



# DISCIPLES & THE EARLY CHURCH

## Unit 4 • The Corinthian Church

### UNIT DESCRIPTION

This fourth unit is taken from the book of 1 Corinthians.

"Paul had received information from several sources concerning the conditions existing in the church at Corinth. Some members of the household of Chloe had informed him of the factions that had developed in the church (1:11)... It is clear that, although the church was gifted (see 1:4-7), it was immature and unspiritual (3:1-4)."[1]

[1] Kenneth Barker, General Editor, NIV Study Bible, Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1985, p. 1732.



# REAL WISDOM

Disciples & Early Church • U4#1 1st-3rd Gr. • Sept.22, 2024

## Concept

The wisdom of God is the only wisdom that can always be trusted.

## Goal

Students will learn that God’s wisdom is far superior to the greatest wisdom of the world, and that we grow in God’s wisdom when we seek His wisdom through the Bible and other people who are wise.

## Passage

1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5; 3:19

Key Verse: "... the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God." 1 Corinthians 3:19

## Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p><b>Learning Activity #1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>A collage of pictures of people with whom the students are familiar, 1/small group</i></li> <li><i>“What Would You Do?”, 1/student</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Learning Activity #2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Old adult t-shirts, 3/room*</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Activity Stations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Chinese finger pulls, 3/room</i></li> <li><i>Clipboard with lined paper &amp; pencil, 1/room</i></li> <li><i>Fake microphone, 1/room</i></li> <li><i>Hat with “PRESS” sign taped to front, 1/room</i></li> <li><i>“Road to Heaven” large puzzle pieces</i></li> <li><i>“HEAVEN” sign</i></li> </ul>

### \*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

# Background Information (for the teacher)

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"Wisdom is not a minor theme in the Bible. The antithesis of wisdom is not obscure either—foolishness. Definitions are important here. Understand the difference between smart, intelligent, and wise. Smart refers to IQ. It is something that you are born with, and is not a virtue at all. Intelligence refers to education, and is also usually the indirect result of our birth and station in life. Even though it is the result of environment, and does require active work on the part of the individual, it is usually a value that was trained into us at a young age, and is always a matter of opportunity, geography, economics and history. It is very possible to be ignorant and yet smart. It is also unfortunately possible to be educated and yet foolish. Of course, even though intelligence is not a virtue, we would rather be intelligent than ignorant.

"Wisdom on the other hand, has nothing to do with birth or circumstance. It is accessible to all, but native to none. Proverbs says that 'foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child.' Foolishness is the natural state of all people. Yet foolishness is neither excusable nor necessary. Proverbs says, '... The way of a fool is right in his own eyes' Proverbs 12:15... 'He who trusts in his own heart is a fool' Proverbs 28:26... 'The fool has said in his heart, 'there is no God.' Psalms 14:1." [1]

In our culture today knowledge is more highly esteemed than wisdom. We are not encouraged to take time to think about what is right or wrong or reason through what or why we believe. Most people accept without question what they see and hear on the media, from peers or "experts." Often man believes he knows so much that he doesn't need God. But man is limited in his understanding (Is. 55:8). All wisdom comes from God, not us. Only those who know Jesus are able to be wise and grow in true wisdom. As you prepare this lesson, consider your perspective on wisdom and the extent to which you seek the wisdom of God in your daily life. Pray that you will challenge the children to consider and desire the wisdom that only comes from God.

Additional reading: Proverbs 3:7; Daniel 2:20-23; Romans 1:21, 22; James 1:5

[1] Dennis McCallum, "James 1:1ff," ©Dennis McCallum, June 2, 1987.

## Set Up

**Instructions:** Before class hang "HEAVEN" sign on the white board or bulletin board.

### Activity Stations:

- **Chinese Finger Pull**

- **Instructions:** Have the students put a finger in each end of the finger pull and try to pull both out. We naturally think that we only need to pull to get them out, but the key is to push in and then take one out at a time.

- **"Wisdom Interviews"**

- **Instructions:** Using the clipboard and fake microphone and wearing the "press" hat, interview the students for station WOASIS, asking them to define wisdom. Record their answers with their names so you can report one or two of their answers to the class in the INTRODUCTION.
- **Suggested questions:** What do you think it means to be wise or to have wisdom? Do you know anybody who is wise? Why do you think that person is wise? Do you think someone who makes all A's in school is wise? How about someone who is smart enough to win a TV quiz show? Are adults always wise? Are kids wise?

- **Large Puzzle—The Road to Heaven**

- **Instructions:** Divide students into 3 groups with a teacher in each. Give each group 4 puzzle pieces (one group will get five pieces). The teacher will read the words on the piece and the students will decide whether or not it is a statement of how we get to heaven—therefore, God's wisdom or man's wisdom. Separate the "heaven" pieces from the others. When all the groups are finished have a representative from each group take their "heaven" pieces to the area where the heaven sign is hanging and those three students will fit the pieces together.
- **Discussion:** We have put this road together with pieces of the puzzle that tell us how we get to heaven. What about the pieces of the road that did not fit? (They are man's wisdom.) Many people think they can go to heaven if they... (read the pieces that don't fit). But there is only one way to get to heaven. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." That is God's wisdom.

