

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. **Enjoy discovering more about Him!**

"THE GOD-DESIGNED LIFE" | 1 COR 2 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

Would you rather watch a simple sitcom or a complicated, elaborate multi-season crime series?

"Simple Wisdom" (1 Cor 2: 1-5)

Paul reminds the church that he was a simple man with a simple message, and it was God's power that led them to faith. **Why does it strengthen a person's faith if they were saved through God's power instead of polished words or programs?**

"Spiritual Wisdom" (1 Cor 2: 6-16)

Paul goes on to share there is a special wisdom from God that only comes through knowing Jesus and receiving His Spirit. **What does that show about God? What does that show about how to gain spiritual wisdom?**

Paul explains that the things of God won't make sense to someone who doesn't know Jesus, but Christ-followers have the mind of God so they can discern all kinds of things. **How can believers better let Jesus be their source of wisdom instead of looking to the world?**

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Paul's aim is to see people come to faith in God, through the power of God, which was revealed by the wisdom of God, that only comes from the Spirit of God, giving us the spiritual discernment of God, because we have been blessed by the mind of God. **Do you see your faith and wisdom coming from God or from others? Have you been seeking wisdom from the world or from God and His Word? Pray that God would continue to transform your mind as you spend time with Him.**

The God-Designed Life

I. Announce:

- A. **Slide1 Harvest Festival Baked Goods:** In addition to the needs for **candy** and **volunteers** for our Harvest Festival, **we are also in need of baked goods!** Homemade or store-bought. Bring on the day of the event.
- B. **Slide2** This Wed, Nov.1st, we are going to have our **1st night** in the Fellowship Hall. **At 6pm** we will have a *charcuterie spread, a Photo Booth, & an hour of fellowship together*. **Wed night service will start at 7pm**. Please join me as we celebrate the **grand opening**, **pray** over the room together, and **fellowship**. **And Joshua 7**.
- C. **Slide3** Thank you those who gave to Nepal Earthquake victims (\$5,547). **Israel** (\$6,706)
1. Thank you for those who **helped out demo'ing** inside the Sanct.
- D. **Slide4** Prayer: *not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts*.

II. Slide5a Intro: The God-Designed Life

- A. When you're a **pilot** when you take off you are either flying by (VFR) *Visual Flight Rules* **or** by (IFR) *Instrument Flight Rules* [**thus using instruments** for flying **because** you cannot see through *clouds, mist, etc*]
1. There was no more VFR *Visual Flight Rules* **after the fall**.
 2. **Since the fall of Adam & Eve**, man is **flying-blind**. We cannot see the unseeable, we need **a guide to show us the way**.
 - a) We'll hear in this chapter who **this guide** is to spiritually *show us the way*.
 - b) **Man cannot discover God on His own**.
- B. Winston Churchill advised, *"If you have an important point to make, don't try to be subtle or clever. Use a pile driver. Hit it once. Then come back and hit again."* (Pile driver at our 15/215 freeway junction, *I-beam retainer wall*) **Paul does that here:**
1. Paul slams down his pile driver, **The Power of God**. **Then again** - **The Wisdom of God**. **Then again** - **The Spirit of God**. **Then again** - **The Spiritual Discernment of God**. **Then again** - **The Mind of God**.

C. Slide5b Outline: *Simple Wisdom* (1-5). *Spiritual Wisdom* (6-16).

III. Slide6 **SIMPLE WISDOM** (1-5) **READ** *Christ Crucified*

A. **THE POWER OF GOD**

B. Paul's faith was in **God**, *not in his speech, not in his own wisdom, not in himself.*

C. **Wherever we go**, call people to trust in *Jesus' life for their righteousness, His death for their atonement, His resurrection for their hope.*

1. God may have used a **sermon** or a **speaker** in our life. He may have used a **song** by the worship team. **But** at the core, we do not shake this feeling that **God Himself** was **winning us to Himself**.

a) **But some** will become "christian" because they like the girl that invited them to church. So their testimony will be, *I came to Faith by the power of...her looks.*

b) **Some** will say, *faith will help me move up in my company.*

c) **Some** will see faith as *an avenue to find their moral-center.* (like the young parents that say, *we have children now, they need some morals, let's take them to church and find some*).

