LESSON TWO

Built Different

"A Disciple Chooses the Cross Over Status"

SCRIPTURE | 1 Corinthians 1:10–2:5

MEMORY VERSE

"I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought" (1 Corinthians 1:10).

MAIN IDEA OF THE TEXT

Built different: disciples unite under the cross of Christ; they do not divide by personalities, popularity, or human achievement.

DISCIPLESHIP RHYTHM

Worship

GROUP TIME

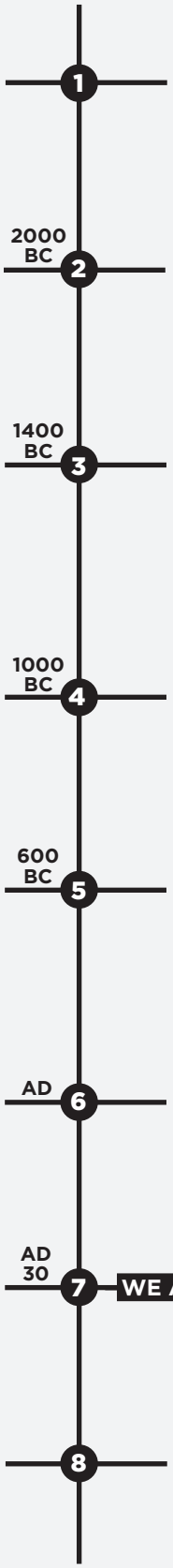
5 minutes	**Welcome**
5–10 minutes	**Attention Grabber**
10 minutes	**Story / Context**
25 minutes	**Discussion**
5–10 minutes	**Closing & Prayer**

PRAYER FOCUS

- **Next Steps Class** – Pray for NSC next weekend. Pray for people to connect with Lakepointe in an intentional way, committing to the church family to be discipled and finding a place to leverage their talents and skills.

<u>BEGIN</u> this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of his Word, and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your study.

GOD'S STORY TIMELINE



1. God Creates the World and Promises a Rescuer *(Genesis 1-11)*
God created everything good and placed humans in a garden to live in close relationship with Him. But Adam and Eve chose to trust themselves instead of God, and sin entered the world. Relationships, creation, even our connection to God was broken. Yet even in judgment, God promised that one day, a descendant of Eve would crush the serpent and bring healing.
+This points to Jesus as the promised Rescuer who defeats sin, Satan, and death.

2. God Calls a Family and Makes a Promise *(Genesis 12-50)*
God chose a man named Abram (later Abraham) and gave a covenant to him: that he would have a large family, receive a land, and be a blessing to all nations. Though Abraham and his descendants were deeply flawed, God continued His promise through Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.
+This points to Jesus as the true offspring of Abraham, through whom all nations are fully blessed.

3. God Rescues His People and Forms a Redeemed Nation *(Exodus-Deuteronomy)*
Generations later, Abraham's descendants were enslaved in Egypt. God raised up Moses to rescue them from oppression and slavery. God called His people into a relationship with Himself. He made a covenant with them, gave them the law, and instructed them in worship. He was forming a people who would live differently and show the world what it looked like to belong to Him.
+This points to Jesus as the greater Moses, who rescues us from slavery to sin and writes God's law on our hearts.

4. God Gives a Home and Promises a King *(Joshua-2 Chronicles)*
God brought His people into the promised land under Joshua's leadership. Over time, they asked for a king like the other nations. It was a disaster. But God graciously gave them David, with whom he made another covenant: one of David's descendants would rule forever. Solomon built the temple, but after his death, the kingdom split into two and began spiraling into idolatry and injustice again.
+This points to Jesus as the forever King from David's line, who reigns with justice and peace.

5. God Removes His People and Reminds Them of His Promise *(Ezra-Nehemiah)*
Because of their rebellion, God allowed His people to be conquered and taken into exile. First, it was the Northern Kingdom, Israel (to Assyria), then the Southern Kingdom, Judah (to Babylon). The temple was destroyed, and the glory of the kingdom faded. Yet God continued to speak through the prophets, reminding the people of His promise to restore them, give them new hearts, and send a Rescuer.
+This points to Jesus as the one who brings the new covenant, restores hearts, and fulfills every prophecy.

