

1 Corinthians 1:18-31 A Life Worth Living: “Wisdom-part 1”

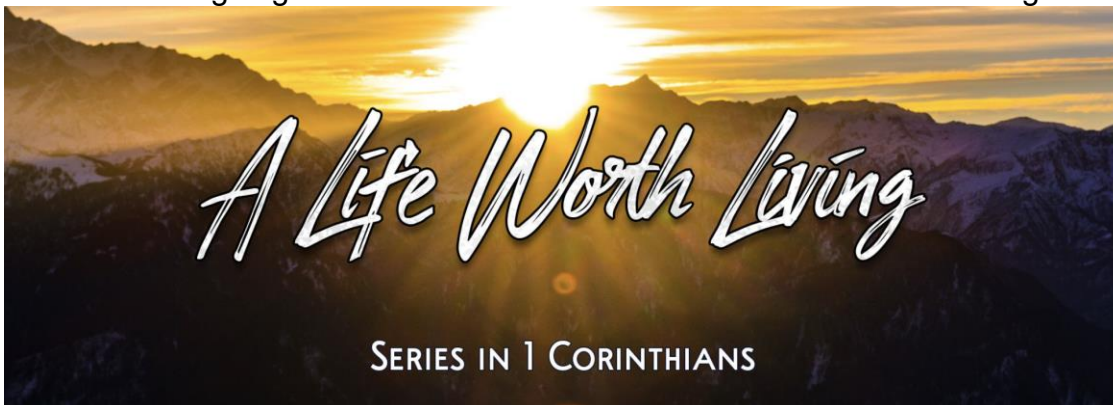
4.26.20

Let me ask you some questions as you are turning this morning:

#1 Is there a difference between intelligence and wisdom? #2 Can you be smart, but not wise? #3 Can you be wise and only have a limited education? The answer to all three of these questions is: **YES**. Yes, there is a difference between intelligence and wisdom... Yes...you can be smart but not wise, and yes...you can be wise and only have a 6th grade education.

Another question: Do you know people who are very smart, but aren't wise? I do. We all do. I know people who are very intelligent, very smart...they have tremendous influence and power...in the business world, some in the world of academia...some, politically, some athletically... They are considered very successful, even famous...but they're still not wise. You say, “Wise? In what way?”

Well, I'm talking about being wise...having wisdom, “GODLY WISDOM.” Yet, we live in a world where there will be those who see someone acting with Godly wisdom and say, “No...they're a fool...dumb...unintelligent...not smart”. They might look at a person operating in the “realm of Godly wisdom” and say, “They've lost their mind.” Yet, wisdom, Godly wisdom is something you and I must have if we're going to live an abundant life...to have...what we're calling in our series...



“A Life Worth Living.”

I want to show you a scene that the elites of the first century looked upon and saw the man in the middle as a fool...a total nut-case...



Jesus on a cross... Yes, to the world, that was foolishness...they would never call that

wisdom...they would call that: defeat... In fact, they would say, "That looks like the dumbest thing that could have ever been done by someone claiming to be a religious leader. After all, what kind of religious leader dies for His followers? Jesus does!! But, they call that foolish!"

Church family...based on the Word of God: Jesus' death on the cross was the wisdom of God in action. That's how the God of the universe accomplished salvation for us. You see, without the cross...there is no salvation... Without the cross there is no hope of heaven...we're doomed. But, because of the cross... We can sing: "*What a beautiful name it is, a beautiful name it is...the name of Jesus Christ my King...*" NOTHING COMPARES TO THIS...

There is victory in Jesus! There is victory in the cross and that's why Paul preached: *Christ and Him crucified*...and here's the thing...if a human being **can't** accept that...then they're foolish (that's what the Bible says)...they're unwise and it doesn't matter what their IQ is or how many degrees they have...they're doomed forever **with** their intelligence. You see, church family, it was **with** the death of Jesus Christ on the cross that God revealed the foolishness of man's wisdom and the weakness of man's power so that He might reveal His power through the death of His Son!

And that brings us to our passage today...and verse 18 says it so well...

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

¹⁸ For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." ²⁰ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach^[b] to save those who believe. ²² For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. ²⁶ For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards,^[c] not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹ so that no human being^[d] might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰ And because of him^[e] you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹ so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

See this picture...who does it depict?



Satan, of course. Did you know, according to George Barna's American Worldview Inventory 2020 survey more Americans believe in the existence of Satan than they do God? When asked about the existence of Satan, 56% agreed with the statement that "Satan is not merely a symbol of evil, but is a real spiritual being and influences human lives." But only 49% agreed with the statement, "They are positive that God exists." And get this...more people believe that Jesus was divine *and a sinner* than those who believe Jesus is divine *and sinless*. Barna concluded: "All of the spiritual noise in our culture over the last few decades has obviously confused and misled hundreds of millions of people in our nation."

