

*While the reading for this week is from 1:18-31, this study will take in a broader context from 1:17-2:2.*

**1 Corinthians 1:17-19**

**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.

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

*What is Paul describing as the core message of his preaching?*

*Why would the message of the cross seem to be foolishness to some?*

*Why is the cross so central to we who are being saved?*

**1 Corinthians 1:20-25**

**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? **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. **22** For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, **23** but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, **24** but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. **25** For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

*Do we tend to idolize education? Do we assume that those people with the most degrees are the most deserving of our trust?*

*When judged by the world's standards, Christ's crucifixion appears weak and foolish. But it is the wisdom and power of God. How difficult is it to see things how God does, not following the ways and standards of the world? What are examples of when it has been hard to trust God's wisdom rather than follow "conventional wisdom" or do what everyone else does?*

### **1 Corinthians 1:26-2:2**

**26** For consider your calling, brothers:<sup>1</sup> not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. **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; **28** God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, **29** so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. **30** And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, **31** so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

**2:1** And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. **2** For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

*How easy is it to be prideful? If all we have is from God, on what basis could we be proud?*

*Paul wants us to boast, just not in ourselves. What are some ways that we can "boast in the Lord"?*

*Do you ever feel as though you don't know the right words to say to someone when talking about your faith? What can we learn from Paul's example, in which he stops caring about eloquence or seeming wise by human standards, and instead he focuses on Jesus Christ and him crucified?*

*What are the qualifications for those God calls? If we are in Christ (verse 30), is that enough for God to use us in his plans?*

*Read the following for more context on this week's Bible text.*

### **Galatians 1:10**

**10** Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

*In the opening (1:17), middle (1:22-23), and closing (2:1-2) of this section of 1 Corinthians, Paul notes how he did not come with the world's wisdom or lofty speech, rather he preached the cross of Jesus. He was committed to this message regardless of how it was received. Are we more concerned with pleasing people or God? What would look different if pleasing God was our number one goal?*

*How can you apply this Scripture to your life?*

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<sup>1</sup> or brothers and sisters