

GOSPEL of *Grace*
FELLOWSHIP

1 Corinthians 3:18-20

The Danger of Self Delusion

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Two Imperatives

1 Corinthians 3:18 (CSB)

Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks he is wise in this age, let him become a fool so that he can become wise.

- Self-deception is grounded in “this age”
- The protasis (if anyone) is a condition of the 1st class, assumed to be true
- The 2nd imperative gives the only way out

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1

This Age of Deception

1 Corinthians 3:18a (CSB)

Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks he is wise in this age...

- Self-deception is based on false thinking
- Self-deception rejects God’s wisdom which is always at odds with the world’s
- This age is temporary
- This age is under God’s wrath
- This age believes “the lie” of Satan

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2

Paul’s Purpose Clause

1 Corinthians 3:18b (CSB)

...let him become a fool so that he can become wise.

- The second imperative is a call to believe the gospel
- The “wise” are those who reject the lie and embrace the Truth!
- God’s wisdom is “the word of the cross”
- The option to please Christ and the world does not exist

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3

God’s Wisdom Is Not From Man

1 Corinthians 3:19 (CSB)

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, since it is written, He catches the wise in their craftiness;

- This theme was introduced in 1:18-25
- God’s wisdom is “the word of the cross”
- Man’s wisdom is religious works

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4

**The Futile Reasonings
of Human Religion**

1 Corinthians 3:20 (CSB)

and again, The Lord knows that the reasonings of the wise are futile.

- “Reasonings” is *dialogismos* (14 times NT)
- Futile “reasonings” are known by Christ (Lk 5:22; Lk 6:8; Lk 9:46, 47; Lk 24:38)
- Paul rebukes futile reasoning (Rom. 1:21)

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5

Implications and Applications

- The religion of man is based on 'the lie' and cannot be pleasing to God
- The world believes the lie; but we are called to believe the truth and be saved.
- There is no valid process whereby the wisdom of God will become popular with the world

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6

The Suppression of the Truth

Romans 1:18 (NASB)

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men **who suppress the truth** in unrighteousness

- God's wrath against sin shows the need for salvation (Romans 1:16, 17)
- No one can change reality through semantic manipulation!

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The Wicked Exchange

Romans 1:25 (NKJV)

who **exchanged the truth of God for the lie**, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

- Satan is the father of the lie (John 8:44; Genesis 3:3-7)
- The lie "you surely will not die" persists
- Jesus Christ is the truth and speaks the truth (John 8:45)

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8

The World Is Hostile to God

Romans 8:7, 8 (CSB)

The **mindset of the flesh is hostile to God** because it does not submit to God's law. Indeed, it is unable to do so. **Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.**

- This hostility is not resolved through 'church growth,' but conversion
- Boasting is excluded (Romans 3:27; 1 Corinthians 3:21)

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9