

Subject: The Wisdom and Glory of God - Sermon Recap from 1 Corinthians 1:10-31

Dear Church Family,

It was a joy to gather together this past Sunday and open God's Word as a community. We hope this recap serves as a helpful reminder of what was shared and an encouragement to carry these truths into your week. For those interested in the teaching notes and a number of discipleship materials, please go [\[HERE\]](#).

Summary: The sermon explored the call to biblical unity found in 1 Corinthians 1:10-31, examining how the Corinthian church had allowed worldly wisdom, personal preferences, and factional loyalties to cheapen the very gospel that had saved them. Through the imagery of an orchestra submitted to a single conductor, we were reminded that unity in the body of Christ is not something we manufacture but something the Holy Spirit has already given us to maintain. The sermon challenged us to examine where we may be importing our own wisdom and preferences into the church in ways that divide rather than build up, and called us back to the cross as the only worthy center of our life together.

Takeaways:

1. Biblical unity is not uniformity. God has intentionally designed His church with great diversity in gifting, background, and perspective. The strength of the body lies in every different member submitting to one Lord, one faith, and one gospel, not in everyone looking, thinking, or worshipping the same way.
2. The cross must remain the center. The Corinthians lost their footing when they elevated human wisdom, personality, and preference above the message of the gospel. We are in constant danger of doing the same whenever we allow our opinions and reasoning to substitute for the truth of God's Word.
3. Brokenness before God is the posture that leads to genuine freedom. As Paul reminded the Corinthians by pointing them to their own stories, it was not their wisdom or strength that brought them to salvation. It was God's grace meeting them in their need. The person who has come to the end of themselves is the one positioned to truly glory in the Lord alone.

As you reflect on this sermon in the days ahead, consider where preferences or personal opinions may be creating unnecessary friction in your relationships within the body. Ask the Lord to reveal any area where self-wisdom has quietly taken the place of His truth. And be encouraged that the same grace that saved you is the grace that sustains and unifies His church.

With gratitude for the privilege of walking with you in faith, Pastor Jim

1 Corinthians 1:10-31

The Wisdom and Glory of God

I. Introduction: Conductor Jesus

- We are charged to keep (not achieve) the supernatural unity Jesus gives us.

Additional Scripture References: Eph 2, 4:3

II. 1 Corinthians 1:10-17: Biblical Unity is a First Order Priority

- Unity NOT uniformity
- The diversity in our unity is Christ's design strength and not a flaw
- The bible teaches us how to properly deal with non-essential differences (as well as essential difference) in the church.

Additional Scripture References: 1 Cor 12:14-19, 24-26; Eph 4:1-6; Ro 14:1-8; Ro 14:5, 14:1; Eph 4:1-6, 4:15; Phil2:1-5; Ro 14; 1 Cor 8-10

III. 1 Corinthian 1:18-25: How do you see the cross?

- Both Jew and Gentile we busy fashioning a God of their own making.
- In so doing, they both cheapened and missed the cost of Calvary in offering new life to any that will confess Jesus as Lord.

Additional Scripture References: Is 29:14

IV. 1 Corinthians 1:26-31: Look No Further Than the Mirror

- Everything good in this life rests in Christ alone.

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The Wisdom and Glory of God

1 Corinthians 1:10-31

I. Introduction: Conductor Jesus

1. In our opening of this book a couple of weeks ago, we noted that the church is to look nothing like the world. *Instead we are set aside by God to be His ambassadors, servants, and children in obedience, faithfulness, worship, and love.* As we read in **Ephesians 2**, just as His blood at Calvary offers us new life, *His blood was also shed that His church would be birthed in supernatural unity for His purposes and glory.*
2. Additionally, we noted that Paul commended the Corinthians for coming short in no spiritual gift...*oh that this part of the Corinthian testimony would be our testimony as well.* Think of the implications of our having all the spiritual gifts functioning in our body...*our obedience in faithfully using them would certainly bring Him much glory.*
3. Today, in preparation for the stark transition Paul is making in correcting the Corinthian saints, I want to consider music; *specifically the music of an orchestra.* I know it seems funny, but an orchestra has violins, clarinets, trumpets, drums, and flutes—*instruments that sound nothing alike and were never meant to.* If every musician insisted on playing the same note in the same way, you wouldn't have music—you'd have a great cacophony of noise masquerading in the costume of unity.

