SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

# 1 Corinthians 1

*The Word of the Cross — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive*

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-15 · NASB 1995

*"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11*

CHAPTER THEME

The church does not split over Christ; it splits over pride. God cut the ground out from under every human boast by saving the world through a crucified Messiah and calling nobodies like me — so the only boast left is in the Lord.

## 00 The Text

1 CORINTHIANS 1 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been ☆ sanctified in Christ Jesus, ☆ saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus,

5 that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge,

6 even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you,

7 so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

8 who will also ☆ confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 △ God is faithful, through whom you were ☆ called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and ⚠ that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.

11 For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are ⚠ quarrels among you.

12 Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ."

13 ⚠ Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,

15 so that no one would say you were baptized in my name.

16 Now I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any other.

17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that ⚠ the cross of Christ would not be made void.

18 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.

19 For it is written, "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE."

20 Where is the wise man? 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 through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

22 For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom;

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

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

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

26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;

27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,

28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are,

29 so that no man may boast before God.

30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,

31 so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

## Marked in the text

- **v2** "sanctified in Christ Jesus" — Promise / blessing
- **v2** "saints by calling" — Promise / blessing
- **v8** "confirm you to the end, blameless" — Promise / blessing
- **v9** "God is faithful" — God — His character & actions
- **v9** "called into fellowship with His Son" — Promise / blessing
- **v10** "that you all agree" — Command / instruction
- **v10** "that there be no divisions among you" — Sin / warning
- **v10** "made complete in the same mind" — Command / instruction
- **v11** "quarrels" — Sin / warning
- **v13** "Has Christ been divided?" — Sin / warning
- **v17** "not in cleverness of speech" — Time / place / contrast
- **v17** "the cross of Christ would not be made void" — Sin / warning
- **v18** "the word of the cross" — God — His character & actions
- **v18** "those who are perishing" — Sin / warning
- **v18** "the power of God" — God — His character & actions
- **v21** "the foolishness of the message preached" — Time / place / contrast
- **v22** "Jews ask for signs" — Time / place / contrast
- **v23** "we preach Christ crucified" — God — His character & actions
- **v23** "stumbling block" — Sin / warning
- **v24** "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" — God — His character & actions
- **v27** "God has chosen" — God — His character & actions
- **v28** "the things that are not" — Time / place / contrast
- **v29** "so that no man may boast before God" — Sin / warning
- **v30** "by His doing you are in Christ Jesus" — God — His character & actions
- **v30** "righteousness and sanctification, and redemption" — Promise / blessing
- **v31** "BOAST IN THE LORD" — Command / instruction
- **v19** "wisdom" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v19** "wise" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v18** "foolishness" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v20** "foolish" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

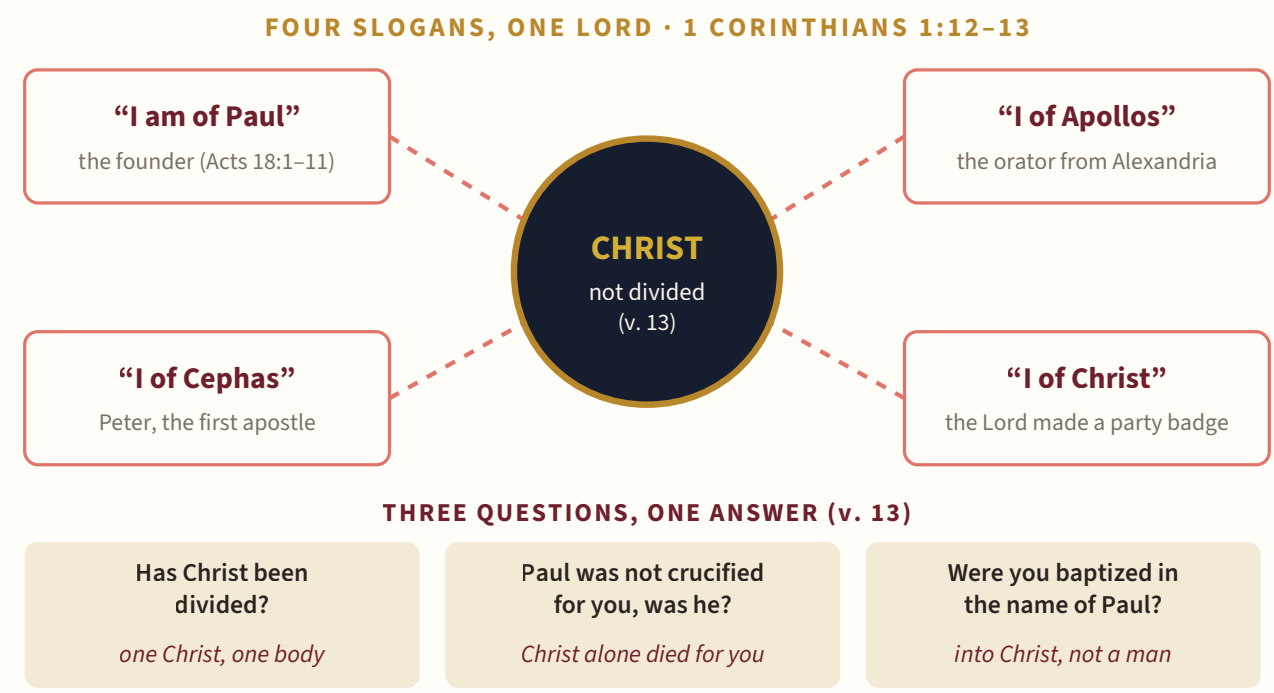
# 01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 1:10

"Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment."

FIGURE · FOUR SLOGANS AND THREE QUESTIONS




*Every slogan tears at the same body — even "I of Christ" when it is used to stand above the brothers — and each of Paul's three questions has only one answer.*

**Setting.** Paul writes from Ephesus (16:8) to the church he planted in Corinth around A.D. 50 and stayed with for a year and a half (Acts 18:1–11). Corinth sat on the narrow isthmus between two seas — rich, crowded, proud of its orators and notorious for its vice. News has reached Paul from "Chloe's people" (v11) that the church is splitting into fan clubs. Chapter 1 opens the letter and goes straight to the first problem: division, and the pride underneath it. The argument it starts runs through 4:21.

**Who:** Paul, "called as an apostle" (v1); Sosthenes our brother (probably the synagogue ruler of Acts 18:17); "the church of God which is at Corinth," "sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling" (v2), with all who call on the Name everywhere; Chloe's people (v11); Apollos, Cephas (Peter); Crispus, Gaius, the household of Stephanas (vv14–16); Jews and Greeks; the wise man, the scribe, the debater of this age (v20).

**Structure:**

- vv1–3 — **greeting:** who Paul is (called, by the will of God), who they are in Christ (sanctified, saints by calling), grace and peace.
- vv4–9 — **thanksgiving:** grace given in Christ Jesus; enriched in all speech and all knowledge; not lacking in any gift; awaiting the revelation of the Lord; He "will also confirm you to the end, blameless" (v8) — "God is faithful" (v9).
- vv10–17 — **the problem, divisions:** an exhortation by the Name (v10); the report of quarrels (v11); four slogans — "I am of Paul," "I of Apollos," "I of Cephas," "I of Christ" (v12); three questions (v13); Paul glad he baptized few (vv14–16); sent to preach, "not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void" (v17).
- vv18–25 — **the word of the cross:** foolishness to the perishing, God's power to the saved (v18); Isaiah 29:14 quoted (v19); four questions (v20); the world through its wisdom did not know God (v21); Jews ask for signs, Greeks search for wisdom, "we preach Christ crucified" (vv22–23); to the called, Christ the power and wisdom of God (v24); God's foolishness wiser, His weakness stronger (v25).
- vv26–31 — **look at your calling:** not many wise, mighty, noble (v26); God has chosen the foolish, weak, base, despised, "the things that are not" (vv27–28), "so that no man may boast before God" (v29); Christ became to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption (v30); "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD" (v31, from Jer 9:24).