Church, Solomon said, "There is nothing new under the sun." ...this confusion in our day was happening in first century Corinth as well. You see, the Corinthian Christians were struggling mightily with all the ungodly and pagan influences of their day. And these pagan influences were having a greater impact on the church, than the church was on the culture. Their way of thinking about issues were changing rapidly...and that's why a group in the church had written Paul, who was in Ephesus, to tell him...they're going off the rails Paul...they're not thinking straight! Their epistemology was changing... Have you ever heard of the term Epistemology? Let me show it to you with its definition.

Epistemology: the investigation of what distinguishes justified belief from opinion.

For example...what's your epistemology regarding gravity? What goes up, must come down. Do you believe that? You say, "Yeah...that's a law of nature." Okay, so that one was easy. How about this? What do you believe about gender or climate change or Coke versus Pepsi? How about politics and all that's going on with the coronavirus? Should Wilkes County be allowed to open back up? You see, we all have what is called a worldview... What is it?



It's how we see the world...like looking through a pair of sunglasses. If the glasses are tinted pink, we'll see everything as pink...if they're tinted yellow, we'll see everything with a yellow hue... It depends on the glasses, right? Here's a definition of worldview:

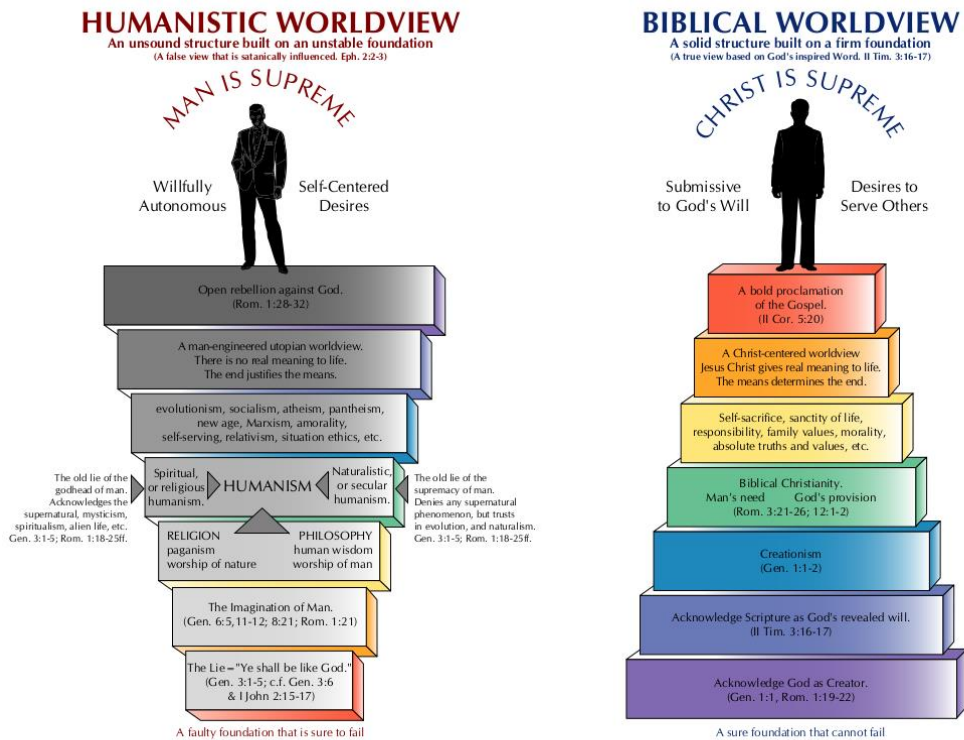
What is a Worldview?

- A way to observe and interpret reality
- A way to understand the world around us.
- Can enhance or limit our ability to observe and interpret reality



So, we can say it this way: What you and I see and understand about a subject or an issue is shaped by our worldview, our lenses...so that our epistemology (the way we think about an issue) has everything to do with how we'll see or view that issue.

Listen, what people were thinking about sin in Corinth was being affected by how they saw the world. The Corinthians were having to determine whether or not they would see the world through God's lenses or the worlds. And so do we. Today, you and I must decide...is Man supreme or Christ? As believers, I believe we can boil down "worldview" into two, broad, overarching categories: Humanist vs. Biblical. See this chart...



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On the left, man is supreme in the Humanist worldview...(humankind is king and needs no God and submits to no one), while the person following a Biblical worldview (on the right) is one who identifies Jesus as supreme and we submit to Him.

You see, the Corinthians were struggling with all kinds of competing ideas. Again, as a reminder...see the map...