What makes an orchestra beautiful isn't uniformity; it's every different instrument submitted to one conductor, one tempo, one song. **Ephesians 4:3** doesn't call us to “*achieve*” unity—it calls us to “*keep*” the unity already given by the Spirit of God – a unity of our belonging to Christ and to each other, the church. *You see, the*

music was never in our hands to create. It's in our hands to perform as conductor Jesus leads.¹

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II. 1 Corinthians 1:10-17: Biblical Unity is a First Order Priority

1. In the opening verse Paul, with the full weight of his apostolic authority, pleads for unity. The Greek word for 'plead' here means using the utmost persuasion toward drawing all into unity. What's more, Paul's pleading in the name of Jesus is as if Jesus Himself is pleading with His children to walk in unity...this image is stark as we consider Jesus pleading with His church to NOT cheapen His death at Calvary by dividing over non-essential issues.

A. I think it's important we hear that this is not a rules-based religious creed. Rather, we are unified in Christ because of His grace and love! He gave of Himself all the way to death, and we cheapen *not* just His death, but His grace when we unnecessarily divide.

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2. Those with bibles, please turn with me to 1 Corinthians 12. I think it important to understand that Jesus is not calling us to uniformity, but unity. Let's pick up in v14-19.

¹⁴ For in fact the body is not one member but many.

¹⁵ If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁷ If the whole body *were* an eye, where *would be* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *would be* the smelling?

¹⁸ But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. ¹⁹ And if they were all one member, where *would be* the body *be*?
- 1 Co 12:14–19

Now pick up in v24-26:

¹ Adapted from a Claude generated story dated July 28, 2026 using the following prompt. "The modern day church is quick to divide over matters that should NOT cause division. Write 3 very short sermon illustrations highlighting the church's requirement to stay in the supernatural unity of the holy spirit."

...But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, ²⁵that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. ²⁶ And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. - 1 Co 12:24–26

3. Here Paul is making clear the Lord purposefully designed His church to live in unity (not uniformity or sameness) of shared purpose with great diversity in gifting and contributions. Simply put, His design is a strength and not a flaw.

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Now shift with me to Ephesians 4:1-6:

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, ² with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, ³ endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

⁴ *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

- Ephesians 4:1–6

4. As we read here, biblical unity is NOT behavioral or aesthetic, but spiritual in nature with theology and doctrine regarding the gospel as central pillars. While we won't take the time to read **Romans 14:1-8** today, that passage clearly indicates that the body of Christ is to tolerate very real differences on non-essential issues. This leads to the obvious question of what are the non-essential issues that most commonly create friction and even division in the church? Some of the more common ones include:

church governance, baptism, spiritual gifts, end times/rapture, creation, Calvinism vs Arminianism (vs Biblicalism), church practices, women as pastors/elders, and Christian liberty in a wide variety of areas (alcohol, tobacco, tattoos, dancing, cards, movies, secular music, dietary choices, dress, etc), along with Israel and the church or dispensationalism.

5. Consider that while the church was officially birthed at Pentecost, it was conceived in the atoning death of Jesus Christ – **it is His creation for His holy and good purposes!** Thus, it seems wise for us to be attentive to our duties, responsibilities, and privilege in actively building unity and rejecting division in the body of Christ. **With that in mind, here are a couple of applicational thoughts for us as a church family:**

A. Preferences, form, and methodology are NOT reasons for division. **Denial of essential gospel truths, unrepentant ongoing sin within the church, false teaching, idolatry, and rejection of spiritual authority in correction and discipline are biblical reasons for division.**

B. God offers us a series of tenets in helping us to properly deal with non-essential differences in the body toward achieving our God-given mandate of maintaining the biblical unity, including:

- Hold convictions based on Scripture (Romans 14:5).
- **Avoid quarrels over disputable matters (Romans 14:1).**
- Pursue unity in the body (Ephesians 4:1–6).
- **Speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).**
- Show humility toward those who differ (Philippians 2:1–5).
- **Recognize that mature believers may reach different conclusions on some non-essential doctrines while remaining faithful to Christ (Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 8–10).**
- Following the lead of God’s appointed spiritual leaders (Heb 13:7)

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6. As we travel through the rest of this passage, we see that there have been factions formed around differing group’s favorite leaders. **From the grammar, it does not seem this division had been fomented or endorsed by the named leaders, but was people’s preferences leading them to choose leaders they favored without regard to the central issue at hand – THE GOSPEL. V17 makes clear that baptism and a false gospel were central to Paul’s correction here.**