**Repeated words, with counts (NASB95):**

- "God" ×21 — vv1, 2, 3, 4 (×2), 9, 14, 18, 20, 21 (×3), 24 (×2), 25 (×2), 27 (×2), 28, 29, 30.
- "Christ" ×17 — vv1, 2 (×2), 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 17 (×2), 23, 24, 30. Ten of them in vv1–10, before the problem is named.
- "Jesus" ×10 — vv1, 2 (×2), 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 30; "Lord" ×8 — vv2 (×2), 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 31; "in Christ Jesus" ×3 — vv2, 4, 30.
- "wisdom" ×7 — vv19, 20, 21 (×2), 22, 24, 30; "wise / wiser" ×5 — vv19, 20, 25, 26, 27. Twelve in all, every one from v19 on.
- "foolish / foolishness" ×6 — vv18, 20, 21, 23, 25, 27.
- "call / called / calling" ×6 — vv1, 2 (×2), 9, 24, 26.
- "baptize(d)" ×6 — vv13, 14, 15, 16 (×2), 17.
- "so that" ×6 — vv7, 15, 17, 28, 29, 31.
- "things" ×6 — vv27 (×3), 28 (×3); "chosen" ×3 — vv27 (×2), 28.
- "world" ×5 — vv20, 21, 27 (×2), 28.
- "boast(s)" ×3 — vv29, 31 (×2); "not many" ×3 — v26; "Where is" ×3 — v20.
- "Jews" ×3 — vv22, 23, 24; "Greeks" ×2 and "Gentiles" ×1 — vv22, 24; 23.
- "cleverness / clever" ×3 — vv17, 19 (×2); "power" ×2 — vv18, 24; "cross" ×2 — vv17, 18; "crucified" ×2 — vv13, 23; "grace" ×2 — vv3, 4.

**Questions:** v13 fires three in a row; v20 fires four ("Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?").

**Lists:** speech and knowledge (v5); four slogans (v12); wise, mighty, noble (v26); foolish, weak, base, despised, things that are not (vv27–28); wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption (v30).

**Contrasts:** the church of God ⟷ at Corinth (v2). Divisions ⟷ made complete in the same mind (v10). Baptize ⟷ preach (v17). Perishing ⟷ being saved; foolishness ⟷ the power of God (v18). The wisdom of the world ⟷ the wisdom of God (vv20–21). Signs and wisdom ⟷ Christ crucified (vv22–23). Stumbling block and foolishness ⟷ power and wisdom (vv23–24). God's foolishness and weakness ⟷ men's wisdom and strength (v25). Foolish, weak, base, "things that are not" ⟷ wise, strong, "things that are" (vv27–28). Boasting before God ⟷ boasting in the Lord (vv29, 31).

**Shape of the chapter:** grace (1–9), a tear (10–17), the cross (18–25), the mirror (26–31). It starts with God calling them saints and ends with God taking every boast but one.

**Chapter theme (my words):** The church does not divide over Christ; it divides over pride. God cut the ground out from under every human boast by saving the world through a crucified Messiah and by calling nobodies — so the only boast left is in the Lord.