See Corinth in the middle...it was a seaport town on the Aegean Sea with access to the Mediterranean, and that meant every idea imaginable floated into Corinth...like an open portal in our day...to filth on the internet, these seas brought in all kinds of worldviews! Unfortunately, much of what was brought in to city, crept into the church and that created the factions and cliques that we talked about last week and this was destroying the unity in the church and polluting the minds of the people.

You see, the Corinthians had moved from thinking biblically about so many matters to thinking worldly, humanistic. They were allowing the philosophies of their day to clutter and confuse their thinking. Look at verse 19 again, (which is actually a direct quote from Isaiah 29:14):

1 Corinthians 1:19-20

¹⁹ For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate."^[c]²⁰ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?


Where is the debater??... We can ask that same question today... We've got our own struggles don't we... After all, one of the greatest debates of our age continues to be: "Where did we come from?" Did we come from a Big Bang... 13.8 billion years ago (again, that's a new number...when I was in school, it was 13.1 billion years ago, then it went to 13.3 and then 13.4...now it's 13.8)...but, we don't want accuracy do we? Science doesn't change does it...like gravity...it's settled science right, THE BIG BANG? We won't hold evolutionists to an exact number...but, they want to tell us EXACTLY how we got here. From goo to you! From a bang in space...and don't you question that.

Do you see this lovely lady? That's Lucy...

CNN health Food Fitness Wellness Parenting Vital Signs LIVE TV Edition Q

How did Lucy, our early human ancestor, die 3 million years ago?

By Ashley Strickland, CNN
Updated 9:33 AM ET, Tue August 30, 2016




How did the world's most famous fossil die? 01:04

Story highlights (CNN) — When Lucy, the world's most well-known fossil, was discovered sticking out of a shallow Ethiopian stream bed in 1974, she provided new insight about life

Lucy, the Australopithecus fossil, is iconic. But how did she die?

More from CNN

- A Catholic diocese is reopening for Mass despite a statewide...
- Protective equipment costs increase over 1,000% amid competition...



That's our ancestor they say. Don't miss what you're looking at...that's a CNN article? Does CNN have an epistemology? A worldview? Is it humanist or Biblical? **Headline: "How did Lucy, our early human ancestor, die 3 million years ago?"** Secular scientists say Lucy died between 3 - 3.2 million years ago...again, who's counting. Lucy is known as perhaps the world's most famous early human ancestor, in that she was the first *Australopithecus afarensis* skeleton ever found...found in Ethiopia in 1974...and called "a human," they say... Here's what they found...only about 40% on her bone structure.



and yet, here's the artist's depiction of her



Look at that longing gaze...and check out the human eyes. Folks, do you think there's an agenda here? An epistemology, a worldview? Of course... it's from the Big Bang... to Lucy to YOU. And you've got to believe this, because Charles Darwin said it was so. Or did he? I thought his was the "**Theory** of Evolution"? No...not anymore...it's taught as fact, settled science, and if you don't believe it, you are labeled "unintelligent" and a "fool!" Well, the Bible said we would be. That's verse 25...

1 Corinthians 1:25

²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Church can I show you what the CNN article said about how Lucy died? They tell us they know how she died...3 million years ago. Are you ready? This is from a scientist now...**so you have to believe it.** His name is John W. Kappelman, a professor of anthropology at the Univ of Texas-Austin.

"From 46 feet in the air, Lucy fell out of her tree, fully conscious. She fell toward the ground rapidly at 35 mph and hit feet-first, sending an impact punching through her body that created fractures in her ankles, knees, hip and shoulder. Internal organs were probably punctured by this 'hydraulic ram effect.' Lucy pitched forward and instinctively put out her arms to break the fall, creating fractures in the bone there as well. It would probably be her final conscious act.

She twisted to her right, landing primarily on that side. That twist fractured her neck and tilted her head. Unconscious, broken and bleeding, she lay on the stream bed. If there was water present at the time, it gently moved the body a short distance along, naturally carrying her to a final resting place since members of her own species didn't." John W. Kappelman, professor of anthropology at University of Texas-Austin

Here's a picture from the CNN article of "how it would have looked":



The writer of the article, Ashley Strickland, who is identified only on the CNN website as a: “Space and Science Writer” with CNN...that’s all it says, so I looked her up. She has a journalism degree from the University of Georgia. She said this: “Falling is easy to imagine for anyone, and he, (Kappelman, the scientist), could picture the progression of her injuries as she plummeted to her death and lay at the bottom of the tree.” And then she quotes Kappelman again:

“It really hit me for the first time. Here she was in her death, reaching her arms out to try instinctively just to break her fall. It was at that moment that these broken bits of bone that I’ve taught for 30 years became a living individual. And it gave me this feeling of empathy, because I could identify with this. It’s like putting yourself there at someone’s death and being able to picture that, almost as if understanding that drops us into a time machine and we fly back through 3 million years so we’re there observing how this little individual died. It was in understanding her death that she became alive for me.”