### Mini Drama Instructions:

The "reporter" who did the wisdom interviews in the Activity Station will do the INTRODUCTION. Pick one or two of the answers you were given and report that expert <<student's name>> stated that wisdom is...

Good morning/evening ladies and gentlemen, and thank you for joining us for this special edition of WOASIS news. I'm reporting today/tonight from the city of Corinth. It seems that a man named Paul was here and started some Christian churches. These churches have had a heck of a time—

## Incorporation Lg. Group

## Introduction Lg. Group

## Introduction Continued

lots of problems, you know. So this Paul wrote letters to these people to help them learn more about God and how to follow Him. The issue I am reporting on today is that of wisdom. Now I did some interviews earlier and heard some interesting thoughts about wisdom. I'd like you to hear what some of your friends had to say.

I want to thank you for joining me as we have tried to discover just what is this thing called "wisdom." I hope you will learn more about it today/tonight. Until next time, this is your WISE reporter, signing off.

## Transition

Thank you, WISE reporter. Let's continue to find out just what is wisdom.

## Lesson Lg. Group

Listen as I read **1 Corinthians 1:20-31**. The people in Corinth were very intellectual. They considered those who could debate or deliver a speech with great ability and impressive words or those who were very smart to be very wise. Those supposedly "wise" people were very proud and bragged about how smart they were. According to the Bible there is the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God. The truth is that the wisdom of people or the world is opposite of God's wisdom. Turn to 1 Corinthians 3 and follow along as I read verses 18 & 19. Our key verse this week is, "... the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God" (1 Corinthians 3:19). So why is that?

Back to chapter 1 verse 21 it says that people did not come to know God through their own wisdom, but through belief in Christ. In verse 22 Paul said that his message was always and only about Christ's death on the cross for their sins. God's wisdom says that Jesus is the only way to a relationship with God. The world's wisdom says that Christ's death on the cross is total foolishness, that we are acceptable to God by our own good works. It is a stumbling block to the Jews because they thought the Messiah would come as a rich, powerful, reigning king, not as a poor, common man. And the cross is foolishness to the Gentiles because it is totally unbelievable that a powerful, wise God would be born to a poor family in a stinky stable, live a life of poverty and die a criminal's death on a cross. In their minds, no god would stoop so low and no man should worship such a loser!

But the people who are foolish, weak and lowly by the world's standards are wise by God's standard because they know that that it is only by faith in Christ that they can have a relationship with God. Ordinary people like you and me who admit that we can't do anything to be acceptable to God are considered the foolish, weak and lowly by those who want to believe they are smart enough or good enough to be acceptable to God. However, our decision to believe Christ and ask His death to count for us is eternally wise. We not only come to know God but He also gives us His wisdom that is far superior to the greatest wisdom of the world and then we go to live with Him in heaven when we die.

## Lesson Continued

That's why Paul says in verse 31, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord," not himself or herself, but in the Lord who's great wisdom and mercy sent Jesus to the earth to provide a way back to Him.

1 Corinthians 3:19 says "... the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God" We aren't automatically wise when we accept Christ's forgiveness. We grow in God's wisdom when we seek His wisdom through the Bible and other people who are wise.

## Transition

Let's get into our small groups.

## Learning Activity#1 Sm. Groups

**Instructions:** Have the students look at the collage and determine who they think is wise. How do they come to their conclusions? Discuss what they think makes someone wise. The teacher in each small group should decide on 1 scenario from "What Would You Do?" to discuss. The students can take them home to go over with their parents.

- We often believe someone is wise because he is smart, famous, rich, or even religious. That is not what makes a person wise. So how does a person become wise? How do we get wisdom? A person becomes wise by knowing God, seeking God's wisdom and obeying Him.
- Have you ever asked God for wisdom about something? What happened?
- Let's look at the "What Would You Do?" handout.

**Missions Prayer:** Talk about and pray for the Oasis Giving Campaign.

Let's pray now. Let's ask God to help us learn to ask Him for His wisdom and to grow in His wisdom.

## Learning Activity#2 Lg. Group

### Game: T-Shirt Tower [1]

**Instructions:** Break into your small groups (if your group is smaller than 6, join with another group with a total of no more than 20 players). Lay a t-shirt on the floor for each group and see how many players you can get standing on the t-shirt without any touching the floor. Note: You can use this before the small group discussion if you need some active movement after all the sitting.

[1] Susan Butler, Non-Competitive Games, © 1986 Susan Butler, Bethany House Publishers, p. 174.