III. 1 Corinthians 1:18-25: How Do You See the Cross?

1. The Corinthians had lost track of the gospel. In a great warning for us, they brought their worldly wisdom and power into the church and, in so doing, corrupted their testimony of Jesus.
 - A. To the worldly (or foolish in v18), the message of the cross represents pain, suffering, and death.
 - B. To the Christ-follower (or saved in v18), the message of the cross represents redemption and eternal life.
2. In Vs19-21, Paul draws the infinite contrast between the wisdom of God and man. His series of rhetorical questions emphasize that man cannot save himself – indeed can't even see his/her need for salvation – but offers a laser-like focus of our desperate need of a Savior.
3. In quoting **Isaiah 29:14** here in v19, Paul is directly challenging the man-wisdom-centric works-based view of salvation. As one commentator noted, it is this view of salvation being earned which is the unifying concept of every other world religion as seen in their feasts, fasts, pilgrimages, penances, sacrifices, sufferings, rules, and rituals.² In great contrast to this works-based view, in v21, Paul reminds the Corinthians that it's God's word and only His word that saves. In short, we are to focus on the message of the gospel of grace and NOT the messenger.
4. In Vs22-25, Paul (knowing mankind's hearts) cuts off any possible escape route both the Jews and Gentiles might use to nuance and justify their positions. You see...
 - A. The Jews wanted the kinds of signs God had given them in the past. The kinds of signs with God showing His power through them as they vanquished yet another hated enemy – the

² John Phillips, *Exploring 1 Corinthians: An Expository Commentary*, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), 1 Co 1:10–4:21.

Romans. What they did NOT understand was that the real rescue story was NOT from a foreign invader, but from their own hearts. A truth that is for every one of us!

B. Culturally, the Romans held wisdom as the highest ethic of reason and so any God they worshipped needed to be within their ability to reason. Is this so different than in our day? We live in an age of information, podcasts, streaming, and other real-time communication tools where people routinely import and substitute their wisdom as though they are God.

C. Sorrowfully, both groups were fashioning a God of their own making and Paul, in a great warning to us also, was having none of it. Instead, Paul drew their attention back to God and His word, for only truth sets them (and us) free. The Jews and Gentiles idolatry had a firm grip on their hearts and this is precisely why they needed new hearts to see the risen Christ as Messiah.

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IV. 1 Corinthians 1:26-31: Look No Further Than the Mirror

1. The cliff notes summary for this section might read something like “Because God is God and you are not God, glory in Him and not yourself”.
2. Digging a little deeper, we see the heart of natural man is self-righteous, self-seeking, and self-serving. As Paul notes in v26, few of these people will respond to God’s gracious offer of salvation as they reject God in favor of their own wisdom and power. As we have seen in this passage, the natural man chooses other men and their wisdom over the life-saving-live-sustaining gospel.

In contrast, the broken person, no matter the cause, has come to see that everything good and right in their lives, including salvation, rests in Christ alone. The broken person has come to see their power and wisdom is insufficient and just plain foolish. The broken and repentant person has come to glory in the grace of God.

3. In a bit of irony, Paul is pointing to the Corinthians themselves as a proof-positive contrast of the prideful, self-righteous man and the one surrendered to God. *They had lived their lives separated from God by their own foolishness only to have Him revealed and received by them unto salvation.* In something I am sure none of us would ever do (dripping sarcasm here), now they were bringing back in the very foolishness that alienated them from God in the first place. *Specifically, they were judging Paul and other messengers by their preferences, opinions, wisdom, and power and NOT according to the truth that had set them free!*
4. Let's close with Paul's closing. *He calls the Corinthians to die to self and instead glorify God.* Consider the essence of what he is communicating with them...*'it is only by God's wisdom and power that we may be found in Him and only in Him may we be righteous and redeemed.'*

Two thoughts as we close...(1) If Paul's words have convicted you to lay down your foolishness and instead live increasingly in the wisdom and power of God, let's take a moment to glorify God with our praises. //// (2) *And, if you have never confessed Jesus as Lord, I want to invite you to do so now...*

[Prayer]

5-Day Devotional

1 Corinthians 1:10-31

The Wisdom and Glory of God

Day 1: One Conductor, One Song

Reading: Ephesians 4:1-6

Devotional: Unity in the body of Christ is not something we manufacture — it is something the Spirit of God has already established and entrusted to our care. Just as every instrument in an orchestra is distinct yet submitted to one conductor, every believer brings a unique voice to the church while remaining under the lordship of Christ. The calling here is not to create uniformity but to guard a Spirit-given unity rooted in one Lord, one faith, one baptism.

