

1 Cor 3:18 – 4:5

Nov 4, 2018

The Deception of Human Wisdom

1Cor 3:18-23 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, he must become foolish, so that he may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, "He is THE ONE WHO CATCHES THE WISE IN THEIR CRAFTINESS"; 20 and again, "THE LORD KNOWS THE REASONINGS of the wise, THAT THEY ARE USELESS." 21 So then let no one boast in men. For all things belong to you, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all things belong to you, 23 and you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God.

Definition: "**deceive himself**" To cause someone to have misleading or erroneous views concerning the truth; to mislead, to deceive, to beguile, to seduce, to lead out of the right way into error.

Eph 5:6 Let no one deceive you with empty words

Gal 6:3 For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

Rom 7:11 for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

Rom 16:18 ... by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

2Cor 11:3 But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray

2Thes 2:3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first ...

Mk 4:19 but the worries of the world, deceitfulness of riches, ... choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful

1Tim 2:14 And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

Wisdom:

If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age -

Some saw themselves as wise in attaching themselves to a particular teacher.

- he must become foolish, so that he may become wise.

Wisdom is found in renouncing the wisdom of this world.

The way to become wise is to realize that we are fools;

the only way to knowledge is to confess our ignorance.

"let no one boast in men"

Definition: to express an unusually high degree of confidence in someone or something being exceptionally noteworthy;

1Cor 1:31 so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

1Cor 5:6 Your boasting is not good ...

Jas 4:16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.

2Thes 1:4 therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God ...

Jas 3:5 So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things ...

"All things are yours"

Paul, Apollos, Cephas – preachers and teachers are gifts to us

If they became people of spiritual wisdom, they would see that everything has been given to them in Christ.

The world = is ours in that as Christians we may enjoy the good things of this world (1Tim 4:3-5)

Life = is ours in that it cannot be taken from us until the time God has appointed (Ps 31:15).

Death = is ours in that it has lost its power over us (2Tim 1:10).

Things present = is ours in that in our circumstances we are able to rejoice in the Lord Jesus (Phil 4:4, 11-13).

Things to come = is ours because we are co-heirs with him (Jn 14:1-4; Rom 8:17; 1Cor 2:9).

They were acting as though they were their own masters, but they really belonged to Christ.

If you lack knowledge, go to school.

If you lack wisdom, get on your knees!

Knowledge is not wisdom.

Wisdom is the proper use of knowledge. (Vance Havner)

Three judgments

1Cor 4:1-5 Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy. 3 But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. 4 For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord. 5 Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.

“Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ”

Gk. huperetes = originally was used for a slave who was a rower on a Greek or Roman war ship.

A subordinate, servant, attendant, or assistant in general. The subordinate official who waits to accomplish the commands of his superior; (from The complete word study dictionary of the New Testament)

It's used 20 times in the NT and translated as “officer” 11 times; “minister” 5 times; “servant”; 4 times.

“and stewards of the mysteries of God.”

Gk. oikonomos = he controlled the staff; he issued the supplies; but, however much he controlled the household staff, he himself was still a slave where the master was concerned. (William Barclay)

The one thing that a steward must be is reliable.

Lk 16:10-12 “He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. 11 “Therefore if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you? 12 “And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? (Lk 16:1-13).

Paul speaks of 3 judgments that every man must face:

1) The judgment of others (to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court).

We should never allow the opinions of others determine what we believe or who we are.

2) The judgment of himself (I do not examine myself, the one who examines me is the Lord).

A man's judgment of himself can be clouded by self-satisfaction, pride or the loss of self-respect.

3) The judgment of God (do not go on passing judgment before the time) on the judgment day of the Lord.

Only God knows all the circumstances;

He knows the struggles that a man has had;

He knows the secrets that a man can tell to no one;

He knows what a man might have sunk to and He also knows what he might have climbed to.

Only God knows our motives. Man sees the deed, but God sees the intentions.

Deeds that looks noble may have been done from impure and selfish motives.

Many deeds which look base may have been done from the highest motives.

Remember two things:

If we escape all other judgments or shut our eyes to them, we cannot escape the judgment of God. Judgment belongs to God and we do well not to judge any man.

1Sam 16:7 ... "Do not look at his appearance ... for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

Rom 14:10 But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. (Rom 14: 3-4, 13)

References used in this study:

The Letters to the Corinthians; by William Barclay
Tyndale New Testament Commentary; by Leon Morris
Holman New Testament Commentary (I & II Corinthians)
The complete New Testament word study dictionary
Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament
Opening up 1 Corinthians
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