the [Great White Throne](#) where they are judged and condemned to eternal torment in [the Lake of Fire](#).

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the **GREAT** and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:11-15+)

**ILLUSTRATION** - During the Week of Champions revival, [Paul Anderson](#), at that time the strongest man in the world, was giving his testimony. In one of the isles near the platform was a young man in a wheel-chair with the glow of Christ on his face. A young man came forward and gave his heart to Jesus. When asked what Paul Anderson said that spoke to his heart, he said, "Oh, it was nothing Paul said. When I saw the glow of the Lord on the face of that man in the wheel-chair, I said that if God could put that much joy in a cripple's heart, I wanted Jesus in my life."

God usually chooses the Ordinary rather than the Outstanding;  
The Common rather than the Cultured;  
The blue collar folks rather than the blue blood folks.  
The world looks for Heroes; God seeks the Humble.  
The world looks for the Somebodies; God seeks Nobodies.

#### **Related Resources:**

- List of multiple online resources related to election
- Dr Wayne Grudem - [Chapter 32 Election and Reprobation When and why did God choose us? Are some not chosen? - in Systematic Theology](#) - scroll down to page 580)

Jesus spoke of a similar principle in Luke - "And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for **that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God**" (Luke 16:15+)

**MacArthur** - The world measures greatness by many standards. At the top are intelligence, wealth, prestige, and position—things which God has determined to put at the bottom. God reveals the greatness of His power by demonstrating that it is the world's **nobodies** that are His **somebodies**. ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**William Barclay**, "Christianity made people who were mere things into real men and women - more into sons and daughters of God; it gave those who had no respect their self-respect; it gave those who had no life, life eternal; it told men that, even if they did not matter to other men, they still mattered intensely to God. It told men who, in the eyes of the world were worthless, that, in the eyes of God they were worth the death of His only Son. Christianity was, and still is, the most uplifting thing in the whole universe." ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Weak** (772) ([asthenes](#) from **a** = without + **sthénos** = strength, bodily vigor) (See [astheneo](#) - note the concentration of asthenes/astheneo in the epistles to the Corinthians - almost 50% of NT uses) is literally

without strength or bodily vigor. **Asthenes** describes one's state of limited capacity to do or be something and is used literally of physical weakness (most of the uses in the Gospels) and figuratively of weakness in the spiritual arena (weak flesh, weak conscience, weak religious system or commandment [Gal 4:9, Heb 7:18], etc) and thus powerlessness to produce results.

Paul used this very word **asthenes** of himself writing "some say, "His letters are weighty and forceful, but his physical presence is **weak** (asthenes) and his speech is of no account." (2Co 10:10NET) Compare Paul's use of the cognate word [astheneia](#) in 2 Cor 12:9-10+ "And He (JESUS IN ANSWER TO 2 Cor 12:7-8) has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in **weakness** ([astheneia](#)). " Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my **weaknesses** ([astheneia](#)), so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with **weaknesses** ([astheneia](#)), with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. "

[David Brainerd](#) suffered and finally succumbed to tuberculosis after only a few years of ministry to the American Indians.

[Robert Murray McCheyne](#) died before his 30th birthday.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the "prince of preachers" suffered excruciating pain from gout and arthritis for most of the latter years of his adult life

**Strong** (2478) ([ischuros](#) from [ischuo](#) = to be able) is an adjective which means strong, powerful, mighty (usually referring to inherent physical strength), able, forcible. Strong, having moral power. Inherently strong. Ischuros denotes power or ability and places "stress on the actual power that one possesses rather than on the mere principle of power.

**Shame** (disgrace, put to shame) (2617) ([Kataischuno](#) from **kata** = intensifies meaning of **aischuno** = to shame) means primarily to put to shame, to humiliate, to disgrace. In the passive voice it can mean to blush with shame at one's predicament.

**Who were many of the church members at Corinth?** Paul answers in 1 Cor 6:9-11+

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 Such were some of you; but you were **washed**, but you were **sanctified**, but you were **justified** in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

**Brian Bell** comments "We've all seen art made from discards. It could be old thimbles, piano strings, rusted clock gears, bent paper clips, scratched door hinges, & cabinet knobs. Each part is virtually worthless. But the hands of a craftsman have turned the useless odds/ends into an extraordinary piece of art. God is such an artist that He can take & mold our worthless lives & turn them into priceless works of art! But Paul says sometimes we forget our "junkyard beginnings". We think God performed a great work on us because we gave Him high-quality material to work with. Out of His grace, God stoops & saves the nobodies, the nothings, the junk. Thus, the **Artist**, not the art, should get the honor/glory! ([ophia Meets Jesus](#))

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**ILLUSTRATION** - A man overheard a Christian co-worker speaking to another co-worker about Jesus. He interrupted and said, "All you Christians are brainwashed." the believer replied, "I'd say that everyone is brainwashed to some degree. But the Christian gets to chose what he wants to wash his brain with."

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**D. L. Moody** was given a note just before he preached. When he opened the note, it only had one word on it: **Fool**! Moody stood before the people and said, "I received the letters where the message was written but the person forgot to sign his name; but this is the first time I've received a letter where someone signed their name but forgot to write a message."

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**ILLUSTRATION** - During a Billy Sunday evangelistic campaign, a mentally impaired boy came faithfully each night to sing in the choir. "Joey was not very bright," said Homer Rodeheaver, the well-known song leader for Billy Sunday, "but he never missed any of our meetings and wouldn't leave until he shook my hand. Sometimes I was embarrassed by the way he constantly tailed me, and I secretly wished he'd go away."

Then one evening a man came to Rodeheaver and said, "Thank you for being kind to my son Joey. He's not right mentally, but never has he enjoyed anything so much as singing in the choir. He worked hard doing simple chores for people so he could contribute to the collection. Through his pleadings my wife and five other children came to this evangelistic campaign and have now received

Christ. Last night his 75-year-old grandfather, who has been an atheist all his life, was saved, and tonight his grandmother also came forward. Now our entire family is converted!"

Joey was one of God's faithful servants.

GOD HAD USED THE FOOLISH AMONG MEN TO HUMBLE THE WISE.

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**ILLUSTRATION** - Johnny Damon of the 2004 Boston Red Sox dubbed his own team "The Idiots." They were known for their long hair, scruffy beards, and carefree spirits. These traits stood in contrast to the clean-cut rival Yankees, who were poised to sweep Boston on their way to the World Series. But Boston's failure to come to grips with reality helped them stage one of the most improbable comebacks in baseball history—those so-called idiots won the championship! In 1 Corinthians 1:27 surprisingly, Paul used similar terminology to describe the believers in Corinth, saying they were not wise, influential, or noble. They were foolish, weak, lowly, and despised. Yesterday we studied the apparent foolishness of the Cross in a world that valued miraculous signs and logic. Today we'll examine the fact that not only was the message foolishness—the recipients of the message were fools. ([Today in the Word](#))

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## Unlikely Servants

Read: Judges 6:11-16

God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise. —1 Corinthians 1:27

We often hear people say things like: "I'm only a housewife." "I'm only a janitor." "I'm only an average student."

Underestimating one's usefulness to God is nothing new. In Old Testament times, for example, when God looked for someone to conquer the troublesome Midianites, He chose unimpressive [Gideon](#), calling him a "mighty man of valor" (Judges 6:12). [Gideon](#) responded, "How can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house" (Jdg 6:15). But God persisted, saying, "Have I not sent you? ... Surely I will be with you" (Jdg 6:14-16).

[Gideon](#) became God's man for the task, because there's no such thing as a "nobody" in His eyes. The Lord gave [Gideon](#) just 300 men to help him, rather than thousands (Jdg 7:1-7+), so that God alone would receive the glory.

The apostle Paul also taught that God chooses and uses things that the world calls foolish, weak, lowly, and despised. He shames the wise and the mighty so "that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Corinthians 1:29).

If you feel that you're "only a nobody," review God's call to Gideon. The Lord wants to use you more than you ever thought possible.

Gladly take the task God gives you,  
Let His work your pleasure be;  
Answer quickly when He calls you,  
"I am willing, Lord, use me."  
—Darch

God uses ordinary people to carry out His extraordinary plan.

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**Martyn Lloyd-Jones** - We Christians often quote 'not by might nor by power, but by my spirit saith the Lord,' and yet in practice we seem to rely upon the mighty dollar and the power of the press and advertising. We seem to think that our influence will depend on our technique and the program we can put forward and that it would be the numbers, the largeness, the bigness that would prove effective. We seem to have forgotten that God has done most of his deeds in the church throughout its history through remnants. We seem to have forgotten the great story of Gideon, for instance, and how God insisted on reducing the 32,000 men (Jdg 7:3) down to 300 (Jdg 7:6) before he would make use of them. We have become fascinated by the idea of bigness, and we are quite convinced that if we can only stage, yes, that's the word, stage something really big before the world, we will shake it and produce a mighty religious awakening. That seems to be the modern conception of authority.

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**ILLUSTRATION** - What this refers to is this very principle, that God chooses to open the mouths of children and mere striplings and use them oftentimes to do what the wise and the important have been unable to accomplish. One of the greatest awakenings of the 19th century began in Cambridge University in England when D. L. Moody and his singer, Ira B. Sankey, came to that center of learning. In 1950 when I was traveling with Dr. H. A. Ironside, I met an Episcopal rector in Virginia who had been a member of that class in Cambridge when D. L. Moody came. He told me that the whole University was outraged that this backwoods American preacher would dare to appear and speak in the center of culture of the English world. They well knew that he "murdered" the King's

English. (Somebody once said that D. L. Moody was the only man he ever heard who could pronounce Jerusalem in one syllable!) So this rector said that he and others of his classmates who were not Christians determined that when Moody spoke in the chapel at Cambridge they would hoot him off the platform.