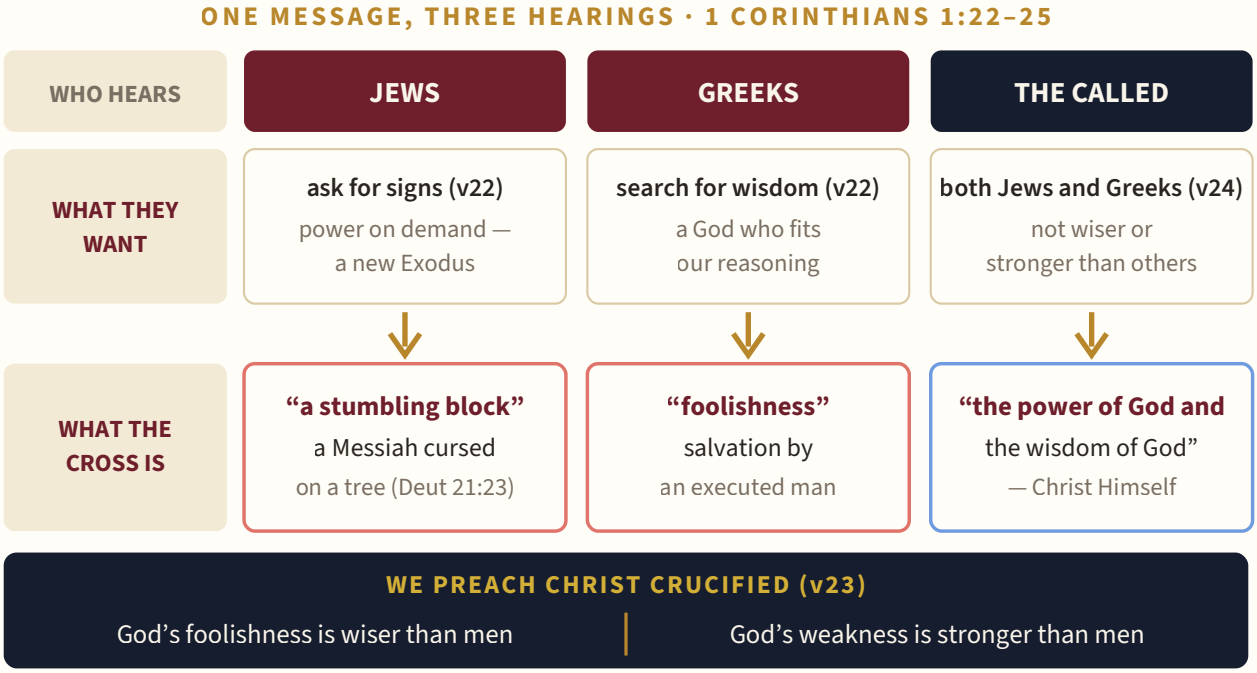
# 02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 1:24

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

FIGURE · ONE MESSAGE, THREE HEARINGS




*Read down each column: Jew and Greek bring their demands and find an offense or a joke; the called, from both, find Christ Himself.*

**Why the letter starts here.** Guzik notes that Paul plants his authority in his first words — literally "a called apostle" — through the will of God, not by the Corinthians' vote; Henry: "It was not pride in Paul, but faithfulness to his trust." Yet before he corrects anything he calls them saints. Guzik: "The Corinthians were called saints, not called to be saints" — the KJV's "to be" is supplied. They are holy by God's calling and Christ's work, not by their performance, which at Corinth was poor. Calvin (in Guzik) compares Paul to a surgeon who touches the wound gently before he cuts.

**Corinth.** Guzik, drawing on Barclay, Fee and Morris: intellectually alert, materially prosperous, morally corrupt — Fee's "New York, Los Angeles, and Las Vegas of the ancient world." Guzik's question for the whole letter: "is the church influencing the city, or is the city influencing the church?" The church was planted in that soil, and the soil showed.

**Thanksgiving for a troubled church (vv4–9).** Paul thanks God for proud, divided, carnal people — but for what *God* has done in them: grace given, gifts, speech, knowledge. Spurgeon (quoted by Guzik, and in his own sermon on

v6): "gifts are nothing, unless they are laid on the altar of God." Their future rests not on their progress but on God: Christ will confirm them to the end, blameless (v8), because "God is faithful" (v9). Henry: blameless "not in rigour of law, but from rich and free grace." Paul points a broken church to Jesus before he points to the problem.

**The divisions (vv10–17).** Paul *exhorts* by the Name rather than commanding. "Divisions" is *schismata*, a tear — Guzik stresses it means rents in the fabric, not polite differences of opinion. "Made complete" is *katartizō*, used of mending nets (Matt 4:21) and, Barclay notes, of setting a broken bone. Henry's rule is wise: "In the great things of religion be of a mind: but, when there is not a unity of sentiment, let there be a union of affections."

**What was the "Christ" group (v12)?** Views differ. (1) A super-spiritual party that claimed Christ against all human teachers — Guzik's "Jesus Party," "so carnal, following after mere men"; Henry: some "were for none of them, but Christ only." (2) Paul's own retort to the other three — less likely, since he lists it with the faults and answers it with "Has Christ been divided?" (3) Not formal parties at all: Guzik notes from 4:6 that Paul may have applied these names to himself and Apollos to cover factions around local people. Either way the root was pride: "It wasn't so much that they thought Apollos was great, but that they were great for following him" (Guzik). Henry: "Pride lay at the bottom."

