



STRAIGHT TALK.

LEADER'S GUIDE

Bold Letters to the Corinthians

Week #3 Leader's Guide – April 24, 2016

Straight Talk: Bold Letters to the Corinthians
SDBC Community Groups
“Crucified Christ”

Key Passage 1:

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

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 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.

1. Read the first key passage.
2. Greco-Roman culture highly valued wisdom, power, and status. Paul claims that the Corinthian Christians' disunity arises from a lack of understanding of the power of the crucified Christ. In v.22, Paul states that Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom (Jews wanted a mighty conqueror as their Messiah and the Greeks wanted a wise philosopher/debater). What are our culture's expectations of God?
3. How do people respond when they discover God doesn't fit their expectations of God?
4. How can we come alongside those who are facing such stumbling blocks when we preach a crucified Christ that goes against their expectations?

Key Passage 2:

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

²⁶ For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, 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 might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰ And because of him 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."

5. Read the second key passage. *Background information: Corinth was invaded by the Romans in 146BC, and it was resettled as a very Roman colony in 44BC. This new settlement of Corinth was made up of freedmen (freed from slavery), veterans, and slaves. Paul rebukes the Corinthian Christians for being boastful—especially since they have nothing for which they should be boastful besides Jesus Christ.*
6. In v.27, Paul says that "God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise . . . what is weak in the world to shame the strong; . . . what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are." Why would God do such a thing?

7. Can you think of examples in your personal walk with Jesus where you experienced God using your weakness or foolishness to bring about His glory?

Key Passage 3:

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

1 And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. **2** For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. **3** And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, **4** and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, **5** that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

8. Read the third key passage. *Background information: Paul studied under Gamaliel (a great Jewish teacher at the time), was multilingual, had advanced rhetorical skills, and was well educated in literature and philosophy. He had every right to proclaim the testimony of God with loft speech and wisdom. However, he “[decides] to know nothing among [them] except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (emphasis mine).*
9. Why is it important to know the crucified Christ and not just the resurrected Christ?
10. What does it look like to proclaim the gospel in our given contexts “in demonstration of the Spirit and of power?”
11. What can we do to fight off the temptation to base our faith on human wisdom instead of the power of God?