Now, Moody began by asking Sankey to sing. (Sankey must have had a wonderful voice, because whenever he sang audiences quieted and listened to him.) As soon as he finished, Moody stepped to the edge of the platform and looking directly at the students who were gathered there, he said these remarkable words, "Young gentlemen, don't ever think God don't love you, for he do!" This young man said that he and his classmates were dumbfounded by that beginning. Moody went on and in a few minutes he again said, "Don't ever think God don't love you, for he do!" Something about the very ungrammatical structure of these words captured them. The intense earnestness of this man spoke right to their hearts, beyond all the superficial, external things. That young man said that that day he sought out Moody for a private interview, and Moody led him to Christ. A great awakening came to Cambridge University at the hands of that humble servant of God.

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## The Master's Hands

God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the . . . mighty. — 1 Corinthians 1:27

Today's Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:26-2:5

A renowned violinist announced before a concert that he would play one of the world's most expensive violins. His first composition was played flawlessly, and the audience was thrilled at the performance. After taking his bows, the musician suddenly smashed the instrument, completely demolishing it. The audience was horrified—that is, until the violinist explained that he had been playing a cheap violin. Then, picking up the expensive instrument, the virtuoso began to draw the bow across the strings. The sound was beautiful, but most of the people couldn't tell any difference between the music from the expensive violin and the cheap one. The quality of the instrument was secondary to the skill of the violinist.

It's something like that in our service for the Lord. The Master can use ordinary instruments like us. If we are yielded to Him, He will produce beautiful music through us. The apostle Paul said that "God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise" (1 Corinthians 1:27). God did so, "that no flesh should glory in His presence" (v.29).

Like that cheap violin, we can be instruments in the Master's hands to magnify the Lord and bring blessing to others. By: Richard DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Play [The Touch of the Master's Hand](#) by Wayne Watson

Lord, use me as Your instrument  
To magnify Your name;  
May Your love be my song today,  
My life Your grace proclaim.  
—Sper

God can use ordinary instruments to produce a concert of praise.

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## Flawed And Frail

God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise. — 1 Corinthians 1:27

Today's Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

One of my boyhood heroes was Davy Crockett, the "King of the Wild Frontier." I looked up to him, admiring his courage and exploits.

Years later, my brother gave me a book that traced the experiences of the real-life David Crockett. I was surprised by his humanness. The real Davy Crockett made mistakes and had serious personal problems. The book depicted him as both flawed and frail.

This was both disappointing and reassuring to me. It was disappointing because he was less than I had come to believe, but reassuring because that reality made Crockett more accessible to me—and even more of a hero.

In the Bible we see that God consistently used people who were far less than perfect. That shouldn't surprise us. God is glorified by showing Himself strong through our weaknesses. It shows us that He desires to work through our lives not because we are perfect but because He is. And since He uses weak and foolish things (1 Cor. 1:27), it means you and I are prime candidates for His work.

The Lord isn't looking for superheroes. He uses those of us who are flawed and frail, so that He can show His strength and grace. He wants those with a willing and available heart. By: Bill Crowder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

It's not in the flash of the style that you hone,  
Nor all the degrees you've compiled;  
The Savior is looking for servants who own  
The warm, willing heart of a child.  
—Gustafson

In God's service, our greatest ability is our availability.

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## **The Big Cover-Up**

God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty. —1 Corinthians 1:27

Today's Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

If we are committed to pleasing Christ, we will try to have a good testimony among unbelievers. Some Christians assume that being a good example means keeping up an appearance of strength—even when they are weak. They have the misconception that any appearance of weakness hinders their testimony. Thus begins a subtle slide to spiritual play-acting, or what I call “the big cover-up.”

When seeking to have a good testimony, we must ask whether we are trying to represent God or ourselves. And when seeking to be strong, we must ask, “In whose strength—God's or ours?”

According to Paul, the Lord enables us to testify of Him and His strength, not by despising our weakness but by using it, “that no flesh should glory in His presence” (1 Cor. 1:29).

Are unbelievers best won to Christ by “strong” people who pretend they're never weak, or by “weak” people who testify of a strength not their own? Unbelievers often say of the former, “I could never be like that.” But of the “weak” people, they more often say, “If Christ can help them, perhaps He has something for me.”

Let's honestly admit our weakness and offer it to God for His use. By: Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

My life today I yield, O Lord, to Thee,  
A channel for Thy love and grace to be;  
Use me just as Thou wilt, I humbly pray,  
To point some soul unto the living way.  
—Christiansen

To show others what Christ will do for them, show them what Christ has done for you.

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## **The Unlikely**

God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty. —1 Corinthians 1:27

Today's Scripture & Insight: 1 Corinthians 1:25-31

Fanny Kemble was a British actress who moved to America in the early 1800s and married a southern plantation owner named Pierce Butler. Fanny enjoyed the life afforded by the wealth of the plantation, until she saw the cost of that luxury—a cost paid by the slaves who worked her husband's plantations.

Having written a memoir of the cruel treatment slaves often suffered, Kemble was eventually divorced from her husband. Her writings were widely circulated among abolitionists and published in 1863 as *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1838–1839*. Because of her opposition to slavery, the former wife of a slave owner became known as “The Unlikely Abolitionist.”

In the body of Christ, God often wonderfully surprises us. He regularly uses the unlikely—people and circumstances—to accomplish His purposes. Paul wrote, “But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen” (1 Cor. 1:27-28).



This reminds us that God, in His grace, can use anyone. If we will allow His work to be done in us, we might be surprised at what He can do through us! By: Bill Crowder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

How will you let God use you today?

God desires willing hearts ready to be used.

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### **Does He Want To Use Me?**

God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty. — 1 Corinthians 1:27

Today's Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

The work of God is not done by great people but by ordinary people who are committed to Him. We may say to God, "I am nothing. I have no gifts. I often fail miserably. Do You really want to use me?"

The answer to that question is found in God's Word. He used the hesitant, inarticulate Moses to lead Israel to freedom (Ex. 3:13; 4:10). He used men of the herds and flocks, as well as fishermen and farmers to accomplish His work and record His words. A simple carpenter and a peasant girl raised His Son.

That's still the way God works. Although we have "mega-methods," mass media, and superchurches, it is ordinary people who do God's extraordinary work. A grandmother prays faithfully for her 14 grandchildren and talks to each one about trusting Christ. A clerical worker witnesses to everyone in his office. A Christian takes a meal to her unbelieving neighbors when their baby is hospitalized and assures them of her prayers.

When we ask, "Does God really want to use me?" the answer is clear. God chooses "the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty" (1 Cor. 1:27).

God has been using ordinary people like you and me for thousands of years. Why would He stop now? By: David C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Though oft our spirits long to rise  
And bask in heavenly realms above,  
The Lord has placed us here on earth  
To live for Him—to serve, to love.  
—DJD

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### **No Small Deeds**

God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty. — 1 Corinthians 1:27

Today's Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

Do you sometimes feel that your life isn't making any impact for God? I do! The human race now numbers more than 6 billion people, the majority of whom don't know Jesus. World problems are overwhelming. My praying, witnessing, and giving seem to be doing little to change our ungodly world.

Recently when I was tempted to sink into a mood of futility, I read something by Frederick Buechner that lifted my heart. Comparing the world to a great spider web, Buechner wrote, "If you touch it anywhere, you set the whole thing trembling. . . . As we move around this world and as we act with kindness, perhaps, or with indifference, or with hostility toward the people we meet, we too are setting the great spider web a-tremble. The life that I touch for good or ill will touch another life, and that in turn another, until who knows where the trembling stops or in what far place and time my touch will be felt. Our lives are linked. No man is an island."

Encouraged by Buechner's words, I returned to my seemingly small duties with new zeal. Who knows how the few souls we touch will touch others who in turn will touch still others! God uses us in our weakness and smallness to accomplish His far-reaching purposes (1 Cor. 1:26-31). By: Vernon Grounds

I cannot do great things for Him  
Who did so much for me;  
But, Lord, I'll do the little things  
In fellowship with Thee.

—Anon.

No deed is small when done for Christ.

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## Different Goals

God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise. — 1 Corinthians 1:27

Today's Scripture: 1 Cor. 1:18-31

In 1945, professional golfer [Byron Nelson](#) had an unimaginable season. Of the 30 tournaments he entered, he won an amazing 18 times—including 11 in a row. Had he chosen to, he could have continued his career and perhaps become the greatest of all time. But that was not his goal. His goal was to earn enough money playing golf to buy a ranch and spend his life doing what he really loved. So, instead of continuing on at the peak of his career, Nelson retired at age 34 to become a rancher. He had different goals.

The world may find that kind of thinking to be foolish. It doesn't really understand the heart that looks beyond trying to gain more wealth or fame to real satisfaction and contentment. This is especially true when it comes to our choice to live for Christ. But it is in the world's perception of our alleged foolishness that we might best represent the Master's different goals to this world. Paul wrote, "But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty" (1 Cor. 1:27).

A commitment to living according to kingdom values might brand us as foolish in the eyes of the world, but it can bring honor to our God. By: Bill Crowder ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

What Christ will say on judgment day  
Will finally make life's values clear;  
He'll show that we were rich or poor  
By what on earth we held most dear.  
—D. De Haancons

Core values are of no value unless they reflect God's values.

**1 Corinthians 1:28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are,**

Amplified - And God also selected (deliberately chose) what in the world is lowborn and insignificant and branded and treated with contempt, even the things that are nothing, that He might depose and bring to nothing the things that are,

Wuest - And those individuals among the world of sinners, who are not of royal or noble ancestry but belong to the common people and those who are utterly despised, God selected out for himself, the aforementioned classes of individuals looked upon as nonentities, in order that He might deprive of force, influence, and power those who think themselves to be somewhat, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, what is regarded as nothing, to set aside what is regarded as something,

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:28 God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:28 He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things--and the things that are not--to nullify the things that are,

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:28 καὶ τὰ γενεὰ τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τὰ ξουθενήματα ἐλεῖται, ὅτι μὴ ἴστανται, ἀλλὰ καταργεῖται,

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:28 and the base things of the world, and the things despised did God choose, and the things that are not, that the things that are He may make useless --

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:28 and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, yea and the things that are not, that he might bring to nought the things that are:

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:28 God has chosen what is insignificant and despised in the world-- what is viewed as nothing-- to bring to nothing what is viewed as something,

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are,

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:28 and God chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who are something,

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:28 those who by human standards are common and contemptible -- indeed those who count for nothing -- to reduce to nothing all those that do count for something,

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:28 God chose what the world considers ordinary and what it despises-what it considers to be nothing-in order to destroy what it considers to be something.