6. God Sends His Son and Fulfills His Promise *(Matthew-John)*
At just the right time, God sent Jesus into the world—born of a virgin, fully God and fully man. He perfectly obeyed the law, pointed us to the Father, and laid down His life as a sacrifice for our sins. On the third day, He rose again, proving that He is the Savior, the King, and the fulfillment of every covenant promise God has ever made.
+Jesus is the center of the story—all of Scripture leads to Him.

7. God Sends His Spirit and Builds His Church *(Acts-Jude)*
After rising from the dead, Jesus ascended into heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to empower His followers. The early Church spread the good news of Jesus across the Roman world—planting churches, welcoming both Jews and Gentiles, and learning to live as God's new covenant people. Though imperfect, the Church carries Jesus' mission forward today.
+This points to Jesus as the risen King who gives the Spirit to dwell in us and send us on mission.

8. God Restores All Things and Dwells with His People *(Revelation)*
The story isn't over. One day Jesus will return to judge evil and make all things new. There will be a new heaven and new earth, where God's people from every tribe and nation will live with Him forever. There will be no more pain, no more death, and no more sin—just joy, justice, and unbroken peace.
+This points to Jesus as the one who brings the story to its perfect and eternal culmination.

1 GRAB THEIR ATTENTION

LEADER TIP

To grab your participants' attention, start your lesson by telling a story related to the lesson's main idea. We have provided you with three options in this section, but feel free to develop your own.

OPTION 1: THE BEATLES AFTER THE BREAKUP

When the Beatles broke up in 1970, the band did not simply disappear. The members continued making music, and fans began sorting themselves into camps. Some insisted John Lennon was the true genius. Others argued that Paul McCartney carried the band musically. Still others defended George Harrison as the overlooked talent. Did anyone ever suggest Ringo? The same group that once had been celebrated together became the subject of endless arguments over which personality mattered most.

Something similar was happening in Corinth. Believers were dividing themselves around Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and even Christ as though the church were a collection of rival fan bases. But the church is not held together by the appeal of a gifted leader. Jesus is not one impressive figure among several. He is the crucified Lord who purchased His people, gave them one identity, and is worthy of the loyalty and praise the Corinthians were giving to human personalities.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

• Why do people tend to divide into camps around talented or influential personalities?

Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text:
The Beatles could not remain united once competing personalities and loyalties pulled them apart. The church is built on something far stronger than human charisma. In 1 Corinthians 1:10–2:5, Paul called believers to unite under the cross of Christ and give God the confidence, loyalty, and praise that belong to Him alone.

OPTION 2: HE MUST BECOME GREATER

In John 3, some of John the Baptist's disciples became concerned that people were leaving John and going to Jesus instead. They seemed to view ministry as a competition for attention and influence. John refused to protect his status or build a following around himself. He reminded them that a person can receive only what God gives and then said, "He must become greater; I must become less" (John 3:30).

John understood that his role was to point people to Jesus, not gather people around his own name. He could release attention, influence, and recognition because worship belonged to Christ. Disciples are built different; they do not need to be the center, defend their importance, or divide people into camps. Their joy is found in seeing Jesus honored.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- *Why do you think John's disciples were worried that people were going to Jesus?*

- *Why can it be difficult to celebrate when someone else receives attention or influence?*

Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text:
John refused to turn ministry into a competition because he knew that attention and worship belonged to Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 1:10–2:5, Paul confronted believers who had divided into camps around gifted leaders. He called them back to the cross, where human pride is emptied and Christ alone becomes the center.

OPTION 3: THE ALL-STAR GAME

In an all-star game, elite players from different teams put on the same uniform for one night. They may cooperate, but everyone knows they are not real teammates, and the game often lacks the same intensity because their deepest loyalty still belongs somewhere else. Something similar was happening in Corinth. The believers gathered as one church, but under the surface they were wearing the jerseys of Paul, Apollos, Cephas, or another preferred leader.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- *What happens to a group when people share a space but remain loyal to different teams?*

Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text:
An all-star team may wear one uniform, but divided loyalties keep it from becoming a true team. In 1 Corinthians 1:10–2:5, Paul called the church to take off the jerseys of human personalities and unite under the cross of Christ. Disciples are built different because their loyalty, confidence, and praise rest in Jesus alone.