Ask yourself today: am I performing the part God assigned me, or am I insisting others play my note?

Day 2: The Cost of Division

Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:10-17

Devotional: When Paul pleads for unity in the name of Jesus Christ, he is not issuing a polite suggestion. He is urging the Corinthians — with the full weight of apostolic authority — to recognize that division over non-essential matters cheapens the very death that purchased their belonging to one another. Every unnecessary fracture in the body of Christ is a statement about how little we value the cross.

Consider today where preferences, opinions, or personalities have quietly replaced the gospel as the center of your relationships within the church. Repentance and reconciliation are always available.

Day 3: The Foolishness That Saves

Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Devotional: The message of the cross has never been designed to impress the self-sufficient. To those who trust their own reasoning, their own strength, and their own moral record, the gospel will always appear insufficient. But to those who have come to the end of themselves, it is the very power and wisdom of God.

Paul's warning to the Corinthians remains a warning to every generation: when we import the world's standards of wisdom and power into the church, we obscure the gospel we were entrusted to proclaim. The cross does not need our improvement. It needs our surrender.

Day 4: The Mirror Does Not Lie**Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:26-31**

Devotional: Paul points the Corinthians to their own stories as evidence of God's method. He did not choose the powerful, the influential, or the intellectually elite to shame the world's wisdom — he chose the broken, the overlooked, and the lowly. This was not an accident. It was a declaration that salvation belongs entirely to God and that no human being may stand before Him and claim credit.

Look honestly into the mirror of your own testimony today. Whatever good is present in your life, whatever freedom you walk in, whatever hope anchors you — it rests in Christ alone and nowhere else.

Day 5: Glory in Him Alone**Reading: Jeremiah 9:23-24**

Devotional: Jeremiah 9:23-24 delivers the same verdict Paul builds toward in 1 Corinthians 1 — that no person has grounds to boast in wisdom, strength, or wealth, but only in the knowledge of the God who exercises lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness. The natural heart resists this conclusion because self-glory feels like strength. But Paul and Jeremiah together testify that self-glory is precisely what keeps a person blind to their need for a Savior.

The broken person, the surrendered person, the one who has stopped fashioning God in their own image — that is the person who finally begins to see clearly. Glory in Him today.

Small Group Study Guide

1 Corinthians 1:10-31

The Wisdom and Glory of God

Opening Prayer: Pray that the Lord would open your eyes to see and understand His word as you discuss the sermon.

Key Takeaways: Query the group for takeaways first...you may stay with one or more of those.

1. Biblical unity is a first-order priority. Unity in the church is not something we manufacture. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit that we are called to actively maintain. Division over non-essential issues cheapens the grace of Christ and the cost of His sacrifice at Calvary.
2. Unity is not uniformity. Just as an orchestra requires many different instruments submitted to one conductor, the church requires many different people with different gifts, backgrounds, and perspectives submitted to one Lord. Diversity within the body is by God's design and is a strength, not a flaw.
3. The gospel must remain central. The Corinthians had allowed personal preferences, favorite leaders, and worldly wisdom to crowd out the centrality of the gospel. When anything other than the message of the cross becomes the organizing principle of church life, the church loses its way.
4. God's wisdom confounds human wisdom. The cross looks like weakness and foolishness to the world. To those who are being saved, it is the power and wisdom of God. Every attempt to replace God's wisdom with human reasoning is a form of idolatry.
5. Brokenness is the doorway to grace. The person who has come to the end of their own wisdom and power is precisely the person God uses. The call to glory in God alone is not a religious formality but a daily surrender of self-reliance.

Discussion Questions: Did the Holy Spirit prompt any questions with you? Start with those.

1. The sermon described Paul pleading for unity with the full weight of his apostolic authority, as if Jesus Himself were pleading with His church. What does it say about the seriousness of division that Paul frames his appeal this way?
2. The sermon drew a distinction between unity and uniformity. In your own words, what is the difference? Where have you seen a church or group confuse the two?