- **the base things:** Ro 4:17 2Co 12:11
- 1Co 2:6 De 28:63 Job 34:19,20,24 Ps 32:10 37:35,36 Isa 2:11,17 Isa 17:13,14 37:36 41:12 Da 2:34,35,44,45 Rev 18:17
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



## THE ANTITHESIS OF THE WISE, MIGHTY, AND NOBLE

**And the base things of the world** ([kosmos](#)) - TEV = "what the world looks down on and despises"; NJB = "those who by human standards are common and contemptible" **Base** (agenes - only here in NT) is the opposite of noble in 1 Cor 1:26 and means literally not born into a noble family, thus lowborn, insignificant, inferior, looked upon by the world as "non-existent!" It describes a person not [born with a silver spoon in their mouth](#), one who is without a lofty [pedigree](#). These are the dregs of society, the lowly, the insignificant in the eyes of men, but not in the eyes of God (cf 1 Sa 16:7)! One thinks of the sad caste system in India, where the lowest castes are truly viewed as worthless, as scum, as nothings. And not surprisingly, the most receptive to the Gospel are those in the lower castes ([see story](#) of the "untouchables" the Dalits! [Watch this heart-rending video on the Untouchable Dalits!](#))

**Utey** writes "God calls and uses those people of whom the world takes no notice!"

**And the despised** ([exoutheneo](#)) **God has chosen** ([eklego](#) aorist tense middle voice), **the things that are not**- God's election has purpose here which is to effectively show that the traits the world values are of no value in His plan of redemption. **The despised** are those viewed with or treated with contempt and scorn. These are those about whom others say they will never [amount to anything](#). They are looked down upon by others and written off as [no account](#) nobodys. In other words those who see themselves as superior show by their attitude or manner of treatment that those socially lower than themselves have no worth or merit in their opinion. The NLT has a good paraphrase of **the thing that are not** rendering it "things counted as nothing at all." These are the "forgotten ones," those who are completely overlooked, the ultimate "nobodies." As Lowell Johnson says "There is no greater demonstration of the power of God than when God takes **nobodies** and makes **somebodies** out of them."

"God chose nothings to make nothings out of the somethings.

He chose nobodies to help the somebodies to realize they are nobodies too."

We know from history that many of the first century believers were among the **the base things of the world** for many were slaves

(cf Php 4:22+), **despised** among men but welcomed with open arms by Christ followers. They were considered as [schattel](#), as living tools by the wealthy, but living souls by the worshipers of Jesus! They had no earthly hope, could be bought and sold on a whim, were regularly beaten (often to the point of death), and even their children were not their own. And yet many among these **despised** and hopeless souls found a heavenly hope in the life transforming Gospel of Jesus Christ.

**THOUGHT** - You may have been told that you would never amount to anything (**ED**: MY STEP-FATHER NEVER USED MY GIVEN NAME, CALLING ME "BOY" AND TELLING MY MOTHER "HE WILL NEVER AMOUNT TO ANYTHING." - SEE MY TESTIMONY). Maybe you have grownup feeling that you were worthless. I have good news for you. God can use you. (Lowell Johnson)

**ADDENDUM** - If you have been verbally abused by a parent or some other authority figure, telling you that will never amount to anything, then you need to seriously consider the transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, because Paul writes that when you hear and receive the Gospel and are born again you become God's "**workmanship** (masterpiece! - [poiema](#)), created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." (Eph 2:10+).

#### Related Resource:

- Believers Are God's Masterpiece, His Poiema

**Chosen** (1586) see note above on [eklego](#)

**Despised** (1848) ([exoutheneo](#) from **ek** = an intensifies + **outhenéo** = bring to naught) is a strong verb which means to despise someone on basis that it is worthless or of no value. To consider as nothing. To treat someone contemptuously as if completely worthless, despicable, or of no account.

**So that** (term of purpose) **He may nullify** ([katargeo](#)) **the things that are** - **NLT** picks up the idea rendering it "used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important." **The things that are** refers to those things to which the lost world ascribes value (wisdom, power, noble birth). They regard these things of "value." God says they are without efficacy and totally useless in regard to bringing about the salvation of one's soul. God will nullify, , cancel, bring to naught this worldly wisdom.

**Wiersbe** - God chose the foolish, the weak, the base ("low born"), and the despised to show the proud world their need and His grace. The lost world admires birth, social status, financial success, power, and recognition. But none of these things can guarantee eternal life. (BEC)

**Nullify** (do away, nullify, void, cancel,) ([2673](#)) ([katargeo](#) from **kata** = intensifies meaning + **argeo** = to be idle or inactive from **argos** = ineffective, idle, inactive from **a** = without + **érgon** = work) literally means to reduce to inactivity. The idea is to make the power or force of something ineffective and so to render powerless, reduce to inactivity. Uses in the letters to Corinth - 1 Co. 1:28; 1 Co. 2:6; 1 Co. 6:13; 1 Co. 13:8; 1 Co. 13:10; 1 Co. 13:11; 1 Co. 15:24; 1 Co. 15:26; 2 Co. 3:7; 2 Co. 3:11; 2 Co. 3:13; 2 Co. 3:14;

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## Serving the Smallest

God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things. 1 Corinthians 1:28

Today's Scripture & Insight: Luke 14:15–23

The video showed a man kneeling beside a busy freeway during an out-of-control brush fire. He was clapping his hands and pleading with something to come. What was it? A dog? Moments later a bunny hopped into the picture. The man scooped up the scared rabbit and sprinted to safety.

How did the rescue of such a small thing make national news? That's why. There's something endearing about compassion shown to the least of these. It takes a big heart to make room for the smallest creature.

Jesus said the kingdom of God is like a man who gave a banquet and made room for everyone who was willing to come. Not just the movers and shakers but also "the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame" (Luke 14:21+). I'm thankful that God targets the weak and the seemingly insignificant, because otherwise I'd have no shot. Paul said, "God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things . . . so that no one may boast before him" (1 Corinthians 1:27–29).

**How big must God's heart be to save a small person like me!** In response, how large has my heart grown to be? I can easily tell, not by how I please the "important people," but by how I serve the ones society might deem the least important.

By: Mike Wittmer

What types of people do you have a hard time valuing? In what ways might God want you to change that?

God, as Your servants please help us to value others the way You do, regardless of who they are or what they do.

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**Bishop Simpson** - In some of the great halls of Europe may be seen pictures not painted with the brush, but mosaics, which are made up of small pieces of stone, glass, or other material. The artist takes these little pieces, and, polishing and arranging them, he forms them into the grand and beautiful picture. Each individual part of the picture may be a little worthless piece of glass or marble or shell; but, with each in its place, the whole constitutes the masterpiece of art. So I think it will be with humanity in the hands of the great Artist. God is picking up the little worthless pieces of stone and brass that might be trodden under foot unnoticed, and is making of them His great masterpiece.

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**D L Moody** - NOTICE that all the men whom Christ called around Him were weak men in a worldly sense. They were all men without rank, without title, without position, without wealth or culture. Nearly all of them were fishermen and unlettered men; yet Christ chose them to build up His kingdom. When God wanted to bring the children of Israel out of bondage, He did not send an army; He sent one solitary man. So in all ages God has used the weak things of the world to accomplish His purposes.

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**Spurgeon - Morning and Evening** —1 Corinthians 1:28

Walk the streets by moonlight, if you dare, and you will see sinners then. Watch when the night is dark, and the wind is howling, and the picklock is grating in the door, and you will see sinners then. Go to yon jail, and walk through the wards, and mark the men with heavy over-hanging brows, men whom you would not like to meet at night, and there are sinners there. Go to the Reformatories, and note those who have betrayed a rampant juvenile depravity, and you will see sinners there. Go across the seas to the place where a man will gnaw a bone upon which is reeking human flesh, and there is a sinner there. Go where you will, you need not ransack earth to find sinners, for they are common enough; you may find them in every lane and street of every city, and town, and village, and hamlet. It is for such that Jesus died. If you will select me the grossest specimen of humanity, if he be but born of woman, I will have hope of him yet, because Jesus Christ is come to seek and to save sinners. Electing love has selected some of the worst to be made the best. Pebbles of the brook grace turns into jewels for the crown-royal. Worthless dross he transforms into pure gold. Redeeming love has set apart many of the worst of mankind to be the reward of the Saviour's passion. Effectual grace calls forth many of the vilest of the vile to sit at the table of mercy, and therefore let none despair.

Reader, by that love looking out of Jesus' tearful eyes, by that love streaming from those bleeding wounds, by that faithful love, that strong love, that pure, disinterested, and abiding love; by the heart and by the bowels of the Saviour's compassion, we conjure you turn not away as though it were nothing to you; but believe on him and you shall be saved. Trust your soul with him and he will bring you to his Father's right hand in glory everlasting.

**1 Corinthians 1:29 so that no man may boast before God.**

Amplified - So that no mortal man should [have pretense for glorying and] boast in the presence of God.

Wuest - to the end that humanity may not in a single instance boast in His presence. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:29 so that no one can boast in his presence.

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:29 As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:29 so that no one may boast before him.

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:29 πως μ̑ καυχ̑σται π̑ σα σ̑ ρ̑ξ̑ ν̑ π̑ιον το̑ θεο̑ .

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:29 that no flesh may glory before Him;

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:29 that no flesh should glory before God.

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:29 so that no one can boast in His presence.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:29 so that no one might boast in the presence of God.

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:29 so that no human being might boast before God.

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:29 so that no human being might feel boastful before God.

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:29 As a result, no one can brag in God's presence.

BBE 1 Corinthians 1:29 So that no flesh might have glory before God.

- 1Co 1:31 4:7 5:6 Ps 49:6 Isa 10:15 Jer 9:23 Ro 3:19,27 4:2 15:17 Eph 2:9
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Jeremiah 9:23-24 (alluded to here, but quoted in 1 Cor 1:31) - Thus says the LORD, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; 24 but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the LORD.

