

1 Corinthians

Christ the Wisdom and Power of God—1 Corinthians 1:18–2:5

Open It

1. In what way might your life-style seem foolish to some of your friends or relatives?

1 Corinthians 1:18–2:5 (ESV)

¹⁸For 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.

¹⁹For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

²⁰Where 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?

²¹For 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.

²²For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom,

²³but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,

²⁴but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

²⁵For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

²⁶For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.

²⁷But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong;

²⁸God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,

²⁹so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

³⁰And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

³¹so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

2 Cor 2:1-5

¹And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom.

²For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

³And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling,

⁴and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

⁵so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Explore It

2. How does the message of the Cross contrast with what most people consider wise? (1:18–19)
3. How does God’s wisdom contrast with the world’s wisdom? (1:20)
4. How did the demands of the Jews and Greeks contrast with the Corinthians’ hope? (1:22–23)

5. How do God's attributes compare with ours? (1:25–26)
6. How does God use the foolish and weak things of the world? (1:27)
7. Why does God express His power and wisdom through “foolish,” “weak,” and “lowly” means? (1:28–29)
8. What has Jesus Christ become for us? (1:30)
9. What kind of boasting is good? (1:31)
10. How did Paul's regard for the world's wisdom affect his preaching and testimony? (2:1–5)

Get It

11. What are some doctrines of the Christian faith that are difficult for non-Christians to understand?
12. How can you share the truth of the gospel with people who demand signs, or proof, of God?
13. How can we make sure that our faith rests on God's power and not our own wisdom?

Apply It

14. What can you do this week to witness for Christ in only God's wisdom and not your own craftiness?