3. The sermon offered a list of non-essential issues that commonly create friction in the church, including church governance, baptism practices, end times views, Calvinism versus Arminianism, and various questions of Christian liberty. Are there any on that list that have personally caused you tension or conflict? How did you navigate it?
4. Ephesians 4:3 calls believers to keep the unity of the Spirit rather than to create it. What is the practical difference between keeping something and creating something? How does that change the way you approach conflict within the church?
5. The sermon also identified legitimate reasons for division, including denial of essential gospel truths, unrepentant ongoing sin, false teaching, and rejection of spiritual authority in correction and discipline. How does a church family discern the difference between a disputable matter and a matter that genuinely warrants separation?
6. The sermon noted that to the worldly, the cross represents pain, suffering, and death, while to the follower of Christ it represents redemption and eternal life. How has your own view of the cross changed over time?
7. Paul references Isaiah 29:14 to challenge the idea that human wisdom can produce salvation. The sermon pointed out that works-based salvation is the unifying concept behind every other world religion. Why do you think the human heart is so drawn to the idea of earning its way to God?
8. The sermon observed that the Jews wanted a God who would demonstrate power through military victory over Rome, while the Greeks wanted a God who fit within the boundaries of human reason. In what ways do people today fashion a God of their own making? Have you ever caught yourself doing this?
9. The sermon stated that the real rescue story was not from a foreign invader but from our own hearts. What does it look like practically to recognize that the greatest enemy we face is within us rather than around us?
10. The sermon described the natural human heart as self-righteous, self-seeking, and self-serving, and contrasted this with the broken person who has come to see that everything good in their life rests in Christ alone. Where do you currently find yourself on that spectrum? Be honest.
11. The sermon pointed out that the Corinthians were bringing back the very foolishness that had once alienated them from God, specifically by judging messengers according to personal preference and worldly wisdom rather than

the truth of the gospel. In what areas of your own life are you tempted to reintroduce old patterns of self-reliance or worldly thinking?

12. Paul's closing charge is essentially this: stop glorying in yourself and start glorying in God. What does it look like in daily, practical terms to shift your glory from self to God? What habits, attitudes, or thought patterns would need to change?

Practical Applications: Query the group for applications first...you may explore one or more of those.

1. For Personal Reflection: Identify one non-essential issue where you have allowed a preference or opinion to create distance between yourself and another believer. Pray specifically about that relationship this week and consider whether a conversation of reconciliation is needed.
2. For Personal Discipline: Each morning this week, begin your day by acknowledging one specific area where you are tempted to trust your own wisdom or strength rather than God's. Bring it to Him in prayer before you bring it to your own reasoning.
3. For Group Practice: As a group, revisit the list of non-essential issues mentioned in the sermon. Together, practice articulating why each one does not constitute a reason for division, grounding your reasoning in Scripture rather than tradition or preference.
4. For Outward Focus: The sermon reminded us that the gospel message, not the messenger, is what saves. This week, look for one opportunity to share the message of the cross with someone outside the church, keeping the focus on Christ and His work rather than on your own story or persuasive ability.
5. For Accountability: Share with one other person in the group one specific way you have been substituting your own wisdom for God's wisdom in a decision you are currently facing. Invite them to pray with you and to follow up with you next week.

Closing Prayer Points:

- Pray a prayer of surrender and praise

Discussion Questions

1 Corinthians 1:10-31

The Wisdom and Glory of God

1. The sermon describes the church as an orchestra where unity comes not from uniformity but from every different instrument submitting to one conductor -- in what practical ways does your life reflect submission to Jesus as conductor, and where might you be insisting on playing your own note?
2. Paul pleads for unity using the full weight of his apostolic authority, framing division over non-essentials as cheapening the death of Christ -- how does viewing unnecessary division through that lens change the way you approach disagreements within your church family?
3. The sermon distinguishes between essential gospel truths and non-essential issues such as church governance, baptism styles, and Christian liberty -- how do you personally discern where to draw that line, and what Scripture guides your process?
4. Ephesians 4:3 calls believers not to create unity but to keep a unity the Spirit has already given -- what does it look like in daily life to actively maintain something you did not create rather than striving to build it from scratch?
5. The sermon notes that every world religion is unified by a works-based view of salvation through feasts, fasts, pilgrimages, and rituals -- in what subtle ways might a works-based mindset still creep into your own understanding of your standing before God?
6. Paul warns that both the Jews seeking signs and the Greeks seeking wisdom were fashioning a God of their own making -- in what ways might modern Christians, surrounded by podcasts, streaming, and information, be guilty of the same subtle idolatry?
7. The sermon argues that the broken person has come to see that everything good and right in their life rests in Christ alone -- what has God used in your own life to bring you to that place of brokenness, and how has it shaped your dependence on Him?
8. Paul points to the Corinthians themselves as proof that God chooses the weak and foolish things to shame the wise and strong -- how does this reality reshape the way your church community values and includes people the world might overlook or dismiss?