## GOD CONFOUNDS THE BOASTFUL PRIDE OF MEN

**so that** - Term of purpose. Purpose of God's choosing the lowliest, most humiliated, and least esteemed of humanity.

**Wiersbe** - And why does God reveal the foolishness and the weakness of this present world system, even with its philosophy and religion? "That no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor. 1:29). Salvation must be wholly of grace; otherwise, God cannot get the glory. It is this truth that Paul wanted to get across to the Corinthians, because they were guilty of glorying in men (1 Cor. 3:21). If we glory in men—even godly men like Peter and Paul and Apollos—we are robbing God of the glory that He alone deserves. It was this sinful attitude of pride that was helping to cause division in the church. (BEC)

**no man may boast before God** - KJV = "no flesh." ESV = "no human being." Compare Jeremiah 9:23 "'Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom.'" Those who are not wise, who are weak in the world's eyes and of low social class know they have no reason to boast in the sight of God.

It is not what I have, but Christ who has me  
It is not what I can give, but in Christ who gave Himself upon the Tree  
It is who He is, and only for His glory  
That we may have the honor and blessing to proclaim His story

**Johnson** - This is God's ultimate purpose in the proclamation of the gospel of the crucified Christ: to overthrow all human claims of achievement, all boasting in one's human success and acclaim in participating in God's wisdom and power (salvation), to highlight the glory of grace as sheer gift.

**Arnold** - Election makes man **nothing** and God **everything**, and this is why God elects some to salvation. Election makes God Creator and man the creature. Not one single boast can be made by man if he is saved, for it all came by God's grace. God will not have any man who is a braggart or a boaster about what he has done for God. No man can stand in God's sight and attribute his conversion to his own wisdom, birth, might, station in life, good works, human will or even his faith. Salvation is all of God; it is supernatural; it is gracious. While it is true that God chooses some to salvation, let us remember that in our evangelism we are not trying to bring men to Calvinism but to Christ, and then, hopefully, we can bring them to an understanding that salvation is the direct result of God's sovereign purposes. ([1 Corinthians 1:26-31 Gods Call To Salvation](#))

There were two students, Dick, and Tom. Dick was a strong Calvinist who was trying to reach Tom for Christ. In his witness, Dick, told Tom all about the Five Points of Calvinism, the Reformed faith and tradition, giving him the whole Calvinistic ball of yarn. Finally, Tom came to Dick with great seriousness of purpose and said, "Dick, I'm ready to make the big decision. I have decided to ask John Calvin into my heart!"

Paul echoes this truth in his famous passage on salvation...

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, **so that no one may boast** ([kauchaomai](#)). (Eph 2:8-9+)

**Spurgeon** - To bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence. This is what flesh always likes to do.



Proud flesh we speak of, and all flesh is such. Flesh has a great tendency to swell, to corrupt; it is easily puffed up; but God will not have it so. What is flesh to God? Did not he make all things? Shall the thing formed boast itself against the Former? ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Boast** (exult, glory) ([2744](#)) see note below on [kauchaomai](#). See also "[Boasting](#)" (below)

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**NO BOASTING PLEASE** - Those in the church at Corinth had nothing to be proud about ... to boast about. They were all just common, everyday sinners. I like the fable about the two geese that were about to begin their annual fall migration south when a frog entreated them to take him with them. The geese said they would be willing to do so if he could devise a means of conveyance. So the frog produced a long stalk of grass and got each goose to take an end in his mouth while he grasped the middle with his mouth. The geese took flight and the frog held on as they began their long journey south. They made great progress on the trip when they were noticed by some men below. The men loudly expressed their admiration at such ingenuity and asked who had been clever enough to come up with this plan. The proud frog opened his mouth to say , " I did" and fell to his death. The moral of the fable is simple: When you have a good thing going, keep your mouth shut!

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## Casting Shadows

Read: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

No flesh should glory in His presence. —1 Corinthians 1:29

Legend has it that Michelangelo painted with a brush in one hand and a candle in the other to prevent his shadow from covering his masterpiece in progress.

That's the kind of attitude we should adopt if we are serious about wanting to display the masterpiece of God's glory on the canvas of our lives. Unfortunately, we tend to live in a way that draws attention to ourselves—our cars, our clothes, our careers, our position, our cleverness, our success. And when life is all about us, it's hard for people to see Jesus in us. Jesus saved us to be reflections of His glory (Rom. 8:29), but when we live for ourselves, our shadow gets cast on the canvas of His presence in us.

When the believers in Corinth were feeling too full of themselves, Paul warned them "that no flesh should glory [boast] in His presence" (1 Cor. 1:29), and reminded them of what Jeremiah said, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor 1:31; Jer. 9:24).

Think of your life as a canvas on which a picture is being painted. What would you rather have people see: the masterpiece of the presence of Jesus or the shadow of your own profile? Don't get in the way of a great painting in progress. Live to let others see Jesus in you. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

My life is a painting created by God,  
And as such I've nothing to boast;  
Reflecting the image of Christ to the world  
Is what I desire the most.  
—Sper

A Christian's life is the canvas on which others can see Jesus.

**1 Corinthians 1:30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, Who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,**

Amplified - But it is from Him that you have your life in Christ Jesus, Whom God made our Wisdom from God, [revealed to us a knowledge of the divine plan of salvation previously hidden, manifesting itself as] our Righteousness [thus making us upright and putting us in right standing with God], and our Consecration [making us pure and holy], and our Redemption [providing our ransom from eternal penalty for sin].

Wuest - But as for you, out from Him as a source are you in Christ Jesus who became wisdom for us from God, both righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:30 He is the reason you have a relationship with Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:30 God has united you with Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made him to be wisdom

itself. Christ made us right with God; he made us pure and holy, and he freed us from sin.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:30 ξ α το δ με ς στε ν Χριστ η σο , ς γεν θη σοφ α μ ν π θεο , δικαιοσ νη τε κα γιασμ ς κα πολ τρωσις,

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:30 and of Him ye -- ye are in Christ Jesus, who became to us from God wisdom, righteousness also, and sanctification, and redemption,

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption:

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:30 But it is from Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became God-given wisdom for us-- our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God-- and righteousness and sanctification and redemption--

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:30 He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:30 It is due to him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:30 It is by him that you exist in Christ Jesus, who for us was made wisdom from God, and saving justice and holiness and redemption.

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:30 You are partners with Christ Jesus because of God. Jesus has become our wisdom sent from God, our righteousness, our holiness, and our ransom from sin.

- **in:** 1Co 12:18,27 Isa 45:17 Joh 15:1-6 17:21-23 Ro 8:1 12:5 16:7,11 2Co 5:17 12:2 Eph 1:3,4,10 2:10
- **God:** Ro 11:36 2Co 5:18-21
- **wisdom:** 1Co 1:24 12:8 Pr 1:20 2:6 8:5 Da 2:20 Lu 21:15 Joh 1:18 8:12 14:6 Joh 17:8,26 2Co 4:6 Eph 1:17-19 3:9,10 Col 2:2,3 3:16 2Ti 3:15-17 Jas 1:5
- **righteousness:** Ps 71:15,16 Isa 45:24,25 54:17 Jer 23:5,6 33:16 Da 9:24 Ro 1:17 Ro 3:21-24 4:6,25 5:19,21 2Co 5:21 Php 3:9 2Pe 1:1
- **sanctification:** 1Co 1:2 6:11 Mt 1:21 Joh 17:17-19 Ac 26:18 Ro 8:9 Ga 5:22-24 Eph 2:10 5:26 1Pe 1:2 1Jn 5:6
- **redemption:** 1Co 15:54-57 Ho 13:14 Ro 3:24 8:23 Ga 1:4 3:13 Eph 1:7 4:30 Col 1:14 Titus 2:14 Heb 9:12 1Pe 1:18,19 Rev 5:9, 14:4
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## Related Passages

Ephesians 2:4-5, 8-9+ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, **5even when we were dead** in our transgressions, **made us alive together with Christ** (by grace you have been saved), (2:8-9) For **by grace** you have been saved through faith; and that **not of yourselves**, it is the gift of God; 9 **not as a result of works**, so that **no one may boast**.

Romans 11:33-36+ Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! 34 For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? 35 Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? 36 **For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.**

Ephesians 1:17-19+ (I PRAY) that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit (or Spirit) of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened (PERFECT TENSE SO COULD READ "YOUR HEART HAVING BEEN ENLIGHTENED IN

THE PAST"), so that you will know (GREEK VERB = BEYOND A SHADOW OF A DOUBT) what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His **power** toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the **working** of the **strength** of His **might** (NOTE IT TAKES PAUL 4 GREEK WORDS ON POWER TO DESCRIBE THE INDESCRIBABLE **SURPASSING GREATNESS!**)

Romans 1:17+ For in it (Ro 1:16+) the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

Colossians 1:14+ in Whom we have redemption ([apolutrosis](#)), the forgiveness ([aphesis](#)) of sins.

Titus 2:14+ Who (WHO IS THIS?) gave Himself for (HUPER = IN OUR PLACE = SUBSTITUTION) us to redeem ([lutroo](#)) us from ([apo](#) - OUT OF) every (HOW MANY?) lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession (WHOSE ARE WE?), zealous for good deeds (WHY ARE WE HIS?).

Revelation 5:9+ And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased ([agorazo](#)) for God with Your blood (1Pe 1:18,19+) men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation (see Rev 7:9+).