2 SET THE STAGE

LEADER TIP

This section provides the historical, cultural, and literary context needed to properly interpret and apply the text.

OUTLINE

I. Greetings and Thanksgiving (1:1–9)
II. Problems in the church (1:10–6:20)
  A. Divisions and factions (1:10–4:21)
  B. Gross immorality (5:1–13)
  C. Litigation before pagan courts (6:1–11)
  D. Fornication with prostitutes (6:12–20)
III. Replies to questions from the Corinthians (7:1–14:40)
  A. Questions about marriage (7:1–40)
  B. Limitations of Christian liberty (8:1–11:1)
  C. Veiling of women in public worship (11:2–16)
  D. Disorderly behavior at the Lord's Supper (11:17–34)
  E. Exercise of spiritual gifts (12:1–14:40)
IV. The Resurrection of the Body (15:1–58)
  A. Centrality of Christ's resurrection (15:1–20)
  B. Sequence of resurrection events (15:21–28)
  C. The resurrection and suffering (15:29–34)
  D. Nature of the resurrection body (15:35–49)
  E. The believer's victory over death (15:50–58)
V. Conclusion (16:1–24)
  A. Collection for the believers at Jerusalem (16:1–4)
  B. Paul's plans for visiting Corinth (16:5–9)
  C. Exhortations, instructions, and salutations (16:10–24)[1]

CONTEXT

Paul started by reminding the Corinthians of their identity (who they were, how they belonged, and what they were supposed to do). They were God's church, sanctified in Jesus, enriched by grace, and called into fellowship with Him. With identity as a foundation affirmed, he turned to the first major problem in the church: division. Members of the congregation had begun identifying themselves by the leaders they preferred. Some claimed Paul, others Apollos, others Cephas, and others used the name of Christ as though He belonged to their particular group. What should have been a shared and unifying devotion to Jesus had become competition built around personalities, speaking ability, status, and influence.

Paul responded by bringing them back to the cross. He asked whether Christ had been divided, whether Paul was crucified for them, or whether they were baptized into Paul's name. The answer to each question is obvious. No human leader had died for them, and no human personality could become the foundation of the church. In Corinthian culture, people admired impressive speech, wisdom, achievement, and public recognition. Paul insisted that God's wisdom is revealed most clearly in Christ crucified, a message the world considers weak and foolish. The church is built different because its unity, confidence, and worship rest not in human greatness but in the saving power of the cross.

[1] F. Alan Tomlinson, "1 Corinthians," in CSB Study Bible: Notes, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1811.

FALLEN CONDITION FOCUS

Apart from Christ, we look to human wisdom, strength, status, and approval to give us identity and security. We are lost in our pride, unable to recognize God's wisdom, and drawn to whatever appears impressive in the eyes of the world. Left to ourselves, we boast in people and achievements, replacing the centrality of the cross.

GOSPEL RESPONSE

At the cross, Jesus exposed the emptiness of human boasting and gave His people a new center. Christ was crucified for us, and through what appeared weak and foolish, God displayed His saving wisdom and power. Because we belong to the One who died and rose for us, we can lay down our rival loyalties, unite around the gospel, and give our praise to God alone.

DISCIPLESHIP RHYTHM: WORSHIP

Worship is more than singing a song. It is a gathering of believers to unify around the gospel of Jesus Christ, praising and honoring God and edifying one another. The communal expressions of our devotion and reverence for God simultaneously affect other believers by emboldening faith and teaching truth. "Singing is for teaching. Praise is for instruction. Adoration is for admonishing."[2]

Central to worship is Jesus Christ glorified. This is the "content" of worship, so to speak. Yet unity of believers and building one another up is the outflow of the environment.

Disciples are built different because their worship is not captured by popularity, personality, or visible success. They can appreciate gifted people without making them the center. The cross teaches us to place our confidence in God's power, praise His wisdom, and unite around Jesus rather than dividing over the people who point us to Him.

