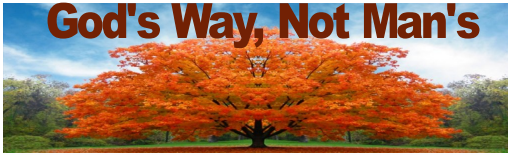


God's Way, Not Man's



"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Prov. 16:25) God has a way, though, that is able to prepare hearts by renewing the mind, as He did with the believers at Corinth. Some insights to consider:

1) Believe and exalt God and His Word, being fully persuaded: The Father always wants the best for us, therefore He instructs us to read and believe Christ the Word, *"...Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."* (I Cor. 1:24) *"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."* (Is. 55:9)

2) Know the good news of the cross and that it is our power: Jesus Christ shed His blood and paid the full price of sin. All man has to do is simply believe it by faith. *"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."* (I Cor. 1:18)

3) Realize that Paul is our designated Apostle (Rom. 11:13), who teaches the mystery of the Body of Christ in thirteen epistles, Romans-Philemon: Just as Paul sent Timothy to stir up forgotten truths in the Corinthians, we also need to regularly renew the doctrine in us or we will regress spiritually: *"...who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church."* (I Cor. 4:17) Do read all Scripture as it's been written to be profitable for our learning. (II Timothy 3:16/Romans15:4)

4) Be established, but also mature in the gospel of Christ, giving God and the Lord Jesus all the glory: *"Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest...To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen."* (Romans16:25-26)

Our approach matters to God!

Just A Minute! *With Scripture*

The King James Bible is used for references. Verses may be underlined/made bold for emphasis.



Are We Wise Or Fools?

As saints, there are two options to live: God's way or the course of this world. Man makes choices, but the Father provides. Every person is able to know God & respond by faith, as each of us has a conscience with a witness of Creation.

"Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." (Romans 1:19-20)

From Creation, man can know two things: God has 'eternal power' and He is 'the Godhead' having a divine nature, being the Creator. God lists a six-step process, revealing man's tendency to rebel & depart from His ways to become a fool:

1) *"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God,*
2) *neither were thankful; but* 3) *became vain in their imaginations, and*
4) *their foolish heart was darkened.* 5) *Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,* 6) *And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image..."* (Rom. 1:21-23) (All sin seems to follow this process.)

The Corinthians had been taught about much more than Creation, for Paul taught them foundational Truths for a year and a half. (Acts 18:11) However, they responded in the flesh, putting God's wisdom/power aside to worship and exalt their own ideas and ways, becoming foolish, carnal babes.

Every believer has this tendency. The Lord warns us, even as we mature & begin to serve: *"For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."* (Rom. 12:3) God is the only one to be exalted!

The Corinthians and all carnal believers need this reproof and correction to walk wisely in faith. (Continue reading on P.3 to see specific desires God has for saints.)

"A wise son heareth his father's instruction..." Proverbs 13:1



Living As Who You Are In Christ

I Corinthians 1: God's Wisdom & Power Verses Man's



The Corinthian Church had a reputation of being carnal, yet God loved them, & desired that they mature. In Chapter 1, he provides clarity about the gospel to shore up understanding of justification, which is basic doctrine from Romans 1-5. Scripture describes how God's wisdom and power greatly exceed man's. Read Chapter 1 several times, then study and meditate on a few issues:

1) Notice key words in Chapter 1: Define a few repeating words: 'Wisdom,' 'called/calling,' and 'things.' Use a concordance or Bible app. to find the context of each and how often they are used.

2) Analyze how Paul opens his epistle: a) Find the verses where he acknowledges himself as 'the writer,' and 'to whom he is writing.' b) How does Verse 4 express the spiritual status of this Church? c) Read the chapter to determine the key verse or the main topic that is addressed.

3. Observe the various word combinations in Chapter 1, describing God's Son: a) Define each name used (Christ, Lord, Jesus, Son)

and think on each. b) Document the combinations. c) What is being taught by changing the order of the names or using two or three terms, but not all? d) Why did Paul use the Son's titles/name so much in the first chapter? What did it teach the Corinthians? e) Reread the chapter, thinking on what you've learned.

4) Note detail and if there is application to your life: a) Satan's first line of attack against the Corinthians was on their justification. Describe what he did. (Verses 12-23) b) List out the problems the Corinthian's had regarding their view of wisdom and power. Is it similar to issues we have today? How does it affect understanding and confidence in the gospel?

5) Explore how Chapter 1 ends: The last verses focus on how to glory. What ought we glory in and why? What were the Corinthians glorying in? Prove your answer.

6) Reread the chapter to reflect on key insights: Name four new things learned.

**Newer students: Focus on 'reading' Scripture rather than on using many new study insights. When you're ready, try answering a few questions above.*

I Corinthians 1-4 Outline: God's Wisdom & Power

God designed I Corinthians with doctrine to educate and edify believers, providing reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness, & how to access God's resources for eternal benefits. In Section 1, 'God's Wisdom & Power' provides concrete help for carnal saints who exalt their flesh.

Chapter 1: God's wisdom/power far surpasses man's. Alone, they provide our justification. (Rom. 1-5)

Chapter 2: God's wisdom/power provides our sanctification and to attain the mind of Christ. (Rom. 6-8)

Chapter 3: God cares how saints live; there's fruit to how they build/live doctrine (Rom. 6-7)

Chapter 4: Suffering: We can yield to be a living sacrifice and labor with our Heavenly Father, which will prepare us to reign together in eternity. (Rom. 8)

There's one way to be victorious in life, that is, to be conformed to the image of Christ, gaining His mind. This enables the wisdom and power of God to work in the inner man. *"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."* (I Cor. 15:57) God has raised the Lord Jesus Christ to conquer sin and death and further, mightily work within the believer until their last day on earth. This provided the Corinthians and us today with a great hope. *"Therefore, my beloved brethren be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."* (I Corinthians 15:58)



What Are We Thinking?