## **SALVATION IS GOD'S DOING FROM START TO FINISH**

**But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus - By His doing** is literally "out of Him." **You** refers to the saints at Corinth. Paul wants them to understand that their status as the called, the chosen, the set apart in Christ Jesus (1Cor 1:1-2) has nothing to do with who they were, what they did, etc. They were **in Christ Jesus** because God willed that they be chosen and called to salvation. That puts a lid on any and all boasting. They had absolutely nothing to boast about in regard to their salvation. Jonah was correct when he said "Salvation is from the Lord." (Jonah 2:9). If it is by His doing "**I will not boast in anything...except Him!**"

### **How Deep The Father's Love**

([Play this version sung with an angelic voice](#))

How deep the Father's love for us  
How vast beyond all measure  
That He should give His only Son  
To make a wretch His treasure  
How great the pain of searing loss  
The Father turns His face away  
As wounds which mar the Chosen One  
Bring many sons to glory

Behold the man upon a cross  
My sin upon His shoulders  
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice  
Call out among the scoffers  
It was my sin that held Him there  
Until it was accomplished  
His dying breath has brought me life  
I know that it is finished

**I will not boast in anything  
No gifts, no power, no wisdom  
But I will boast in Jesus Christ  
His death and resurrection  
Why should I gain from His reward?  
I cannot give an answer  
But this I know with all my heart  
His wounds have paid my ransom**

**In Christ Jesus** (1 Cor 1:2, 4, 30) means God supernaturally placed them into the sphere of Christ (seelocative of sphere), into an eternal covenant with Him, in oneness with Him (see "Oneness of Covenant" and additional [Oneness Notes](#)), in fellowship with Him (1 Cor 1:9+), all the result of God's sovereign [election](#) and [effectual calling](#) of sinners out of the "cesspool" of Corinth and into the

consecration of Christ. For more discussion of **in Christ** see [preceding discussion of sanctified in Christ](#).

**Wiersbe** applies this truth to the problem of divisions in Corinth - Since every believer is [in Christ](#) and he has all that he needs, why compete with each other or compare yourselves with each other? It is the Lord who has done it all! The spiritual blessings that we need are not abstractions that elude our grasp; they are all in a Person, Jesus Christ. He is our wisdom (Col. 2:3), our righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21), our sanctification (John 17:19), and our redemption (Rom. 3:24). Actually, the emphasis here is that God shows His wisdom by means of the righteousness, sanctification, and redemption that we have in Christ. ([The Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Alan Johnson** on **in Christ** - To be in Christ is not a mere mystical experience; it is the objective reality of having been united to Christ by the Holy Spirit and thus sharing in his resurrected life, the new creation (2 Cor 5:17) and the new community that is his body (1 Cor 12:12–13). ([Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

#### Related Resources:

- See [in Christ](#) and [in Christ Jesus](#)

**Ray Ortlund** writes

We're in Him the way a baby's in a womb—but better.  
We're in Him the way a moth is in a chrysalis—but better.  
We're in Him the way a deep-sea diver's in his diving suit—but better.  
We're in Him the way birds are in the air, or fish are in the sea—but better.

**Utley** on **by His doing** - This is literally “*out of Him*,” which is a Greek idiom expressing the [First Cause](#), the Prime Mover. The Father sent it, Jesus brought it, and the Spirit energized it. What follows is a list of God's gifts to believers through Christ. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

**Pritchard** on **by His doing** - “It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus.” It's not your wisdom or your intellect or your memorized Bible verses that brought you to Jesus. And you are not a Christian because you are a good person or a church member or because your father was a preacher and your mother was a Sunday School teacher. Salvation is of the Lord. God wants us to know that he is the reason we came to Christ.

**Ray Stedman** - God sets aside the wisdom, the pride, and the boasting of man because it is based upon an illusion, a fantasy, that men have in themselves power to act. Paul then sets forth for us in another beautiful passage the secret of true wisdom. What is it? It is the ability to recognize that though you may have little of what the world thinks it takes, if you have Jesus, and have learned to count on his power moment by moment, you have the secret of true success. Now, many Christians know that in their minds, but they do not act on it when the moment for action comes, and, therefore, they act like anybody else. The whole purpose of the Scriptures is to teach us to walk in a different way, to live by a different power, and to do so with respect to everything we do. The simplest tasks are to be done in the power of Christ. ([1 Corinthians 1:26-31 God's Tools](#))

**Wayne Barber** on **by His doing** - The little word *ek* (OUT) is really “out of Him you are in Christ.” It is because of Him that you are in Christ. When we look at this verse on salvation and what we have in Jesus Christ, we begin to see the wisdom of boasting only in God. We don't ever want to boast again in man because we realize now that in Him is all the aspects of our salvation. We are in Him, not by our own **doing**. It is by God's plan and by God's grace and by what God has done for us. Don't ever attach yourself to man. A cult is always centered around a man or a person. (1 Corinthians 1:30-31)

**Who became to us wisdom ([sophia](#)) from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption** - Amplified - “Whom God made our Wisdom from God, [revealed to us a knowledge of the divine plan of salvation previously hidden, manifesting itself as]” Col 2:3+ says in Christ “are hidden all the treasures of **wisdom** and knowledge.” We have divine **wisdom** because we are in Christ. “This **wisdom** is ours right now but we must claim and use it by faith. This is a type of wisdom the world knows nothing about. It is wisdom that causes us to look at all of life from a divine viewpoint.” (Arnold) “These four qualities belong together; they both characterize Christ himself and are imparted to his people.” (Johnson)

**Johnson** - The new **wisdom from God** is Jesus Christ himself, who has become for Christian believers their righteousness, holiness and redemption...These realities reverse our low estate in social terms of the world; instead of **weakness** there is now **righteousness** (acquittal), instead of being **despised** there is **holiness** (acceptance into God's intimate fellowship), and instead of **nothings** (nobodies) we become the **redeemed**, holy people of God. Glorifying in these divine gifts is the only “boasting” of any ultimate value. ([1 Corinthians](#))

This passage is one of the beautiful descriptions of our Lord Jesus Christ. He mentions **wisdom** first because that was the attribute so prized by the Greeks. Paul is saying their Source of true wisdom is from on high in the form of a Person, Christ Jesus. It was

from God indicating it was His sovereign pleasure to give them this divine wisdom.

The scientist can merely tell us the "how" of things but the Christian knows the "why" for he has the wisdom from God.

**And righteousness - Amplified** = "[thus making us upright and putting us in right standing with God]," **Righteousness** describes the standing or status of these sinful saints (divisions, immorality, lawsuits, etc) before God, a status only obtained from and found in Christ, the Righteous One. When we are justified by faith, God declares us righteous (our position forever in Christ), doing so at a moment in time. **Righteousness** in simple terms describes all that God is, all that He commands, all that He demands, all that He approves, all that He provides through Christ as effected by His Spirit. When one believes in Christ, he is immediately justified (DECLARED RIGHTEOUS) by faith, declared righteous and clothed with the righteousness of Christ (cf Gal 3:27+).

**Jack Arnold on righteousness** - This is positional **righteousness** not experiential and is given to the Christian at the moment of conversion. We actually receive the righteousness of Christ and on the basis of this righteousness (which we do not feel or experience) we are declared righteous before God (justification). This is a word used in a court when someone who is guilty is cleared of charges by the judge. This righteousness allows God to declare a person righteous in His sight and this makes him or her acceptable to God. The unsaved person thinks he has to work for righteousness and do things which will impress God because he feels guilty. But the Bible says Christ is our righteousness. So often Christians do not understand positional righteousness and they still try to impress God so He will accept them. Our new wisdom is that Christ is our righteousness and we are acceptable to God because of Him, not because of ourselves. "God made him (Christ) who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him (Christ) we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21+). ([1 Corinthians 1:26-31 Gods Call To Salvation](#))

**John Bunyan**, author of Pilgrim's Progress said,

"My righteousness has been in Heaven for 1800 years.  
Christ is my righteousness."

Psychoanalysts try to tell us how to be right with each other but only Christ Jesus shows us how to be right with God and when we are right "vertically," we are much more likely to be right "horizontally" (with our fellow man, our spouse, etc).

**Righteousness** (1343) ([dikaosune](#) from [dikaios](#) = just, righteous = root idea of conforming to a standard or norm) is derived from a root word that means "straightness." It refers to a state that conforms to an authoritative standard or norm and so is in keeping with what God is in His holy character. Righteousness is a moral concept. God's character is the definition and source of all righteousness. God is totally righteous because He is totally as He should be. The righteousness of human beings is defined in terms of God's. Righteousness in Biblical terms describes the righteousness acceptable to God and thus which is in keeping with what God is in His holy character. Rightness means to be as something or someone should be. In short, the righteousness of God is all that God is, all that He commands, all that He demands, all that He approves and all that He provides (through faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ, the perfectly Righteous One.). In the OT God's character is described as righteous. The Mesopotamian term comes from a river reed which was used as a construction tool to judge the horizontal straightness of walls and fences. God chose the term to be used metaphorically of His own nature. He is the straight edge (ruler) by which all things are evaluated. This concept asserts God's righteousness as well as His right to judge.

**And sanctification** - NIV = "our holiness." **Sanctification** in this context is not ongoing sanctification (progressive sanctification - present tense salvation), but is the state of saints, their (our) permanent position in Christ as Paul has described in 1 Cor 1:2+ when he said the Corinthians were **sanctified** ([hagiazō](#) - [see note](#) on v2). The main idea of sanctification is those set apart from the lost and dying world, to serve the living God.

**MacArthur on sanctification** - In Christ we are set apart, made holy. We are declared righteous in Christ and are made holy in Christ. ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Sanctification** (38) ([hagiasmos](#) from [hagios](#) = holy, set apart, consecrated) is a word used "only by Biblical and ecclesiastical writings" (Thayer) and which literally means **sanctification** which includes the ideas of consecration, purification, dedication ("personal dedication to the interests of the deity" BDAG) and holiness. **Hagiasmos** was used in the Greek pagan religions to describe buildings, altars or offerings set apart for religious purposes. The object set apart was thus declared sacred, holy, devoted to religious purposes. It applied also to the worshippers. They were set apart persons, thus religious devotees of the temple. The dominant idea of **sanctification** ([dictionary discussion](#)) is separation from the secular and sinful and set apart for the sacred, (specifically in the NT) for God's special use (cp 2Ti 2:21, 22+), all made possible by the atoning work of Christ and the provision of His Spirit.

