

Summit Woods Baptist Church
First Corinthians Sermon Study Equipping Class
1 Corinthians 3:18-23

On Day 3, you will be looking back over all of the lessons so far, so be sure to have them handy. Remember to begin your study early in the week so that you have time to really think (and keep thinking) about the passage without being rushed.

❖ Day 1

Read 1 Corinthians 3:18-23.

For these lessons, the sermon text is provided in a format that visually helps display the structure of the paragraph or section of text. The verbs are underlined. The main clauses remain to the left, and the supporting clauses are either directly underneath when they have equal priority to what comes before, or are tabbed to the right when the clause supports, develops or explains previous clauses. Suggested themes in the text are provided in the box on the left. As the class progresses, you will have the opportunity to learn how to do this yourself.

Command #1: Allow no self-deception: one is a fool either to God or to the world.

Command #2: Choose to be a fool to the world and wise to God.

Why? Because God opposes worldly wisdom.

Command #3: Stop behaving according to worldly wisdom in your boasting.

Why? Because you are all equal in possessing all things in Christ.

18 **Let no one deceive himself.**

If anyone among you thinks
that he is wise in this age,

let him become a fool

that he may become wise.

19 For the wisdom of this world is folly with God.

For it is written,

“He catches the wise in their craftiness,”

20 and again,

“The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise,
that they are futile.”

21 **So let no one boast in men.**

For all things are yours,

22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas

or the world

or life or death

or the present or the future

—all are yours,

23 and you are Christ's,

and Christ is God's.

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In chapters 1 and 2, Paul contrasted God's wisdom with the world's wisdom. Now after giving three word pictures in 3:5-17 describing the church, he gives directions on how to live in accordance with the truth he has presented. Most of the verbs up to this point have been in the indicative mood, which 'indicates' what happened or the way things are. There are three verbs in this passage that are in the imperative mood, which commands actions. The indicative statements explain why the commanded action is wise. This indicative-imperative relationship is a helpful key in understanding much of Paul's writings, and indeed most of the New Testament.

1. Who is deceiving the one who thinks that he is wise in this world? (see verse 18)

2. Is it possible to be seen as wise by both the world and God?
 - a. So, what decision does Paul present to the Corinthians?

3. How can the church help each of us avoid self-deception?

4. This passage contains two negative commands (what not to do) and one positive command (what to do). What is the positive command?
 - a. Does this command make sense by itself, or would you hope for further explanation?

 - b. Grammar lesson: How can you tell that verse 19 is the explanation for what is commanded in verse 18?

5. Look at verses 19-20. Also look back at 1:18-19 and 2:6. Why should wisdom in the world's eyes be unattractive to Christians?

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6. What is the imperative/command in verse 21?
 - a. What is the explanatory indicative in verse 21? (What follows 'For'?)

❖ Day 2

Read 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 again.

7. How extensive is the category "all things" in verse 21?
8. Look at verses 21-23. At first glance, it might seem like the phrase "all things are yours" would lead the Corinthians toward prideful boasting, but Paul says the opposite. How could the knowledge of their possession of "all things" cause them to not boast in men? (Hint: 'yours' is plural)
9. According to verses 21-23, who in the church is superior to anyone else? (Who possesses more than anyone else?) (see also 1:5-7)
 - a. If we are all equal, is it rational to boast in men?
10. Over the past weeks we have regularly pointed out all of the plural 'you's to show that Paul is writing the letter to the Corinthians as a congregation. In this passage, he addresses the corrective commands to individuals (the 'one's in verses 18-21 are singular). Why does Paul correct individuals in a letter to a congregation?

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11. How does this help you understand the way your individual actions affect our whole church?

➤ Additional Reading:

In verse 20, Paul paraphrases Psalm 94:11. Read Psalm 94.

12. Summarize Psalm 94 in one or two sentences. (If you need a prompt: describe those who are against God, describe God, describe those who trust God, and describe what happens to each.)

13. How does Psalm 94 fit in with what we have been studying in 1 Corinthians?

❖ Day 3

**This is the last homework and sermon from 1 Corinthians for this year. (Pastor Bret will be preaching two Advent sermons about the Incarnation of Jesus on December 18 and 25. Equipping Classes WILL meet on Dec 18.)

Look back over your homework and sermon notes from this semester, and answer the following questions.

14. What have you learned about God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)?

15. What have you learned about mankind (both those who are lost and those who are saved)?

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16. What have you learned about the gospel?

17. What have you learned about the church?

18. How have these passages influenced your thoughts on wisdom, unity, and pride?

19. In what other ways have these passages influenced you?

20. With whom should you share what you have learned?

In preparation for Sunday, pray that we would not be deceived and that we would joyfully be seen as fools by the world as we walk in the amazing and abundant grace that is ours through Jesus Christ.