9. The sermon observes that the Corinthians were bringing back into the church the very foolishness that had once alienated them from God -- what patterns or attitudes from your pre-faith life do you find yourself most tempted to reintroduce into your walk with Christ?
10. Paul's closing call is to die to self and glory in God alone, reminding the Corinthians that righteousness and redemption are found only in Christ -- what specific area of your life most needs to be surrendered to that truth this week?

Dinner Conversation Starters
1 Corinthians 1:10-31
The Wisdom and Glory of God

1. One Conductor, Many Instruments

If our family were an orchestra, what “instrument” would each person be, and how can we better follow Jesus as our Conductor together?

2. Unity Without Sameness

What is the difference between unity and everyone being exactly the same? How can we show love when we disagree about preferences?

3. The Cross: Foolish or Powerful?

Why do you think some people see the message of the cross as foolish, while Christians see it as the power and wisdom of God?

4. Preferences vs. Gospel Truth

What are some things Christians might disagree about that should not divide them? What truths are so important that we must stand firm on them?

5. Boasting in the Lord

Paul reminds us that everything good we have comes from God. What is one thing God has done in your life that you can thank Him for tonight?

Family Conversation Guide for Children & Early Teens

1 Corinthians 1:10-31

The Wisdom and Glory of God

AGES 5-7: SIMPLIFYING THE MESSAGE APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Different Instruments, Same Song**: Help kids understand that God made people different on purpose. Friends may like different games, clothes, foods, or activities, but we can still love each other and play kindly together.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) What are some ways your friends are different from you?
 - (b) If someone wants to play a different game, how can you respond kindly?
 - (c) How can our family “follow Jesus as our Conductor” when we don’t all want the same thing?
2. **Don’t Make Teams Against People**: Teach kids not to form little groups that leave others out. Paul corrected the Corinthians for dividing into groups around favorite leaders. Young kids often do this through “best friend” groups or playground exclusion.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) How does it feel when someone says you can’t be part of the group?
 - (b) What would Jesus want us to do if someone is being left out?
 - (c) Is it okay to have close friends? How can we still be kind to everyone?
3. **Use Words That Build Peace**: Help kids practice simple peacemaking language: “I’m sorry,” “Can we take turns?” “You can play too,” and “I forgive you.” Unity is something we “keep” through love, humility, and gentleness.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) What words can you use when you feel angry?
- (b) How can you tell someone they hurt your feelings without being mean?
- (c) Why does Jesus care about how we treat our brother, sister, or friend?

AGES 8-12: BUILDING UNDERSTANDING APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Unity Does Not Mean Everyone Has to Agree About Everything**: Kids this age often feel pressure to like the same hobbies, teams, games, clothes, or music as their friends. Teach them that Christian unity is deeper than preferences.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) What are some things people your age divide over?
- (b) How can you disagree about preferences without being unkind?
- (c) What matters more: liking the same things or treating each other like Jesus would?

2. **Don't Follow the Crowd Into Foolishness**: Paul warned against trusting human wisdom over God's wisdom. Children need to learn that what is popular is not always wise or godly.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) Why is it hard to speak up when everyone else is laughing?
- (b) What would it look like to follow God's wisdom instead of the group's wisdom?
- (c) What is one sentence you could say to stop or avoid joining in?

3. **Be Careful About Picking Sides**: Like the Corinthians divided over favorite leaders, kids may divide over favorite teachers, coaches, influencers, YouTubers, athletes, or friend groups. Help them see the danger of making a person or group their identity.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) How can liking someone or something become too important to us?
- (b) Have you ever seen people argue online or in person over a favorite celebrity, team, or influencer?
- (c) How can we enjoy things without making them more important than Jesus or people?

AGES 11-15: DEEPENING THE CONNECTION APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Know the Difference Between Core Truths and Personal Preferences**: Preteens and teens are beginning to form convictions. Help them distinguish between essential gospel truths and secondary issues or preferences. They can hold biblical convictions without becoming arrogant or divisive.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) What are examples of issues Christians may disagree on but still love each other?
- (b) What are truths about Jesus and the gospel that Christians must not compromise?
- (c) How can you hold a conviction strongly while still showing humility?