There are 2 general meanings of **sanctification** - (1) All believers are sanctified by the Spirit [in Christ](#), and this is their position forever. "That Christ is made sanctification to believers implies that they are thus set apart to God in contrast to their former condition of alienation from God. It is not a process but a fact." (Vine)(2) **Sanctification** is also used of the Spirit enabled process (experiential in contrast to positional) by which the one in Whom we live and Who lives in us (i.e., Christ, the Spirit of Christ - cp Jn 14:20, Col 1:27+, Ro 8:9+) progressively becomes more and more manifest in our daily conduct (cp 2Co 4:10, 11, 2 Cor 2:14-16, Ro 8:29+). This is also known as progressive sanctification or present tense salvation.

**Hagiasmos** in 10v - Rom. 6:19; Rom. 6:22; 1 Co. 1:30; 1 Thess. 4:3; 1 Thess. 4:4; 1 Thess. 4:7; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 12:14; 1 Pet. 1:2

2 Thessalonians 2:13+ But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through **sanctification** ([hagiasmos](#)) by the Spirit and faith in the truth.

1 Peter 1:2+ according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the **sanctifying work** ([hagiasmos](#)) of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

Paul links **righteousness** with **redemption** in Ro 3:24+ declaring we are "**justified** ([dikaioo](#) - DECLARED RIGHTEOUS) as a gift by His grace through the **redemption** ([apolutrosis](#)) which is in Christ Jesus;"

**And redemption** - In simply terms this describes the fact that believers are set free from the tyranny of our flesh and the devil. We now belong to the Lord. We have been purchased by the payment of Jesus' precious blood out of slavery to our old masters, sin and Satan, and are now the prized possessions of our new Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, forever and ever. Amen. Purchased slaves can now boast in their new Master! Redemption describes the price that had to be paid with the blood of Christ to bring sinners into a state of righteousness and sanctification.

**Ralph Earle** - Godet defines "redemption" as "our complete and final deliverance" (cf. Rom. 8:18-30). One could almost suggest that we find here the "three works of grace" in salvation: justification, sanctification, and glorification. The first two are available to us in this life; the third will come in the next.

And so in the context of divisions, the mention of these great truths should show them how shallow is their belief or allegiance to a man (whether Paul, Apollos or Cephas). These truths should cause the saints at Corinth to glory in the Lord not in a particular spiritual leader, no matter how gifted or talented. And the same principle applies to Christians today.

**Wiersbe** adds that the saints at Corinth had "ignored the fact that they were called into a wonderful spiritual fellowship with the Lord and with each other. Instead, they were identifying with human leaders and creating divisions in the church. Instead of glorifying God and His grace, they were pleasing themselves and boasting about men." ([The Wiersbe Bible Commentary](#))

**Redemption** (629)([apolutrosis](#) from **apo** = marker of dissociation or separation + **lutroo** = to redeem <> from [lutron/lytron](#) = ransom <> from **lúo** = loosen what is bound, loose any person tied or fastened - WE WERE FAST BOUND BY SIN AND SATAN!) is literally the act of buying back of a slave or captive through payment of a ransom and hence releasing them or setting them free. It is the payment of a price to **ransom** ([lutron/lytron](#) = money for a ransom = price paid for a slave set free by the one who bought him), a letting go of someone (breaking the shackles that bound them) after the ransom has been paid (cf 1 Pe 1:18-19+)! To **release** (from the power and authority of someone, spiritually speaking from Sin, Satan). To **buy back** or to **deliver** one from a situation from in which one is powerless to liberate themselves (DEAR "SET FREE" BELIEVER, READ THAT AGAIN! YOU WERE **POWERLESS** AGAINST SIN! IT WAS YOUR HARSH TASKMASTER!) or for which the penalty was so costly that they could never hope to pay the ransom price. For believers this glorious **redemption** in Christ is in time and for eternity! That should make us all shout "Hallelujah!" **THOUGHT** - Are you living like one Christ has been set free from the shameful shackles of sin, or are you still allowing Sin to place the shackles back on your hands by committing habitual sin? Just wondering (and asking myself also!) **Apolutrosis** is used 10 glorious times in NT all except Heb 11:35 referring to the redemption provided by and in Christ. -

- Lk. 21:28+ = your **redemption** (REDEEMER - cf Lk 21:27) is drawing near (now for us His soon return! cf Lk 2:38+ we need godly Anna's attitude!);
- Ro 3:24 = justified as a gift by His grace through the **redemption** which is in Christ Jesus;;
- Ro 8:23 = waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the **redemption** of our body (OUR GLORIFIED BODY - REDEMPTION IS PAST TENSE AND FUTURE TENSE!);



- 1 Co. 1:30;
- Eph. 1:7 = In Him we have **redemption** through His blood (THE PURCHASE PRICE), the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace;
- Eph. 1:14 = The Holy Spirit "is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the **redemption** of God's own possession (GLORIFICATION)
- Eph. 4:30 = sealed for the day of **redemption** (GLORIFICATION);
- Col. 1:14 = in CHRIST we have **redemption**, the forgiveness of sins (NOTE THIS "DEFINITION" OF REDEMPTION = FORGIVENESS OF SINS!)
- Heb. 9:15 = a death has taken place (CHRIST CRUCIFIED) for the **redemption** of the transgressions;
- Heb. 11:35 not accepting their **release** (of the OT martyrs who refused to redeem themselves from torture by denying God)

**ILLUSTRATION** - An uncle took his young nephew to swim in the ocean when the boy was suddenly attacked by a shark – biting him so hard it completely severed his leg. With great courage the uncle grabbed a baseball bat, jumped into the water with the shark, and clubbed it until the shark released his nephew's detached leg! The uncle then picked up his nephew and his severed leg and raced to the hospital. Doctors successfully reattached the leg and his nephew was able to walk again. This provides a picture of redemption: winning back what was "lost"! Infinitely greater is our redemption by Christ so we can regain what we have forfeited by our sins! Christ won this back at Calvary by the price of His own blood. Eph 1:7." (Gary Hill)

A dignified looking lady once approached the great preacher Dr. G. Campbell Morgan and said, "Dr. Morgan, I don't like to hear about the blood. It is repulsive to me and offends my esthetic nature." Dr. Morgan replied, "I agree with you that it is repulsive, but the only thing repulsive about it is your sin and mine." It is repulsive to man, but it is through His blood that we have **redemption**.

**Spurgeon** - The figure of **redemption** is very simple, and has been very frequently used in Scripture. When a prisoner has been taken captive, and has been made a slave by some barbarous power, it has been usual, before he could be set free, that a ransom price should be paid down. Now, we being, by the fall of Adam, prone to guiltiness, and, indeed, virtually guilty, we were by the irreproachable judgment of God given up to the vengeance of the law; we were given into the hands of justice; justice claimed us to be his bond slaves for ever, unless we could pay a ransom, whereby our souls could be redeemed. We were, indeed, poor as owlets, we had not wherewith to bless ourselves. We were, as our hymn hath worded it, "bankrupt debtors;" an execution was put into our house; all we had was sold; we were left naked, and poor, and miserable, and we could by no means find a ransom; it was just then that Christ stepped in, stood sponsor for us, and, in the room and stead of all believers, did pay the ransom price, that we might in that hour be delivered from the curse of the law and the vengeance of God, and go our way, clean, free, justified by his blood. (Spurgeon's sermon [Justification by Grace](#))

**Spurgeon** - In fact, we have everything in Christ; we have in his prophetic office **wisdom**, in his priestly office **righteousness** and **sanctification**, and in his royal office, in which he paid the price of our salvation, we have **redemption**. Here is room for glorifying, and it is our duty to glory in God. Let us do so more and more!....In this extraordinarily comprehensive text, observe, first, that the apostle here attributes the fact that we are **in Christ Jesus** to the Lord alone; he shows that there is a connection between our being as Christians and the love and grace of God in Christ. This is our spiritual existence. Then, second, Paul goes on to write of our spiritual wealth, which he summed up under four words—"wisdom ... righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." Paul declared that Christ is to us all these four things. Third, Paul closed the chapter by telling us where our glorying ought to go—it should return to the Source of our spiritual existence and heavenly wealth: "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

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**Spurgeon - Morning and Evening** - Man's intellect seeks after rest, and by nature seeks it apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. Men of education are apt, even when converted, to look upon the simplicities of the cross of Christ with an eye too little reverent and loving. They are snared in the old net in which the Grecians were taken, and have a hankering to mix philosophy with revelation. The temptation with a man of refined thought and high education is to depart from the simple truth of Christ crucified, and to invent, as the term is, a more intellectual doctrine. This led the early Christian churches into Gnosticism, and bewitched them with all sorts of heresies. This is the root of Neology, and the other fine things which in days gone by were so fashionable in Germany, and are now so ensnaring to certain classes of divines. Whoever you are, good reader, and whatever your education may be, if you be the Lord's, be assured you will find no rest in philosophizing divinity. You may receive this dogma of one great thinker, or that dream of another profound reasoner, but what the chaff is to the wheat, that will these be to the pure word of God. All that reason, when best guided,

can find out is but the A B C of truth, and even that lacks certainty, while in Christ Jesus there is treasured up all the fulness of wisdom and knowledge. All attempts on the part of Christians to be content with systems such as Unitarian and Broad-church thinkers would approve of, must fail; true heirs of heaven must come back to the grandly simple reality which makes the ploughboy's eye flash with joy, and gladdens the pious pauper's heart—"Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." Jesus satisfies the most elevated intellect when he is believably received, but apart from him the mind of the regenerate discovers no rest. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." "A good understanding have all they that do his commandments."

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**Philpot - Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.** God has made Christ all these to his people. He has set him up as their eternal Head, made him the Bridegroom of their souls, that out of his fullness they may all receive. Then, just in proportion as they learn these two lessons--what *they* are, and what *he* is--they receive him into their hearts actually what he is to them in the purpose of God.

Am I a fool? Do I feel it and know it? Have I had painful experience of it, so that all my creature wisdom is turned into one mass of foolishness? Do I catch by the eye of faith a view of the risen Mediator, "Immanuel, God with us," and see what he is made of God to us? The moment my eye sees him as "WISDOM," that moment a measure of divine wisdom flows into my conscience.