**Baptism (vv14–17) — where our teachers differ.** Paul baptized Crispus (Acts 18:8), Gaius (Rom 16:23) and Stephanas' household (16:15). Guzik argues that if baptism were essential to salvation Paul could never thank God he baptized few, yet quotes Hodge that neglecting it is "a dangerous act of disobedience." Henry reads it as a matter of priority — Paul was sent "not so much to baptize as to preach" — and elsewhere in the chapter speaks of Christians "by baptism dedicated and devoted" to Christ. Spurgeon was a Baptist; Henry and Sproul baptized infants, and many in church history hold a higher view of what baptism does. All agree on Paul's point: the one who baptizes adds nothing, and nothing may stand beside the cross.

**Don't empty the cross (v17).** "Cleverness of speech" could make the cross *kenoō* — emptied. Spurgeon: "The cross of Christ is sublimely simple; to adorn it is to dishonour it." Sproul, preaching 1:17–25: "the greatest threat to the church in our day is based in our profound desire to be acceptable to the secular culture."

**The word of the cross (vv18–25).** Guzik: the message of the cross was like "message of the electric chair – except worse!" Notice the tenses: "those who are perishing" and "us who are being saved" — two groups on two roads, both still moving. Sproul: Caiaphas, Pilate and the centurion all looked at the same cross and saw different things; "For all outward appearances, it seemed to display the weakness of Christ. And yet the apostle says, it was the power of God." Isaiah 29:14 shows God has always overturned self-confident wisdom. Henry: "When God would save the world, he took a way by himself." The foolishness is in the *kērygma*, the message — "not such in truth, but in vulgar reckoning" (Henry).

**Signs and wisdom (vv22–25).** Guzik, quoting Fee: both demands become idolatry when they set the terms on which God must show Himself — the Jews had God "completely figured out," the Greeks made Him "ultimate Reason." A crucified Messiah was a contradiction to a Jew — "he who is hanged is accursed of God" (Deut 21:23; Gal 3:13) — and Paul himself once took that offense. To a Greek it was ridiculous; Henry's Greek scoffs, "What, hope to be saved by one that could not save himself!" But to "the called," Christ crucified is God's power and God's wisdom. Spurgeon: the effectual call "is always a special one."

**Not many wise (vv26–29) — whom did God choose?** Guzik applies it to the Corinthians themselves: "Look at yourselves. You're no great bargain." Henry reads it of the first preachers too ("A few fishermen were called out") and takes "the things that are not" as the Jewish way of naming Gentiles. *Not many* — not *not any* (the countess who was glad for the letter "m"). Calvin (in Guzik): God "brings all of them down to one common level." Spurgeon preaches it as election: "There is no doctrine more truly humbling than the doctrine of election." Not every

Christian reads verses 27–28 as Spurgeon does, but all agree on the purpose clause: "so that no man may boast before God."

**Christ our everything (vv30–31).** "By His doing" — *ex autou*, from Him — "you are in Christ Jesus." Christ became **wisdom** from God, and that wisdom is spelled out in three gifts: **righteousness** — a right standing credited to us, not earned (Guzik); **sanctification** — set apart to God, the same root as "sanctified" in v2; **redemption** — "a word from the slave trade" (Guzik). Henry: "He never discharges from the guilt of sin, without delivering from the power of it." Spurgeon: we are redeemed by price now, by power at His coming — "You are not yet redeemed altogether." Then Jeremiah 9:24: "let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me."