2. **Your Identity Is in Christ, Not Your Group**: Teens often define themselves by friend groups, sports teams, aesthetics, political opinions, online communities, or fandoms. Paul reminds believers to boast in the Lord, not in human leaders, wisdom, or status.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) What groups or labels are teens tempted to build their identity around?
- (b) How can a good thing become unhealthy when it becomes your identity?
- (c) What does it mean to "boast in the Lord" instead of your image, popularity, or group?

3. **The Cross Challenges What the World Calls Wise**: The world often values popularity, power, appearance, intelligence, success, and self-promotion. The cross teaches humility, surrender, sacrifice, and dependence on God.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) What does social media often teach people to value?
- (b) How is the message of the cross different from self-promotion?
- (c) Where are you most tempted to care more about being impressive than being faithful?

Tips for Parents

- Be patient and listen: Give your child time to think and respond.
- Relate to everyday life: Use real-life examples and stories familiar to your child to make abstract concepts more tangible.
- Encourage questions: Let your son or daughter know it's okay to ask questions, even if things don't make sense right away.
- Share personal insights: Tell a personal story about a time you experienced these themes, adapting as needed for age appropriateness.

Family Conversation Guide for Gen Z

1 Corinthians 1:10-31

The Wisdom and Glory of God

1. Unity Is Not the Same as Sameness

Bible Reference: 1 Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 4:1–6; 1 Corinthians 12:14–19

Application: God does not call believers to be identical in personality, interests, style, background, or opinions. He calls His people to be united in Christ. For Gen Z, this means resisting the pressure to divide over aesthetics, social labels, music preferences, political subcultures, personality types, or online identities. Christian unity is deeper than vibe, style, or shared interests.

Scenario: You are in a church group, campus ministry, or friend circle where people naturally split into smaller groups based on style, humor, interests, or social status. Some people start feeling left out because they do not “fit the vibe.”

Discussion: Where do you see people your age confusing unity with sameness, and how can you help create a group culture where different people are welcomed without everyone needing to act the same?

2. Do Not Build Your Identity Around a Person, Platform, or Group

Bible Reference: 1 Corinthians 1:11–13; 1 Corinthians 3:4–7; Jeremiah 9:23–24

Application: The Corinthians divided themselves around favorite leaders. Gen Z faces a similar temptation with influencers, pastors, content creators, political voices, celebrities, fandoms, and online communities. It is good to learn from people, but no human voice should become the center of your identity. Christ alone deserves your ultimate loyalty.

Scenario: Your friends constantly argue over which pastor, influencer, podcast host, activist, musician, or online personality is “right.” Disagreement turns into mocking, superiority, or treating others as less spiritual or less intelligent.

Discussion: How can you tell when admiration for a leader, influencer, or community has started becoming unhealthy or divisive?

3. Refuse Digital Tribalism

Bible Reference: 1 Corinthians 1:10; Romans 14:1; Titus 3:9–11; Ephesians 4:3

Application: Online spaces often reward outrage, sarcasm, clapbacks, and picking sides. But Christians are called to “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” This does not mean avoiding truth, but it does mean refusing unnecessary division over secondary issues, personal preferences, or internet drama.

Scenario: A group chat or comment section explodes over a controversial post. People start screenshotting, subtweeting, mocking, and forcing everyone to choose a side.

Discussion: Before joining an online argument, what questions should a Christian ask to determine whether this is a gospel issue, a wisdom issue, or just digital drama?

4. Let the Cross Redefine What You Call “Power”

Bible Reference: 1 Corinthians 1:18; Mark 8:34–36; Philippians 2:5–8

Application: The world often defines power as popularity, status, influence, beauty, wealth, intelligence, or control. The cross shows us a different kind of power: humility, sacrifice, obedience, love, and surrender to God. Following Jesus may not always look impressive online, but it is the wisdom and power of God.

Scenario: You feel pressure to build a personal brand, appear successful, look attractive, have the right opinions, and prove that your life is exciting. You are tempted to curate an image instead of walking humbly with Christ.

Discussion: How does the cross challenge what social media teaches you to value?

These points aim to empower Gen Z to live out their faith genuinely and courageously in various aspects of their daily lives, reflecting Biblical integrity, compassion, and steadfastness.