Am I polluted and defiled throughout? Have I no righteousness of my own? Is all my obedience imperfect? Am I unable to fulfill the requirements of God's holy law? If once I catch by the eye of faith this glorious truth, through him who is the truth, that Jesus Christ is of God made unto me "RIGHTEOUSNESS"--the moment I see that by the eye of faith, that moment a measure of imparted righteousness flows into my heart.

Am I an unholy, depraved, filthy wretch? Does corruption work in my heart? The moment I catch by the eye of faith Jesus made unto me of God "SANCTIFICATION," that moment a measure of sanctification comes into my heart, drawing up holy affections, casting out the love of the world, curbing my reigning lusts, and bringing my soul into submission at his footstool.

Am I a poor captive, entangled by Satan, by the world, and my own evil heart? The moment that I catch this glorious view, that Jesus Christ at the right hand of the Father is made unto me "REDEMPTION"--if I can believe that he is made such for me, that I have a standing in him, and a union with him, so that he is my redemption--that moment a measure of deliverance comes into my soul, and redemption imputed becomes redemption imparted; the soul receives then internally what Christ has done externally.

In a word, when Christ is received as "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," he becomes all these in vital manifestation.

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**Oswald Chambers - Sanctification.** 1 Cor. 1:30.

The Life Side. The mystery of sanctification is that the perfections of Jesus Christ are imparted to me, not gradually, but instantly when by faith I enter into the realization that Jesus Christ is made unto me sanctification. Sanctification does not mean anything less than the holiness of Jesus being made mine manifestly.

The one marvellous secret of a holy life lies not in imitating Jesus, but in letting the perfections of Jesus manifest themselves in my mortal flesh. Sanctification is "Christ in you." It is His wonderful life that is imparted to me in sanctification, and imparted by faith as a sovereign gift of God's grace. Am I willing for God to make sanctification as real in me as it is in His word?

Sanctification means the impartation of the holy qualities of Jesus Christ. It is His patience, His love, His holiness, His faith, His purity, His godliness, that is manifested in and through every sanctified soul. Sanctification is not drawing from Jesus the power to be holy; it is drawing from Jesus the holiness that was manifested in Him, and He manifests it in me. Sanctification is an impartation, not an imitation. Imitation is on a different line. In Jesus Christ is the perfection of everything, and the mystery of sanctification is that all the perfections of Jesus are at my disposal, and slowly and surely I begin to live a life of ineffable order and sanity and holiness "Kept by the power of God."

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## **Christ—Our Everything**

Read: 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

You are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God ... and sanctification and redemption. —1  
Corinthians 1:30

Thomas Shepard (1605-1649) was raised in a godly Puritan home, but while he was attending Cambridge University he fell into a life of sin. One Sunday morning, when he awoke from a drunken stupor, a heavy weight of sadness over the enormity of his guilt crushed him to the point that he left his former way of life.

For the next 9 months, the fear of God's wrath almost drove him to "run my head against walls ... and kill myself." But while listening

to a sermon on 1 Corinthians 1:30, he suddenly realized that Christ was everything he needed—that Jesus had lived the perfect life he couldn't live, had paid for his sins on the cross, and was now his Advocate in heaven.

Commenting on John 1:12, "As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God," Shepard wrote, "The Lord gave me a heart to receive Christ with a naked hand, ... and so the Lord gave me peace."

If you want the kind of peace that only God can give, ask Him to give you a deep awareness of your own sinfulness. Then reflect on the wonder of the grace by which He made Jesus Christ everything you need. Finally, either renew the commitment you have already made to the Lord, or for the first time receive Jesus as your Savior. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The outstretched hand of God extends  
To those weighed down by sin;  
He offers to remove the load  
And give His peace within.  
—Sper

Jesus died in our place to give us His peace.

### 1 Corinthians 1:31 so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, **BOAST** IN THE LORD."

Amplified - So then, as it is written, Let him who boasts and proudly rejoices and glories, boast and proudly rejoice and glory in the Lord.

Wuest - in order that even as it stands written, He who boasts, in the Lord let him be boasting. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 1:31 so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

NLT 1 Corinthians 1:31 Therefore, as the Scriptures say, "If you want to boast, boast only about the LORD."

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:31 so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:31 Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."

GNT 1 Corinthians 1:31 να καθ ὡς γ γραπται, καυχ μενος ν κυρ καυχ σθω.

KJV 1 Corinthians 1:31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

YLT 1 Corinthians 1:31 that, according as it hath been written, 'He who is glorying -- in the Lord let him glory.'

ASV 1 Corinthians 1:31 that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

CSB 1 Corinthians 1:31 in order that, as it is written: The one who boasts must boast in the Lord.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 1:31 that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."

NRS 1 Corinthians 1:31 in order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

NAB 1 Corinthians 1:31 so that, as it is written, "Whoever boasts, should boast in the Lord."

NJB 1 Corinthians 1:31 As scripture says: If anyone wants to boast, let him boast of the Lord.

GWN 1 Corinthians 1:31 As Scripture says, "Whoever brags must brag about what the Lord has done."

- 1Ch 16:10,35 Ps 105:3 Isa 41:16 45:25 Jer 4:2 9:23,24 2Co 10:17 Ga 6:13,14 Php 3:3 \*Gr:
- [1 Corinthians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Jer 9:23-24 (HOW TO BE A TRULY **WISE, MIGHTY AND RICH** MAN) Thus says the LORD, "Let not a wise man **boast** of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man **boast** of his might, let not a rich man **boast** of his riches; but let him who **boasts** **boast** of this, that he **UNDERSTANDS** and **KNOWS** Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the LORD.

2 Corinthians 10:17+ (**PAUL QUOTES Jer 9:24 AGAIN**) But HE WHO BOASTS IS TO BOAST IN THE LORD.

([See and sing the hymn above](#) to the One above!)

## OUR ONLY BOAST THROUGHOUT ETERNITY

**So that** - Term of purpose. "in order that it might come to pass, work out just as" Purpose for the truths that all the previous grand attributes are found only in Christ and only as a gift of God's grace.

**Lenski** - Paul now gathers all that he has said into a single focus in the way he usually loves to do when he comes to the end of a matter. He uses a purpose clause (**ED**: INTRODUCED BY [Hina](#)) and parallels it with the one found in v. 29. There he writes in the negative: "that no flesh should glory in God's presence." Here he writes the corresponding positive. ([The Interpretation of I Corinthians](#))

**Just as it is written** - Written ([1125](#)) is [grapho](#) in the perfect tense which means it was written in the past and stands written, written and applicable for every age, yea, for all time (cf Mt 24:35). In Ro 15:4+ Paul affirms the value of the OT writing "For whatever was **written** in earlier times (LIKE Isaiah 29:14) was **written** for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."

**LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD** - The passage says if you are going to boast, here is how to do so in a godly, God honoring way. Expressing one's pride in the Lord, the Source of all the incredible gifts in salvation. The second **boast** is present imperative, calling for this to be our lifestyle! ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#))

**THOUGHT** - We need to rely on the Spirit's enabling power ("desire and power" = Php 2:13NLT+) to boast in the Lord, because the "default" tendency of our fallen flesh is to boast in self! We do well to remember that he who sings his own praise is usually off key and usually does so without accompaniment! Thomas Watson said "There is not a more dangerous precipice than self-righteousness."

"Glory (boast) not before Him, but in Him."

-- Johann Bengel

**David** writes

Some **boast** in chariots and some in horses, But we will **boast** in the name of the LORD, our God. (Psalm 20:7)

**Spurgeon** - **Some boast in chariots and some in horse.** Chariots and horses make an imposing show, and with their rattling, and dust, and fine caparisons, make so great a figure that vain man is much taken with them; yet the discerning eye of faith sees more in an invisible God than in all these. The most dreaded war engine of David's day was the war chariot, armed with scythes, which mowed down men like grass: this was the boast and glory of the neighbouring nations; but the saints considered the Name of Jehovah to be a far better defence. As the Israelites might not keep horses, it was natural for them to regard the enemy's calvary with more than usual dread. It is, therefore, all the greater evidence of faith that the bold songster can here disdain even the horse of Egypt in comparison with the **Lord of hosts**. Alas, how many in our day who profess to be the Lord's are as abjectly dependent upon their fellow men or upon an arm of flesh in some shape or other (2 Chr 32:8), as if they had never known the Name of Jehovah at all. Jesus, be Thou alone our Rock and Refuge (Ps 18:2-3, Ps 62:7-8, Ps 94:22), and never may we mar the simplicity of our faith. AMEN.

**we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God.** "Our God" in covenant, Who has chosen us and Whom we have chosen; this God is **our God**. The name of **our God** is JEHOVAH, and this should never be forgotten; the self existent, independent, immutable, ever present, all filling I AM. Let us adore that matchless Name, and never dishonour it by distrust or creature confidence. Reader, you must *know* it before you can *remember* it (OR BOAST IN IT). May the blessed Spirit reveal it graciously to your soul!

