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A Faulty View of the Good News

1:18 to 3:4

The mention of **the cross** in **1:17** introduces a long section on a faulty view of **the Good News**. Basically, the **Corinthians** needed a renewal of **their minds (Romans 12:2)**. They were trying to live **their** lives as believers on the basis of worldly **wisdom** which is self-centered. This kind of life is self-seeking, self-serving, and ultimately, self-destructive (**Luke 9:24-25**).



The World's Wisdom vs the Good News (1:18 to 2:5): Here we find a contrast between the foolishness of mankind, which they think is **wisdom** (Greek: *sophia*), and the **wisdom** of **God**, which they think is foolishness. The contrast is between **God's** true **wisdom** and man's supposed **wisdom**, between **God's** supposed foolishness and mankind's true foolishness.³⁵ Thus, **Paul** says in effect, "So you think **the Good News** is a form of *sophia*? How foolish can you get? Look at *the message*; it is based on the story of a crucified **Messiah**. Who in the name of **wisdom** would have dreamed that up? Only **ADONAI** is so wise as to be so foolish. Furthermore, look at *the recipients*. Yourself! Who in the name of **wisdom** would have chosen you to be the new **people of God (1:26-31)**? Finally, remember my own *preaching*. Who in the name of **wisdom** would have come in such weakness? Yet, look at the results (**2:1-5**).³⁶

We have all known someone who said that they were wise, only to be a pain in the neck. So, what's the difference between someone who is truly wise, and just a wise-guy? I suppose I

could list a dozen things or more. But one thing is true in every case. Wise people know how to use their intelligence to serve others and to help those around them. Wise-guys are for themselves. They use their intelligence to manipulate and to destroy.

In this section, **Paul** addressed those in the church at **Corinth** who claimed to be **wise**. They used their “**wisdom**” to divide the church and to promote themselves. These people took pride in worldly **wisdom**. They had not trusted in worldly **wisdom** for their salvation initially, but they had begun to emphasize worldly **wisdom** over **the Good News itself**. In their pursuit of **wisdom**, they had become arrogant wise-guys. Their so-called **wisdom** was worthless.³⁷



True Wisdom and the Spirit of God (2:6 to 3:4): Whereas false, human, worldly **wisdom** is a great hindrance to **the Good News**, true, divine **wisdom** flows **from the Good News**. To believers, **to those who are called, Messiah is God’s power and God’s wisdom (1:24)**. **Mature** (Greek: *teleios*) can mean *perfect*, or *complete in all its parts*, but it can also mean *going through the stages to reach an end-goal*. Here, **Paul** uses this term in the same way it is used in other forms by the writer to the **Hebrews (6:1 and 10:14)** to refer to salvation. **Those who are mature** are those who are redeemed and are completely trusting in **Yeshua Messiah**. **Paul** is not saying that **he** speaks **God’s wisdom** only when **he** is with believers who are *advanced* in the faith, but only when **he** is with believers *in the faith* - the saved. To all others it is **a stumbling block** or **foolishness (1:23)**. Obviously some believers are better taught, and some more obedient to **God’s wisdom** and the leading of **the Spirit** than others. But for every believer, **in all His wisdom and insight, He has made known to us his secret plan, which by His own will, He designed beforehand in connection with the Messiah (Ephesians 1:8-9)**. While those who reject **Messiah** hear **His Good News** as **foolishness**, to believers it as **wisdom - the wisdom of the Spirit of God**.³⁸