Folks, I’m not sure what to say about that...I don’t want to be sarcastic. It almost brings me to tears...for Lucy? No... many other scientists (which I have shown you before here) say Lucy was an ape. 3 ½ tall, 60-pound female ape. No, I feel tears for Kappelman and Strickland. But, that’s how they would feel about me. They would look at me and say, “You have to believe the science, the evidence.” So, church family, we can view Lucy through the lens of Scripture or the lens of Humanism. The Bible says we are made in the image of God, not apes.

You see, Church family, there are people who refuse to give any credit to God on any subject. Did you hear, Andrew Cuomo, the governor of New York, who recently said, “God didn’t do that? You did.” He was speaking of who flattened the curve in NY. Cuomo is a humanist. Oh, he has said in the past that he believes in God...and he has even said as much during this pandemic; yet his words, “God, didn’t do that,” well...the claim he believes in God rings terribly hollow in the light of that quote.

The inhabitants of Corinth had their debaters of their age...and they totally dismissed God too. Again, they thought this whole idea of a Savior dying on a cross was absolutely foolish. Watch the flow of this...pick up in verse 21...

1 Corinthians 1:21-25

²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach^[b] to save those who believe. ²² For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Let that resonate in your heart: “The foolishness of God is wiser than men...” Folks, who are you going to believe? Where are you going to look for answers to the big question of life? **Turn to the Gospel of John, chapter 6.** Jesus had just taught that those who believed in Him were going to have to make a choice. Jesus in John 6, drew a line in the sand. Watch this...

John 6:59-69

⁵⁹ Jesus^[d] said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum. ⁶⁰ When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” ⁶¹ But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, “Do you take offense at this? ⁶² Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? ⁶³ It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴ But there are some of you who do not believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) ⁶⁵ And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.” ⁶⁶ After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. ⁶⁷ So Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?” ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, ⁶⁹ and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”

What about you? Do you believe in Jesus? Do you want to know why I know God exists, because He came here, to this earth, in the person of Jesus Christ! God exists because He came and dwelled among us. Emmanuel. Do you believe that?

Romans 1:16

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

The Corinthians needed to make choice. Man’s philosophies or God. Watch the progression of this...

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

²⁶ For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards,^[c] not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹ so that no human being^[d] might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰ And because of him^[e] you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹ so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

The world loves everything to be complex, so we can figure it out in our own wisdom. But you know, God didn't appeal to the world's wisdom because that's vanity. You know, God could have made a gospel that was so complex that only really smart people could have been saved...those who could figure it out. Like only those who can understand quantum physics advanced Calculus

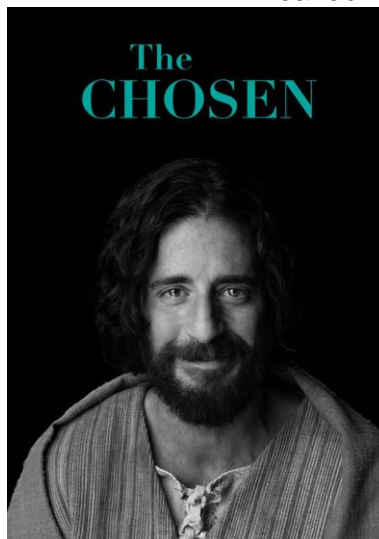
can be saved... But you see, that's not how God did it. Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding (Matthew 11:25) and revealed them to little children." Meaning, it's through a child-like faith that we're saved...

Do you remember last week...how I talked to you about the woman at the well? Did you know that (outside of His disciples) that woman at the well...(a woman of Samaria) was the very first person Jesus ever told that He was the Messiah? Take a look at this map...



Jesus had chosen to go to Jerusalem by way of Samaria. See Galilee and Nazareth at the top...it's a 90-mile journey to Jerusalem and the Jews always went around Samaria by way of the Decapolis (on the right side) and Perea and then into Jerusalem. Why? Because Samaria was considered unclean territory because the Samaritans had intermarried...part Jew, part Gentile...they were called half-breeds and Jews didn't go through there. But, Jesus did and He was called foolish, unwise for doing so.

He meets this woman at the well...while his disciples had gone into town to get food and Jesus has a conversation with this woman. A despised woman... A woman who drew water in the heat of the day because she was considered a "woman of the world." **Now, there's a new mini-series on YouTube that's free**...the entire first season...and it's called: THE CHOSEN.



They have done a fabulous job depicting this encounter. Watch this through the lens of what the world calls foolish and God calls wise...

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

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