**Arnold** - God has provided a complete, perfect gracious and supernatural salvation for undeserving sinners. There can be no boasting on man's part. Human wisdom had nothing to do with the salvation of the Corinthian believers. Therefore, the Christians at Corinth (as well as all Christians) ought not to be exalting men. They ought to be exalting God. Man's wisdom leaves men to boast in man. God's wisdom leaves man only to boast in God. The wisdom of God and the wisdom of man in the area of salvation are fundamentally opposed to one another. There can be no middle ground between the two, and compromise between the two is unthinkable for a Bible-believing Christian. ([1 Corinthians 1:26-31 Gods Call To Salvation](#))

**Alan Johnson** - The passage has been moving toward this climax of finding our ground of boasting not in our own achievements of

learning, wealth and status improvement but in God's grace expressed through the crucified Christ. Since all Christians possess this priceless worth and status, there is no need to compete for honor by forming factions around our favorite speakers. All such is contrary to the realities of God's great reversal of human wisdom found in the crucified Savior. ([1 Corinthians](#))

**Boasts...boast** (exult, glory) ([2744](#)) [kauchaomai](#) akin to **aucheo** = boast + **euchomai** = pray to God  
<> **auchen** = neck which vain persons are apt to carry in proud manner) means to boast over a privilege or possession. The idea is to take pride in something. Uses in the letters to the Corinthians (especially the **second** letter) - 1 Co. 1:29; 1 Co. 1:31; 1 Co. 3:21; 1 Co. 4:7; 2 Co. 5:12; 2 Co. 7:14; 2 Co. 9:2; 2 Co. 10:8; 2 Co. 10:13; 2 Co. 10:15; 2 Co. 10:16; 2 Co. 10:17; 2 Co. 11:12; 2 Co. 11:16; 2 Co. 11:18; 2 Co. 11:30; 2 Co. 12:1; 2 Co. 12:5; 2 Co. 12:6; 2 Co. 12:9

**Spurgeon** - In this chapter the apostle magnifies the cross of his Lord, as God's greatest gift to the world; and as the highest glory of God's self-revelation to men. He praises God that the Corinthian Christians have experienced the saving grace that comes by faith in the sinner's sacrifice on Calvary. He rejoices, too, that that same grace has taught them to look forward to the Saviour's return in glory. But he is compelled to reprove them for some divisions and rivalries that sprang from their glorying in gifts rather than graces. This leads him to remind them how God had disparaged mere worldly wisdom by saving mankind by the death of Jesus. And he brings all to a very practical application in the verses that we now ponder. ([1 Corinthians 1 Commentary](#))

This great exhortation recalls the beautiful line "Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast" in the hymn by Isaac Watts...

### [When I Survey the Wondrous Cross](#)

When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.

#### **Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast**

save in the death of Christ, my God;  
all the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to His blood.

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### **Pride is the Root Problem at the church in Corinth**

- 1 Corinthians 1:29—"so that no human being might boast in the presence of God ..."
- 1 Corinthians 1:31—"Therefore, as it is written, 'Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.' "
- 1 Corinthians 3:7—"So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth."
- 1 Corinthians 3:21—"So let no one boast of men."
- 1 Corinthians 4:6 (at the end)—"... that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another." The end of verse 7—"If then you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?"
- 1 Corinthians 4:18—"Some are arrogant as though I were not coming to you."
- 1 Corinthians 5:2—"And you are arrogant!"
- 1 Corinthians 8:1—"Knowledge puffs up, love builds up."
- 1 Corinthians 13:4—"Love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude."
- 2 Corinthians 1:9—"Hardship comes even up to the brink of death, "but that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead."
- 2 Corinthians 3:5—"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our sufficiency is from God."
- 2 Corinthians 4:7—"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us."
- 2 Corinthians 12:9—"I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ might rest upon me."

### [John Piper - What Is Pride?](#)

- It is boasting in self and not the Lord.
  - It is taking credit ourselves for what God alone can do.
  - It is relying on self and not God.
  - It is feeling sufficiency in our own strength and not in God's.
  - It is the disinclination to admit that we are mere earthen vessels so that another gets the glory.
  - It is the unwillingness to admit weaknesses that may accent the power of Christ.
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## Westminster Shorter Catechism

### Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?

#### A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, [a] and to enjoy him for ever. [b]

[a]. Ps. 86:9; Isa. 60:21; Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 6:20; 10:31; Rev. 4:11

[b]. Ps. 16:5-11; 144:15; Isa. 12:2; Luke 2:10; Phil. 4:4; Rev. 21:3-4

### Q. 2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

#### A. The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, [a] is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him. [b]

[a]. Matt. 19:4-5 with Gen. 2:24; Luke 24:27, 44; 1 Cor. 2:13; 14:37; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; 3:2, 15-16

[b]. Deut. 4:2; Ps. 19:7-11; Isa. 8:20; John 15:11; 20:30-31; Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 1 John 1:4

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## BOASTING - James Smith

- **Negative:** "No flesh shall glory" (1 Cor. 1:29).
- **Positive:** "Let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1:31).

Boasting seems part and parcel of our make-up. All glory in something. God has prepared a cure, not by repressing the instinct, but by giving it a worthy subject and object. Boasting is therefore quite legitimate if the right theme be adopted. And the theme? Jer. 9:23-24.

Paul gloried in:

1. The Cross, Gal. 6:14
2. The Lord, 1 Cor. 1:31
3. Tribulation, Rom. 5:3
4. Infirmities, 2 Cor. 12:9

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## J C Philpot - Self-esteem & self-exaltation?

"That no flesh should boast before God. . . .He who boasts, let him boast in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 1:29, 31

In order that we should glory in the Lord, it is absolutely necessary that we should cease to glory in SELF. By nature, we are all prone to glory in self through those cursed principles of self-esteem and self-exaltation. Nothing but the mighty power of God can put down these cursed principles. We are prone to this pride, and it is strengthened and matured in a fallen sinner's heart.

It is the work of the Spirit in the sinner's conscience—to pour contempt on all the pride of man—to open up the depth of the fall—to bring to light all his hidden corruptions—to unbosom and lay bare all the evils of his heart—to upturn the deep corruptions of his fallen nature before his astonished eyes—that he may learn with true humility of soul, brokenness of heart, and contrition of spirit before God—to loathe and abhor himself in dust and ashes, as a monster of iniquity.

If a man has not been taught by the strong hand of God in his soul to abhor, loathe, and cry out against himself as one of the vilest wretches that crawls on God's earth—he has never learned to glory in the Lord Jesus Christ. When the Lord Jesus Christ reveals to his soul a sense of His love, and unfolds a sight of His glory before his astonished eyes, he is brought to look out of himself, and from all he has—to the Lord Jesus Christ!

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## Spurgeon - Glorifying in the Lord

Glory in the Lord practically, by having a contempt for those things which others value so much. Do not be greedy after the world. Love God too much to care for earthly treasures. If God gives you wealth, thank him for it and use it. If he does not, do not worry about it. Feel that you are rich enough without heaps of yellow metal. You have your God and that is the best wealth; you have a heaven to go to and a little heaven below. Rejoice in that which you find in your God. Live above the world. 'For our conversation is in heaven.' May God's Spirit help you. Thus glorify God and when men look at you, compel them to feel that there is something in



you and about you which they cannot understand, for you have been with Jesus and you have learned of him. In all these ways, 'He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.' I am sorry to feel compelled to say that I am afraid many do not understand this. Perhaps you have gloried in your priests and thought they were great. Very possibly some of you glory in your minister; you think he is very eminent. Some of you, it may be, glory in your purses and your possessions. Some of you glory in your broad acres and large houses. Some of you glory in the skill you have in your trade or your quickness in business. It may be many of you glory in the fact that you are not as other men are. All these gloryings are evil. God help you to put them down. Even to glory in your church, your sect and your creed is wrong. To glory in the Lord is the work of his Spirit, and to live to make him glorious in the esteem of men is the only thing worthy of an immortal mind. You will never glory in God until first of all God has killed your glorying in yourself.

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### **Boast in the Lord—1 Corinthians 1:30-31**

Thomas Beecher was one of the children of the famed clergyman Lyman Beecher. His older sister was Harriet Beecher Stowe, the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and a leading abolitionist. His older brother was Henry Ward Beecher, one of the most dynamic pastors in nineteenth century America.

Thomas was chaplain of the New York Volunteers during the Civil War and then settled in Elmira, New York, to be minister of the Independent Congregational Church. There Beecher built a church gymnasium, library, theater, and dancing room, all unheard of at the time. His methods were unconventional but his message was the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Once Thomas was guest preacher at Henry Ward's Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, New York. When Thomas stepped to his brother's pulpit some disappointed people started toward the exits. Calmly he raised his hand and said, "All those who came here this morning to worship Henry Ward Beecher may withdraw from the church; all who came to worship God may remain."

Are you prone to boast of something other than Christ and His love for you? Today in prayer give thanks to the Lord that He is gracious. Only because of His grace do you have life in Christ.

"We are not in the world bearing witness to Christ.

We are in Christ bearing witness to the world."

—G. Allen Fleece

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**WHY DO YOU GO TO CHURCH?** - Francois Fenelon was the court preacher for King Louis XIV of France in the seventeenth century. One Sunday when the king and his attendants arrived at the chapel for the regular service, no one else was there but the preacher. King Louis demanded, "What does this mean?" Fenelon replied, "I had published that you would not come to church today in order that Your Majesty might see who serves God in truth and who flatters the king."

Why do you go to church? To meet your friends, to hear the preacher, to fulfill an obligation? These reasons are not wrong, but they do not represent our highest motivation. Our primary reason must be to worship Christ.

When we gather with God's people, let's not do so to be seen, nor to flatter the preacher. Let's be united in heart and keep Christ preeminent. Make worshiping Him your primary reason for going to church. —Paul R VanGorder

TRUE WORSHIP ACKNOWLEDGES THE TRUE WORTH-SHIP OF CHRIST.

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### **Giving Credit**

Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord. 1 Corinthians 1:31

Today's Scripture & Insight: Jeremiah 9:23–26

In the early 1960s, some unusual paintings featuring a person or animal with huge, sad eyes became popular. Some considered the work "kitschy"—or tacky—but others delighted in it. As the artist's husband began to promote his wife's creations, the couple grew quite prosperous. But the artist's signature—Margaret Keane—didn't appear on her work. Instead, Margaret's husband presented his wife's work as his own. Margaret fearfully remained silent about the fraud for twenty years until the couple's marriage ended. It took a courtroom "paint-off" between them to prove the true artist's identity.

The man's deception was clearly wrong, but even as followers of Jesus, we may find it easy to take credit for talents we possess, leadership skills we display, or even for our kind deeds to others. But those qualities are possible only because of God's grace. In Jeremiah 9, we find the prophet lamenting the lack of humility and the unrepentant hearts of the people. He wrote that the Lord says we shouldn't boast of our wisdom, our strength, or our riches, but only that we might understand and know that He is the Lord "who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth" (v. 24).

Our hearts fill with gratitude as we realize the identity of the true Artist. "Every good and perfect gift is . . . from the Father" (James 1:17). All of the credit, all of the praise belongs to the Giver of good gifts. By: Cindy Hess Kasper ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Dear Father, thank You for all the good gifts You so graciously give.

We were created to give God glory.