[2] Bobby Jamieson, "What is Corporate Worship For?" 9Marks, https://www.9marks.org/article/what-is-corporate-worship-for/.

3 LOOK AT THE BOOK

LEADER TIP

In this section, you will find exercises you can use to lead your group through Observation, Interpretation, and Application. As the leader, work through all the exercises below to ensure you understand the text well.

1 Corinthians 1:10–17 Paul began this section with an appeal "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." The phrase places the entire problem of division under Christ's authority. Paul was not asking the Corinthians to preserve harmony for its own sake. He was calling them to live in a way that reflected their common identity and shared allegiance to one Lord. His desire was that there be no divisions among them and that they be "perfectly united in mind and thought." The language Paul used does not require uniformity on every preference or secondary question. It points to a church whose deepest convictions, loyalties, and aims are centered on Christ rather than fractured by rival identities.

Paul received a message from Chloe's household that quarrels had broken out among them. The problem became explicit in verse 12: "One of you says, 'I follow Paul'; another, 'I follow Apollos'; another, 'I follow Cephas'; still another, 'I follow Christ.'" The names likely reflect genuine attachments to different leaders, styles, or emphases, but Paul treated the deeper issue as misplaced identity. The Corinthians were associating themselves with human figures in a way that turned servants of Christ into competing centers of loyalty.

Paul responded with three sharp questions: "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?" Each question exposes the theological absurdity of the factions. Christ cannot be partitioned into rival camps. Paul did not die for them, and baptism did not place them under Paul's ownership. Both the cross and baptism point away from the minister and to union with Christ. However important a leader may be, only Jesus is the basis of the church's identity.

In verses 14–17, Paul expressed gratitude that he personally had baptized only a few of them. He was not minimizing baptism. He was resisting any attempt to turn baptism into a mark of allegiance to the person who administered it. His primary commission was "to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power." The phrase translated "wisdom and eloquence" carries the idea of rhetorically impressive speech shaped by the standards of public persuasion. Paul was not rejecting careful thought, clear reasoning, or skillful communication. He was rejecting any mode of preaching that made the speaker's performance the basis of confidence and caused the cross to appear dependent on human technique.

1 Corinthians 1:18–25—Paul now explained why the cross creates such a different kind of people. "The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." The cross divides human judgment. To the world, a crucified Messiah appears weak, shameful, and irrational. To those being saved, that same cross is the place God's power is revealed.

Paul supported this by quoting Isaiah: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." God does not simply add the gospel to the world's existing standards of wisdom. He overturns those standards. The cross exposes the inability of human reason, status, and achievement to bring people to God on their own

terms. What the world celebrates as wisdom cannot save, and what the world dismisses as foolishness becomes the means through which God acts.

In verses 20–21, Paul asked, "Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age?" These questions are not anti-intellectual. They challenge the assumption that human beings can reason their way to God apart from revelation. "The world through its wisdom did not know him," so God was pleased to save through "the foolishness of what was preached." The preaching is not foolish. It appears foolish because it announces salvation through a crucified Lord rather than through the kinds of power and brilliance the world expects.

Verse 22 names two common demands: "Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom." One group sought visible demonstrations of power; the other prized philosophical and rhetorical sophistication. Paul refused to reshape the gospel around either expectation. "We preach Christ crucified." The message is a stumbling block to those expecting triumphant power and foolishness to those expecting intellectual prestige. Yet to those whom God has called, Christ is both "the power of God and the wisdom of God."

Verse 25 summarizes the reversal: "The foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength." Paul spoke from the world's perspective. God is neither foolish nor weak, but what appears foolish and weak in the cross surpasses everything human wisdom and power can accomplish. The cross saves because God's wisdom operates according to a different measure than status, spectacle, and public success.

1 Corinthians 1:26–31—Paul then asked the Corinthians to consider their own calling. "Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth." He did not say none of them were. He pointed out that the church's existence cannot be explained by the social prestige of its members. God did not establish the church by gathering only those the world already considered important.

