



Week #7 Leader's Guide – May 22, 2016

Straight Talk: Bold Letters to the Corinthians
SDBC Community Groups

“The Clash of the Gospel and Human Wisdom”

Key Passage:

1 Corinthians 3:18-23

¹⁸No one should deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks he is wise in this age, he must become foolish so that he can become wise. ¹⁹For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, since it is written: He catches the wise in their craftiness; ²⁰and again, The Lord knows that the reasonings of the wise are meaningless. ²¹So no one should boast in human leaders, for everything is yours— ²²whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come—everything is yours, ²³and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

What would you pay to find in this life, perfect peace, perfect joy, and contentment? Perhaps you cannot pay for these things, perhaps we need to give up some things to get peace, joy and contentment. What would you give up?

Would you give up your smartphone?

Would you give up your timeshare?

Would you give up Facebook?

Would you give up alcohol?

Let's look at these four things. How do each of these things bring us joy, contentment and peace?

1. What do Smartphones do for us? Ask yourself this question. What would my life be like without it? How connected am I to my phone?

2. What do Timeshares/vacations offer us? Why do you look forward to vacations? What do they do for you?

3. What does Facebook do for us? Before you snicker, as of March 2016, there were over 1.65 billion people using Facebook. There are 5.6 billion people over the age of 14 living today. 30% of the world's population uses Facebook. People are looking for something. Friends, relationships, comfort. How important is it for people to receive "likes" when they post something. Disappointment comes when we don't get responses or likes to our posts. We lose our joy, our peace and our contentment when this happens.

4. What does alcohol do for us? World health sources believe that over 2 billion of the earth's population consume alcohol. This comes out to be roughly 45% of people of legal drinking age consume some alcohol. Alcohol is used to enhance a time of celebration, or dull our pain. It numbs our lack of joy and peace or our lack of contentment. Sitting on a beach in warm Mexico drinking down a beer or sipping on a margarita can be enjoyable and relaxing and we may find a moment of contentment in this.

How much do you and I depend on these four things to find joy, peace and contentment? If not these, then list other things that you or others turn to, to find peace, joy and contentment.

Read the passage: *"No one should deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks he is wise in this age, he must become foolish so that he can become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, since it is written: He catches the wise in their craftiness; and again, The Lord knows that the reasonings of the wise are meaningless."*

Do the four things mentioned above have an impact on your peace and joy and contentment? Are these things (or others you have thought of) from God or from man? Can we deceive ourselves as to how they impact our peace and contentment?

What makes you more anxious? Losing your cell phone, missing a vacation, not getting a desired response from Facebook? Or, not having alone time with God? Not finding engagement with God?

Each of us is very capable of self-deception. The four items I referred to are only a few of countless ways we seek the peace and contentment that so easily eludes us. God talks about becoming a fool; God determines what constitutes foolishness.

1 Corinthians 2:14 says, *“The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.”*

Proverbs 1:7 says, *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.”*

Read the passage: *“So no one should boast in human leaders, for everything is yours— whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come—everything is yours, and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.”*

What does Paul mean when he says “everything is yours”? What is everything?

Could he be including our peace, joy and contentment? How does this differ from what the worlds good, like smartphones or Facebook, offer us by way of joy?

What does it take for you to find joy, peace and contentment with God as opposed to the things men create?