

Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 1:14 – 31

New American Standard Version

1 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus
2 and Gaius, 15 **so that** no one would say you were baptized in
3 my name. 16 **Now** I did baptize also the household of
4 Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized
5 any other. 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to
6 preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the
7 cross of Christ would not be made void. 18 For the word of
8 the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us
9 who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is
10 written, "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND
11 THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE."
12 20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the
13 debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom
14 of the world? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world
15 through its wisdom did not *come to* know God, God was
16 well-pleased through the foolishness of the message
17 preached to save those who believe. 22 For indeed Jews ask
18 for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; 23 but we preach
19 Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles
20 foolishness, 24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and
21 Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of
22 God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men,
23 and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26 For
24 consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many
25 wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many
26 noble; 27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world
27 to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of
28 the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the
29 base things of the world and the despised God has chosen,
30 the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that
31 are, 29 so that no man may boast before God. 30 But by His
32 doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom
33 from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and
34 redemption, 31 so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO
35 BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

Use the suggestions on the back page as a starting point for your own **Observation, Interpretation, and Application.**

Observation (What does it say?):

What words or phrases do you see in this passage that link ideas together or show the flow of Paul's thinking? Box words that show **cause and effect**, or logical development.

What words show contrast or a change in direction of Paul's thinking? Circle words that make **distinctions** between ideas.

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

How does seeing the logical connections and contrasts in Paul's ideas help understand what he wants to say (or does it)?

How do you define:

- Void (line 7)
- Wisdom (line 10)
- Cleverness (line 6, 11)
- Foolishness (line 8,13)
- Nullify (line 30)

How does understanding those words help clarify Paul's meaning?

How does Paul's use of logic and reason relate to his criticism of "cleverness of speech"? He is promoting "foolishness" – does his argument sound like foolishness?

How is this section on wisdom vs. foolishness related to the previous section about divisions in the church?

Application (What does it mean for me?):

How does Paul's affirmation of foolishness affect how you will share the Gospel with someone the next time you have the opportunity?

Inductive Bible Study

(A few general ideas)

Observation

(What does it say?)

What facts do you **observe** about the passage (repetition, comparisons, contrasts, cause and effect, unusual words, etc.)? Mark the passage (underline, circles, etc.) to help bring out the writer's thought process.

- Who are the people involved?
- What is the action taking place?
- What type of literature is the passage (poetry, history, didactic, etc.)?
- What details are included or left out?
- Are there any unusual words used?
- Is there any symbolic or figurative language used?
- What is the grammar of the passage (pronouns, prepositions, verb tenses)?
- Is there any repetition of words or ideas?
- Are there comparisons or contrasts?
- Are there indications of cause and effect?
- Are there indications of purpose (“in order that...”)?
- Are there conclusions (“Therefore...”)?
- Does the passage contain any explanations?
- Does the passage logically break into sections?
- How would you summarize the passage?
- What would be a good “headline” for the passage?

Interpretation

(What does it mean?)

What questions come to mind about the facts of the passage that would help you **interpret** the writer's meaning?

- How would the original readers have understood the passage?
- What is the main emphasis?
- Why does the writer use repetition, or contrast, or unusual words?
- What does the grammar or structure of the passage reveal about the writer's thought pattern?
- Is there a logical sequence in the passage?
- How are different ideas in the passage connected?
- Are there any new ideas or concepts presented?
- Are there difficulties in the passage?

Application

(What does it mean for me?)

How does the writer's meaning relate to your life? What specific application might the Holy Spirit want to show you?

- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a promise to be thankful for?
- Is there an attribute of God to worship?
- Is there an example to follow?

Read nothing into the Scriptures, but draw everything from them, and suffer nothing to remain hidden that is really in them. – J.A. Bengel