Instead, "God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise" and "the weak things of the world to shame the strong." Paul repeated "God chose" to emphasize divine initiative. God deliberately works through people and means the world overlooks so salvation cannot be credited to human greatness. The "lowly things," the "despised things," and the "things that are not" become instruments through which God brings to nothing "the things that are."

The purpose appears in verse 29: "so that no one may boast before him." The cross removes every basis for self-congratulation. No one belongs to Christ because they were wise enough, powerful enough, or socially worthy enough. Verse 30 returns to the source of their identity: "It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus." Their standing was entirely the result of God's action.

Christ Himself has become "wisdom from God," including "our righteousness, holiness and redemption." Paul gathered several dimensions of salvation into one statement. In Christ, believers receive right standing before God, are set apart for Him, and are released from bondage. These are not achievements to display but gifts to receive.

Therefore, as verse 31 says, "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord." The answer to human pride is not denying that good gifts exist. It is tracing every good gift to its source—God. Foundational to this exercise is worship.

1 Corinthians 2:1–5—Paul concluded by reminding the Corinthians how he first came to them. He did not arrive "with eloquence or human wisdom" as he proclaimed the testimony about God. Paul was capable of careful argument, but he deliberately refused to make a rhetorical display the foundation of their faith. He had "resolved to know nothing" among them "except Jesus Christ and him crucified." This does not mean he ignored every other subject. It means the cross governed the content, posture, and method of his ministry.

Paul described himself as coming "in weakness with great fear and trembling." He did not present himself as the polished public figure Corinthian culture was trained to admire. His message and preaching were "not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power." Paul's point is not that persuasive speech is inherently wrong. The contrast is between confidence in rhetorical force and dependence on the Spirit to make the gospel effective.

Verse 5 gives the purpose: "so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power." Paul did not want the Corinthians' confidence attached to his personality, skill, or reputation. A faith built on human impressiveness will remain dependent on human impressiveness. A faith grounded in the cross rests on the power of God. Here in the final verse of this section is heard a caution against where the critique began: human personalities are not the foundation of our faith.

This section exposes the connection between division and worship. The Corinthians were not merely disagreeing about leaders. They were assigning human personalities a weight they could not bear. Paul redirected them to the cross, where human boasting ends and God's wisdom and power are revealed. Disciples are built different because they do not unite around charisma, status, or achievement. They unite around Christ crucified and boast in the Lord alone. Worship drives us to Jesus as central and unifies believers rather than dividing.

1 CORINTHIANS 1:10–2:5

10 I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. 11 My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. 12 What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ."

13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 so no one can say that you were baptized in my name. 16 (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.) 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

18 For the message of the cross is foolishness 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;
the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate."

20 Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. 22 Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 24 but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

26 Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. 28 God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, 29 so that no one may boast before him. 30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. 31 Therefore, as it is written: "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord."

2 And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. 2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. 4 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

OBSERVATION: WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Gather in groups of three to five people to discuss the Observation and Interpretation questions.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 1: THE DIVISIONS IN CORINTH

Read 1 Corinthians 1:10–17. What was the problem in the Corinthian church? What was the source of the divisions?

Suggested Response: The Corinthian church was experiencing division. Paul said some believers claimed to follow Paul, Apollos, Cephas, or Christ. Allegiance to personalities was clouding the centrality of the cross of Christ, which was the basis of their salvation.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 2: THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18–25. How did Paul describe the message of the cross? Make a list. What are the different responses to it?

Suggested Response: Paul said the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing but the power of God to those who are being saved. He said the Jews demanded signs, the Greeks looked for wisdom, and Paul preached Christ crucified. Christ is a stumbling block to some and foolishness to others, but to those God has called, He is the power and wisdom of God.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 3: NO BOASTING

Read 1 Corinthians 1:26–2:5. Why did Paul say no one can boast about their salvation?

Suggested Response: Paul said God chose the foolish, weak, lowly, and despised things of the world. Therefore, their salvation was not based on intelligence, sophistication, prominence, persuasiveness, or notoriety. It is by God's grace only, not deserved or earned.