D. Slide7a **3 practical methods Paul had:**

E. **1) We are Simple People** (3,4). *We Have a Simple Message. We Have a Substantial God.*

1. Paul is saying, I wanted them to see **this is the power of God**. The method I choose to display, so they would say, *if there's power in this man's ministry ... it did not come from him!*

a) **Paul knew:** art, music, philosophy, culture, the poets, and about his world around him, **but** when it came to presenting the gospel he had a **1-track-mind!**

b) Paul's preaching of the gospel is **not denigrating the concept of wisdom** or its pursuit. **Because** you can have both *lofty speech and wisdom*, even use both, **just don't depend or rely on them** (when it comes to *one's ability to know God personally*).

2. **You won't** always look like *the best ambassador for Jesus*. None of us will. It just reminds us how much we need Him.

F. **Slide7b 2) We Have a Simple Message** (2). *We are a Simple People.*

1. This is *the poster verse* of this whole section, vs.2.

G. **The Gospel/good news** is what has been done for us by God, in Jesus.

1. **Gospel Centrality** is the method of leading people to Christ through *the power of God*.

a) If you want a healthy **marriage** you must 1st *find your identity in Christ*.

b) If you want to raise **children** in a way that is *loving & challenging & rewarding*, you need to **not** make them idols, *instead get your identity from Christ*.

c) If you want to overcome **bitterness** in your family, you need to *find forgiveness in Christ*, that will enable you to offer it to others.

H. It's why, *like Paul*, we need **intentionality** on gospel centrality. *For I decided ...*

1. Because people come to church and want us to **heal their marriage**, or they want **control of their 13-year-old**. They **want** Pragmatic lessons, **but** what they **need** is **a gospel** that **transforms**.

2. No matter **what** brought you here this morning, **or who** brought you here this morning, **I have one answer for you**, *Jesus Christ and Him crucified*. Paul does this over and over again when he writes.

a) **Like** in Ephesians: it's gospel, gospel, gospel (ch.'s 1-3). **And then** the 2nd half, let's talk about practical *husbands/wives, children, and master/slave issues*.

I. He first says, *believe this, hold onto this, cling to this, work out this*. **Gospel centrality** is *the epicenter of a ministry* that will lead people to say (pastors come and go) **but the power of God leads us to Christ!**

1. **The gospel** is your **center**, **not your felt need**. **The good news** of Jesus **should** *help your marriage, help in Child Raising, help in your work life*.

2. It is **not** an **upgrade** to the package of **the Christian ethic**, it's the engine, it's the car, **not the leather seat upgrade**.

J. **Slide7c 3) We Have a Substantial God** (5) *We are a Simple People. We Have a Simple Message.*

K. It's a simple people, with a simple message, which provides a canvas on which *the glory of God* can be painted.

1. If it's proud people, with a proud message, we can leave praising the *teacher, or the worship leader, our books, story telling, or commentaries.*

L. It's always been this way

1. Who was Noah? Noah was a simple guy with a simple message. *It's going to rain get in the boat.* Simple man, simple message.
2. Who was Abraham? Abraham father's household dates back to a *moon worshiping pagan religion.* Abraham was a pagan worshiping old guy, who couldn't have children, whose message was *Keep walking.* Who says to his wife, *God will give us children.* He says to his son, *God is going to provide a ram.* Simple man, simple message.
3. Who was Moses? but a simple Man a fugitive of justice, with a simple message, *Let my people go ...* and God splits the Red sea, sends bread from heaven, and gets water from a rock.
4. Who was David? A simple boy with a simple message, *my God is greater than you giant,* and God shows up.
5. Who were the apostles? simple men hiding in the upper room until the spirit falls upon them, until the glory fills the nations.
 - a) It's always been this way, *simple people, w/a simple message, and a great, faithful, glorious God.*
6. Heb.11 it's all about *by faith so-and-so did this, and by faith so-and-so did that.* Then we get to ch.12, *therefore, since we are surrounded by, so great, a cloud of witnesses, so do what? ... pick your favorite one? Get a poster of them, put it on your wall? Turn them into a little bobble-head for your dashboard? No!*
 - a) He said, *let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates & perfects our faith.*

