



Blueprint for the Church:

Live the Gospel!

Small Group Study Guide



1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-25 Preach the Word

Paul is continuing his address to the issue of divisions in the church. In this particular session he focuses in on the Corinthians' emphasis on and love of human wisdom. Therefore, he states that another foundational building block in God's **Blueprint for the Church** is the Gospel message, which from a purely human perspective is total nonsense, but to those who are being saved, it is the message of God's powerful working.

1. Wisdom is the goal in human philosophy. It refers to learning, which seeks to explain questions like: Where does man come from? What is the purpose of life? How can man find true fulfillment and purpose? How can man know right and wrong? Our culture is filled with those who hold to various "philosophical" schools of thought. In fact, in our current age, the trend is to blend various schools of thought. Below are some of the philosophies prevalent in our world. For each one, explain how the message of the Word of God - specifically, the message of the cross - is foolishness to human wisdom.

Philosophy	Basic Tenets of Philosophy	Reasons Word of the Cross would be considered foolish
Existentialism	Human create their own essence and meaning in life; man is free from any outside transcendent force (God).	
Rationalism	Truth discovered by reason and logic	
Nihilism	Being has no objective meaning, purpose, or value. Denies any form of comprehensive truth	
Pragmatism	Emphasis on consequences and effects in knowing what truth is; truth not ready-made but that man can "make" truth	
Skepticism	Avoid or doubt any assertion of final or eternal truth; true knowledge is uncertain	
Deconstructionism	Reject establishing a concrete or ultimate meaning in text (word); experience elevated over truth claims.	

Don't Forget:
Discuss the Sermon Notes from this week

2. Paul divides all humanity into two general groups in 1 Corinthians 1:18. In your own words, describe these two groups that encompass all of humanity.
 - In what ways does a basic understanding of the reality of these two groups assist you in evangelism (sharing the Gospel)?
 - In what ways does a basic understanding of the reality of these two groups assist you in discipleship (living the Gospel)?
3. “Message preached” in 1 Corinthians 1:21 ought to be interpreted as the content of the message not the means in which the message is communicated. What is the content of the message we are to proclaim?

¹Gordon Fee,
*The First Epistle to
 the Corinthians*
 (Grand Rapids:
 Eerdmans Publishing,
 1987), 74..

4. One commentary stated that “the ‘Jews’ and ‘Greeks’ here illustrate the basic idolatries of humanity”.¹

- Demand for a sign is a trust in power. In what way is desire for power a form of idolatry? From a human perspective, how is the message of Christ crucified a sign of weakness? From God’s perspective, how is Christ the power of God?
- Insistence on wisdom is a trust in learning. In what way is desire for philosophical learning a form of idolatry? From a human perspective, how is the message of Christ crucified foolishness? From God’s perspective, how is Christ the wisdom of God?

BIBLE MEMORY:

*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.*

1 Corinthians 1:18

5. From this study, it becomes evident that the church must be on guard against the attractiveness of human philosophy and ideology. In fact, Paul makes it clear that a core element in God’s **Blueprint for the Church** is the faithful preaching of God’s Word, which will be considered foolishness to the philosophies of man.
 - What are some weekly disciplines you can engage in that will better prepare you for listening to and applying the Word of God preached in our Sunday worship services?
 - Based on the heart attitude you have toward the preaching of the Word, are you **Living the Gospel**, following God’s **Blueprint for the Church**?
 - The context of the passage is still dealing with the threat of division in the church. So, how does a focus on the word of the cross - Christ crucified - lead to unity and harmony in the body?

For Next Week:
Prayerfully meditate and study the following: 1 Corinthians 1:26-31