

The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians

All Things Belong To You

1 Corinthians 3:18-23

1. **Self-Deception** (v.18a)

God hates falsehood (Ex. 20:16; cf. Titus 1:2; Heb 6:18). Deception is one of the many dangers against which Christians must constantly struggle (cf. Matt 24:4ff). No amount of power, wisdom, or blessing prevents anyone from being convinced of something that is not true (cf. Gen. 3:6; Ex. 10:7; 1 Ki. 11:7). Every single lie has consequences, and telling lies to yourself so that you believe them to be true is an indication of a very serious problem (cf. 1 John 1:10).

2. **Intentional Humiliation** (v.18b)

The wisdom of the world is intoxicating in part because we are continually immersed in it and because it is what is most compatible with our flesh, our natural desires (cf. Gal. 5:16-17; Ja. 3:14-16). Whenever people respond to God's call to think and act according to His Word instead of according to what comes naturally, there are real-world ramifications (John 10:29-34: cf. Luke 18:23; 19:8).

3. **Omniscient Wisdom** (vs. 19-20)

God has not only declared that His wisdom is vastly superior to human wisdom, but He has shown it time and again by using the carefully devised plans of wicked men to bring about their own destruction (Dan. 6:1ff; Esther 6:6-9). The crowning activity of God's glorious salvation show how God had planned to use the carefully devised plans of wicked men in ways they had never intended (Acts 2:22-24).

4. **Common Belonging** (vs.21-23)

The divisions in the Corinthian church were fueled by worldly wisdom and were used as an opportunity for boasting (1 Cor. 1:29). The Corinthians were not to claim to be of a certain teacher's party, but instead the teachers belonged to and served the churches (cf. Eph. 4:11ff). All believers and all things belong to God and serve God.