**Word study (Greek):**

- **apostle — *apostolos* (G652):** one sent with a commission; an ambassador (v1).
- **church — *ekklēsia* (G1577):** a called-out assembly; the Septuagint's word for Israel gathered (v2).
- **sanctified — *hagiazō* (G37):** set apart as holy; perfect tense — have been and remain (v2).
- **saints — *hagios* (G40):** holy ones; with **called — *klētos* (G2822):** "called holy ones" (vv2, 24).
- **grace — *charis* (G5485)** and **gift — *charisma* (G5486):** unearned favor and the gifts it gives (vv3–4, 7).
- **confirm — *bebaioō* (G950):** make firm, guarantee (vv6, 8).
- **blameless — *anenklētos* (G410):** unaccusable; no charge that will stand (v8).
- **faithful — *pistos* (G4103):** trustworthy; first word of v9 in Greek.
- **fellowship — *koinōnia* (G2842):** sharing, partnership — with His Son (v9; 10:16).
- **divisions — *schisma* (G4978):** a tear, a rent (v10; Matt 9:16).
- **made complete — *katartizō* (G2675):** mend, restore, set a bone (v10; Matt 4:21).
- **quarrels — *eris* (G2054):** strife, rivalry (v11; Gal 5:20; 1 Cor 3:3).
- **divided — *merizō* (G3307):** parcelled out into shares (v13; Mark 3:24).
- **made void — *kenoō* (G2758):** emptied (v17; Phil 2:7).
- **cross — *stauros* (G4716):** the Roman execution stake (vv17–18).
- **foolishness — *mōria* (G3472):** nonsense; in the NT only in 1 Corinthians (1:18, 21, 23; 2:14; 3:19).
- **perishing — *apollymi* (G622) / being saved — *sōzō* (G4982):** both present tense — on the way (v18).
- **power — *dynamis* (G1411):** might, ability (vv18, 24).
- **wisdom — *sophia* (G4678):** skill, insight; the word Corinth prized most (×7 in NASB95).
- **debater — *syzētētēs* (G4804):** disputer; only here in the NT (v20).
- **message preached — *kērygma* (G2782):** the herald's announcement, the content proclaimed (v21).
- **was well-pleased — *eudokeō* (G2106):** to take delight (v21; Matt 3:17).
- **signs — *sēmeion* (G4592):** miraculous proofs (v22; Matt 12:38).
- **stumbling block — *skandalon* (G4625):** the trigger of a trap; what trips a person up (v23).
- **chosen — *eklegomai* (G1586):** chose for Himself (vv27–28, three times).
- **shame — *kataischynō* (G2617):** put to shame, disgrace (v27).
- **base — *agenēs* (G36):** low-born, without family (v28; opposite of *eugenēs*, noble, G2104).
- **despised — *exoutheneō* (G1848):** count as nothing (v28; Luke 23:11).
- **nullify — *katargeō* (G2673):** make powerless, abolish (v28; 15:26).

- **boast — *kauchaomai* (G2744):** glory, brag (vv29, 31).
- **righteousness — *dikaiosynē* (G1343); sanctification — *hagiasmos* (G38); redemption — *apolytrōsis* (G629):** right standing, holiness, release by ransom (v30).

**Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):**

1. **Paul calls them saints before he corrects them** — sanctified, perfect tense, by God's act (v2).
2. **The Name comes before the problem** — "Christ" ten times in vv1–10.
3. **Their future rests on God's faithfulness, not their progress** (vv8–9).
4. **Division is a tear, unity is a bone set** — *schisma* and *katartizō* (v10).
5. **Party spirit is pride wearing a famous name** (Guzik, Henry).
6. **The cross can be preached into emptiness** — Spurgeon: "to adorn it is to dishonour it" (v17).
7. **The same cross sorts every hearer** — perishing and being saved are both present tense (v18; Sproul).
8. **God was glad to save this way** — *eudokēsen*, the Father's word at the Jordan (v21).
9. **Not many — not none** (v26).
10. **Christ is all four things we lack** — wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption (v30).

**Cross-references:** Num 16:3; Deut 21:23; 23:1; Prov 13:10; Isa 19:12; 29:14; 33:18; 55:8–9; Jer 9:23–24; Matt 3:17; 4:21; 9:16; 12:38; Mark 3:24; Luke 23:11; John 6:30; 17:21; Acts 9; 17:16–34; 18:1–18, 24–28; Rom 1:16, 22; 4:17; 9:33; 16:23; 1 Cor 2:1–5; 3:3–4; 4:6; 10:16; 15:26; 16:15; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13; 5:20; 6:14; Eph 4:1–6; Phil 1:6; 2:7; Col 1:22; 1 Thess 5:24; 1 Tim 3:10; Titus 1:6–7; Jas 2:5.