What we choose to listen to, spend time on, and exalt will affect our thinking and eventually influence behavior. *"Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way...My son, **give me thine heart**, and let thine eyes observe my ways."* (Proverbs 23:19,26) If we take in ungodly, worldly input (doctrine), corruption and immorality is the fruit. However, when our mind is renewed by the Word and sound doctrine, faith and godliness will result.

Since the Garden of Eden, Satan's ways influence saints like those in Corinth, who are unaware, not prepared in sound doctrine, nor able to use their spiritual armour. *"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."* (Eph. 6:11)

Though Satan directs the way of this world; *"Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."* (Rom. 13:14) When prepared, thinking and meditating on God's Word, we are able to yield and access God's wisdom/great power.

Do We Glory In The Lord?

What does it mean to 'glory in the Lord?' In the context of I Corinthians 1, it seems to relate to exalting God's wisdom and his complete provision for this life and eternity. Basically, it's acknowledging and rejoicing in the essence of God's character and ability to do/provide all things.



In contrast, the Corinthians boasted in their teachers and doctrine (how they were saved and being taught), and basically, exalting their own flesh. *"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. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in the name of Paul?"* (I Cor. 1: 12-13).

God's ways are far above ours. (Is. 55:9) Man's best efforts to be wise & powerful are foolish. *"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...That no flesh should glory in his presence."* (I Cor. 1:27, 29)

If we choose to grow/yield, we will naturally honor God for all He has done through Christ, being thankful, & living as a sacrifice unto Him.

Are We Wise Or Fools?

(Continued from Page 1)

God's plan is that we be conformed to the image of Christ having His mind, becoming His ambassadors, that is, His bodily representatives on earth. As a living sacrifice, we can be a beacon of light to the lost and an encouragement and teacher to fellow believers. This occurs as we yield and are transformed by the renewing of our mind. This gives all the glory to God, exalting Him.

A fool will follow the wisdom of this world and try in his own wisdom, experiences, and power, without God, to live righteously, rejecting God's instruction. What is the answer? *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction."* (Proverbs 1:7)

To live wisely, with power, the Corinthians were to heed Paul's reproof/correction by humbly taking godly instruction seriously, applying it in life. This is precisely how we are to respond to God's Word today. As you read/reflect, ask: "Am I awake and focused? Does this pertain to me?" Think on these things to adjust thinking and live what you learn in the Word. This is how walk by faith!

To Do: Read the book of I Corinthians, notice/write down the problem areas targeted, along with the godly instructions given to correct the Corinthians. Take time to think on these things to determine if any of these issues relate to you. Pray to be open and purpose to make adjustments in your life. **Are you growing or just coasting?**

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Stamp

To:

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...” (Romans 3:24)

Do We Seek A Sign or Worldly Wisdom

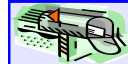
Are we like the Jews, striving to see God’s physical power in ‘signs’ or as Gentiles, exalting what ‘we’ know? *“For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom...” (I Cor. 1:22)* Man’s tendency is to follow these two patterns, which is contrary to trusting what God is doing today in the Body of Christ.

Seeking a Sign: This refers to saints who desire God to show them a concrete manifestation of His power to miraculously alter natural situations upon request. Basically, they’re trying to avoid suffering/discomfort.

The key to living in this time of grace is knowing our ‘total sufficiency’ is through Christ and the Spirit in us. When Paul asked for his thorn to be removed, God said, *“...My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness...” (II Cor. 12:9)* Today, before we ask, God has already given us ‘all spiritual things,’ empowering us **to endure any and all** suffering/persecution. *“...For all things are yours...” (I Cor. 3:21-23)* Corinth’s problem was they didn’t trust God, nor appreciate the Word’s work in the inner man. Instead, they sought physical help/signs.

Seeking Wisdom: Satan enticed Adam to trust in himself, rather than God: *“For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” (Gen. 3:5)* It manifested sin & religious works (cover sin: fig aprons), actually exalting/worshipping ‘self.’ (It did this in the Corinthians; it’s also our tendency.)

In this time of Gentile grace, specific wisdom written to the Body of Christ is found in Romans-Philemon. God works in the inner man, enabling believers to have Christ’s life in them (Rom. 6-8), accessing His magnificent wisdom/power simply by yielding. *“...but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” (Rom. 6:13)* **This is God’s Wisdom and Power!**



‘On A Personal Side’
 We welcome feedback & questions.

From Our Readers

“...I want to express our gratitude to you for always sharing the truth of God’s Word with us here in Africa. We treasure your materials so much, so that any time we receive them we thank God for your life, and pray for God’s strength for you to continue to publish them.” (Africa)

“Legalism is ingrained in our flesh and it’s also very sneaky as well. In fact, sometimes I put my own self under the law by saying ‘yes’ to those who like to delegate...My husband reminds me of *I Corinthians 9:17* “For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.” When I start to grumble or complain about doing something, even reading the Bible, I’ve just put myself under the law.” (In reference to P. 4 of July’s Just A Minute- Illinois)

Opportunities To Study

In North Chesterfield, VA

1. Brian’s Family Bible Study:

Fri.: 7-9 pm

2. Women’s Bible Study/Support

Wed.: 10:30-12 pm local library

Call for Info at (804) 519-1210

Request email/postal subscriptions/past issues or forward questions and ideas using contact information above.