IV. Slide8 **SPIRITUAL WISDOM (6-16)** READ *opposite of natural wisdom*

A. Slide9a **THE WISDOM OF GOD** (6-11)

B. There is a place for *deeper wisdom*, for mature believers.

C. (7) **Handcrafted for the saved**: This involves God's wise plan to bring believers into the glories of heaven.

D. (8) **Hidden from the unsaved**: Had they known the truth, *they would not have crucified the Lord of glory*.

1. *Spiritual depth perception comes from **experiential knowledge of God**, not just **intellectual comprehension of truths about Him***. Swindoll

E. (9) Paul refers to Is.64:4. *The context has nothing to do with *heaven*.

1. The context plainly refers it to **spiritual insights** that were once a **secret**/mystery or **hidden** (7), **but** are now **revealed** (10,11).

F. Slide9b (10) **Wisdom is like an Iceberg**. (2-sided wisdom)

1. **Visible** - **eg. human wisdom**. What is tangible/touchable. What is learned of *our natural world* through observation and experimentation.

2. **Invisible** - **eg. Gods Wisdom**. This is *the deep side*. Where God takes the **Word** and *plumbs it down under the surface currents*, to where **He** can minister it to *our hearts and souls*.

a) Believers can see wonderful things in Scripture, that are *completely unnoticed* by those who are *flying spiritually blind*.

b) Like the psalmist, we should pray, *Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law*. Ps.119:18

c) **Scriptural insight** is available only to those with **spiritual eyesight**.

d) *The Spirit of God enables the people of God to understand the Word of God*.

G. So far Paul has used his **pile driver** twice: **Power & Wisdom**.

1. Remember, **the Jews** sought signs/**power** & **the Greeks** *wisdom*.

a) Both are found in Jesus (**see** 1:24).

H. Slide9c **THE SPIRIT OF GOD** (12)

- I. (1988) French scientists have succeeded in causing **chickens** to sound like quail. Researchers took **tissue** from the part of **the Japanese quail brain** thought to control the bird's call, and they **implanted it** in the brains of **5 chicken embryos**. The experiment worked. Researchers say *the hatched chicks sounded like quail*.
1. Here's a far greater miracle: God has **implanted** the mind of Christ in those who have accepted His Son as their Savior.
 2. When the Spirit of God takes up *residence* in us, in some mysterious way we now have a *capacity* for divine wisdom, that *no scholarly degree or natural experience* could ever provide.
 - a) Having *the mind of Christ* enables us to see life increasingly from God's perspective (obviously not on God's level). But we have a *new capacity* to *think and talk and act* more and more like Christ Himself.
 - b) God wants his children to be "*in the know*" not "*in the dark*."
- J. Slide9d **THE SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT OF GOD** (13-15)
- K. **The Natural Person** is unsaved, they belong to the world and *are happy in it*.
1. They **can't** received the things of the Spirit (the Word) *because* they don't have *spiritual discernment*.
 2. The natural person can enjoy reading the majesty of bible language, can even admire and feel the charm of the stories, even have a feeling of religiosity as they read it. But they can't "*know*" the scriptures.
- L. **The Spiritual Person** is a *believer* who is *controlled by the Spirit*.
1. They are a *person of discernment*, and is able to judge & evaluate things with **God's insights**.
- M. Slide9e **THE MIND OF GOD** (16)
- N. The believer **has** the mind of Christ. *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus* (Phil.2:5). Then Peter says, *Since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind* (1 Pet.4:1).

1. This means that **the Spirit**, through **the Word**, helps the believer **think as Jesus thinks**.
2. **True faith** stands on the rock of Revelation **not on** the sands of human philosophy.¹

- O. Q: If the natural person can't understand anything of **the Spirit** ... How will this change **your** evangelism? (? pray more for **God** to save them ?)
- P. **Slide10 Summed up:** Our aim is to see people come **to faith in God**, through the **power of God**, which was revealed by **the wisdom of God**, that only comes from **the Spirit of God**, giving us **the spiritual discernment of God**, because we have been blessed by **the mind of God/Christ**.
1. And all this makes for, **The God-Designed Life**.

Q. Keywords: wisdom, power,

¹ Alan Redpath, The Royal Route to Heaven.