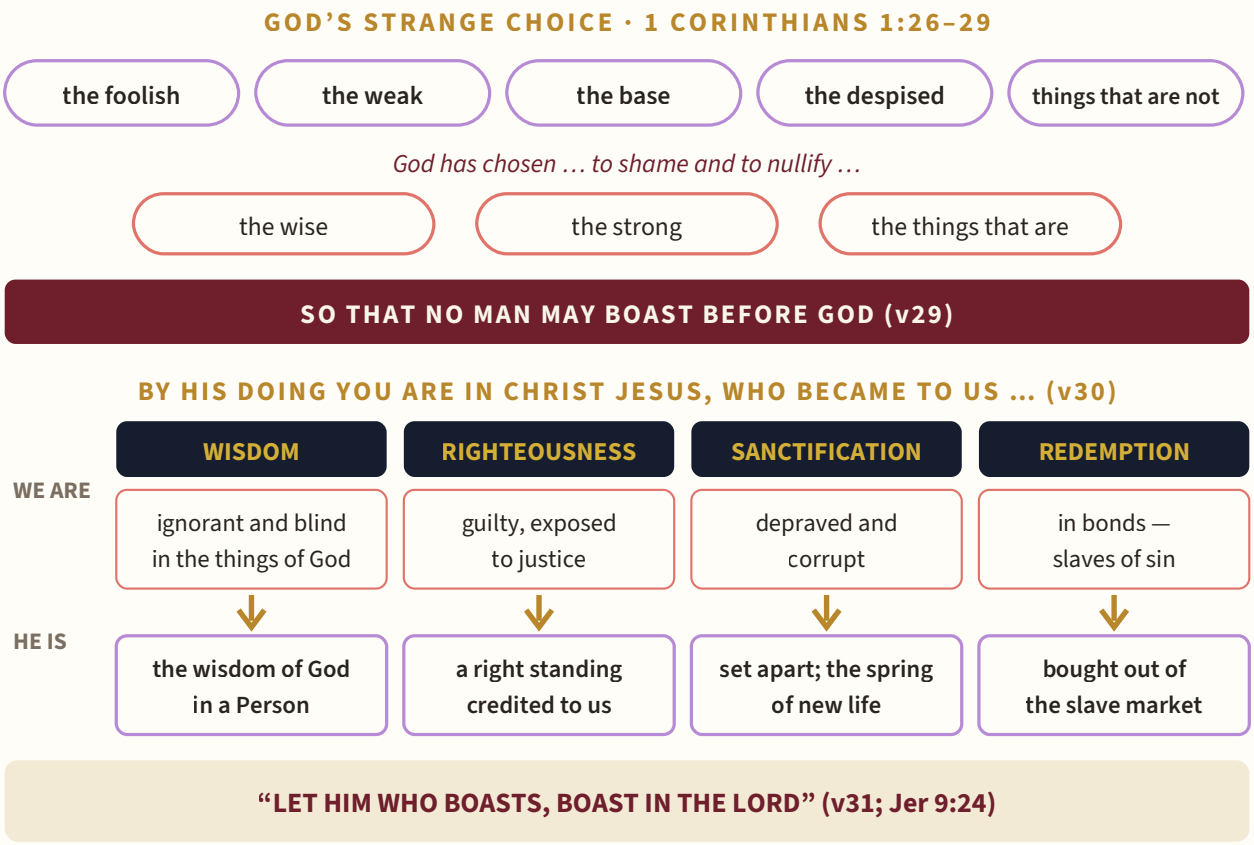
# 03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 1:9

"△ God is faithful, through whom you were ☆ called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

FIGURE · GOD'S CHOICE AND CHRIST'S FOURFOLD GIFT




*God picks the people the world counts as nothing, removes every ground for boasting, and then gives them Christ as all four things they lack (the "we are" row follows Matthew Henry).*

**Promise to trust — God finishes what He starts.** Paul wrote "God is faithful" (v9) to a church full of mess. Christ "will also confirm you to the end, blameless" (v8). My hope of finishing does not rest on my track record; it rests on His. For the man who has relapsed and thinks God must be done with him: read verses 8 and 9 again. God called you into fellowship with His Son, and God does not quit. Spurgeon says it plainly: "To be kept holy is better than merely to be kept safe" — and the same God does both.

**Truth to live in — I am a saint by calling.** Paul called the Corinthians saints before he said one hard thing to them. I spent years thinking "saint" was a word for somebody else. It isn't a grade I earn; it's a name God gives when He sets me apart in Christ Jesus. Now I get to grow into the name.

**Sin to confess — the pride under the division.** "I am of Paul" sounds like loyalty; it is really me making myself bigger by attaching to the right name. I confess the ways I rank teachers, churches, programs and even recovery groups, and look down on brothers who sit under someone else. "Has Christ been divided?" (v13). No. Then I shouldn't be.

**Command to obey — agree in Christ.** "That you all agree and that there be no divisions among you" (v10). The word for "made complete" is the word for mending nets and setting a bone. Unity in a church — or in a men's group — is not everyone thinking alike on everything; it is a broken thing being set straight around Christ. Henry's word helps me: where we can't have "a unity of sentiment," we can still have "a union of affections." This week I'll go to the brother I've been keeping my distance from.

**Warning to heed — don't empty the cross.** Paul refused clever speech "so that the cross of Christ would not be made void" (v17). When I teach, I can impress men or I can point them to Jesus crucified. Only one of those saves anybody. I don't have to make the gospel respectable; I have to make it plain.

**For the men I walk with — God chose the nobodies.** "Not many wise … not many mighty, not many noble" (v26). A record, a diagnosis, an addiction, a past — the world counts those against a man. God counts them as the very place He loves to work, "so that no man may boast before God" (v29). If you feel like one of "the things that are not," you are exactly who God picks to put the proud to shame. You don't need a résumé. You need Christ.

**Promise to trust — Christ is all four.** He "became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption" (v30). I don't have to manufacture my own wisdom, my own standing with God, my own holiness or my own freedom. Redemption is a slave-market word: someone paid to walk me off the auction block. For the man in a cell and the man in chains no one else can see, that is the gospel in one word.

**Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):**

1. Paul called a messy church "saints" before he corrected it. What would change if I saw the men at this table — and myself — the way God has already named us? (1:2; Acts 18:10) *Sanctified, perfect tense: set apart by God before we act like it.*
2. Where do I quietly say "I am of …" — a preacher, a program, a recovery group, a church — in a way that lets me look down on another brother? (1:10–13; 3:3–4) *Henry: "Pride lay at the bottom, and this made them factious."*
3. Is there a brother I have torn away from? What would "setting the bone" look like this week? (1:10; Gal 6:1) *Katartizō: mend, restore, set back in place.*
4. When I share the gospel, do I try to make it sound impressive or reasonable — and empty it — or do I let the cross be the cross? (1:17–18, 23; 2:1–2) *Spurgeon: "to adorn it is to dishonour it."*
5. What "signs" or "wisdom" do I demand from God before I will trust Him? (1:22–24; Isa 55:9) *Both demands set the terms; God answers with Christ crucified.*
6. Which part of my past do I think disqualifies me? How do verses 26–31 answer it? (1:26–31; Jas 2:5) *God chooses "the things that are not" — so that no one boasts but in the Lord.*

**Worship.** The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men (v25). The cross looked like the end of Jesus and was the power of God. The church at Corinth looked like a mess and was the church of God. I look like one of "the things that are not" — and by His doing I am in Christ Jesus. Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.

**Prayer.** Lord Jesus, You are my wisdom, my righteousness, my holiness and my redemption. Forgive me for boasting in men, in programs, or in myself. Heal the tears in Your body where I have helped cause them, and set

the bones back in place. Keep me from emptying Your cross with clever words. Thank You that You chose the weak and the despised — and You chose me. Keep me to the end, because You are faithful. I boast in You alone. Amen.

Scripture: New American Standard Bible® (NASB), © 1960–1995 The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. · Teacher material summarized from David Guzik (Enduring Word), R.C. Sproul (Ligonier), C.H. Spurgeon and Matthew Henry — see 1-Corinthians-1-Deep-Dive-Four-Voices.pdf for sources. · Importable: the companion .md carries the berean-study block.