INTERPRETATION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 1: WHY DIVISION CONTRADICTS THE GOSPEL

Why did Paul respond to the Corinthians' factions by asking whether Christ were divided, whether Paul was crucified for them, and whether they were baptized in Paul's name?

Suggested Response: Paul wanted them to see that their divided loyalties contradicted the gospel itself. Christ alone was crucified for them, and baptism marked their belonging to Him. They had a common source and content of their faith. This unites rather than divides. Human leaders may serve the church, but none of them can become the source of the church's identity or the center of its loyalty.

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 2: WHY THE CROSS LOOKS FOOLISH

Why did Paul say the message of the cross appears foolish or weak to the world, yet reveals the wisdom and power of God?

Suggested Response: The cross overturns normal ideas about power, success, and greatness. A crucified Messiah looked like defeat, shame, and weakness, but through the cross God defeated sin and brought salvation. What the world dismisses as foolishness is actually wiser and stronger than anything human wisdom or strength can accomplish.

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 3: GOD ALONE DESERVES WORSHIP

Why does God choose the weak to do great things?

Suggested Response: Paul was showing that everything the Corinthians had comes from God's grace. They were not chosen because they were impressive, and they did not stand before God

because of their own wisdom, strength, or status. Since Christ was the source of their righteousness, holiness, and redemption, their worship and boasting belonged to God alone.

APPLICATION: HOW DO I RESPOND?

LEADER TIP

In this section, you will find questions to choose from that will help your group consider how God calls them to respond to the text. Help your group set measurable action steps.

QUESTION 1: What part of this section of Corinthians caught your attention the most?

Suggested Response: Responses will vary. Listen closely so you can use follow-up questions to invite your group into deeper transparency and discussion.

QUESTION 2: What kinds of differences easily become divisions for Christians?

Suggested Response: Differences in worship style, politics, age, background, personality, church traditions, or preferred leaders can quickly become reasons to separate from one another. These differences may matter, but they should not become more important than our shared identity in Christ.

QUESTION 3: How can loyalty to a preferred leader, church style, or ministry begin to compete with loyalty to Christ?

Suggested Response: Preferences can become identity markers. I may begin to measure faithfulness by whether someone agrees with my favorite leader, shares my style, or belongs to my group. When that happens, I am giving human personalities a place that belongs to Jesus.

QUESTION 4: Why is the cross such a powerful answer to pride, comparison, and status?

Suggested Response: The cross reminds me that I am not saved because I am impressive, wise, strong, or deserving. Nor am I saved to follow another person. I come to God with empty hands and receive everything through Christ. That leaves no room for boasting in myself or looking down on others.

QUESTION 5: Where are you most tempted to build your confidence on your own abilities?

Suggested Response: I may depend on my intelligence, communication skills, experience, planning, reputation, or the approval of people I respect. These things can be useful, but they cannot become the foundation of my confidence or faith.

QUESTION 6: What would it look like for your worship to become more centered on Christ and less shaped by personalities or preferences?

Suggested Response: I can learn to appreciate gifted leaders without making them the center. I can pay more attention to whether Christ is being honored than whether my preferences are being met. Worship becomes healthier when my praise, trust, and allegiance are directed to Jesus. I want to more intentionally remind myself that worship brings unity to the church and builds us up.

QUESTION 7: What can we do this week as a group to protect our unity and keep Christ at the center?

Suggested Response: A priority is to worship together. This builds unity and edifies us. Also, we can resist comparison, speak carefully about leaders and churches, refuse to create unnecessary camps, and remind one another that Christ alone was crucified for us. We can also pray that our confidence and praise would rest in God rather than in human personalities.

4 CHALLENGE

LEADER TIP

End your study time with one final challenge and prayer. Your final challenge should pull together everything you covered in this lesson and call your participants to action.

A disciple is built different because the cross reshapes both devotion and community. Instead of chasing influence, attaching ourselves to impressive people, or measuring worth by success, we learn to boast in the Lord. The cross lowers our pride, redirects our praise, and gives us common ground with every person who belongs to Jesus.

This week, notice where your loyalties are pulling you.

- What preferences or personalities are carrying more weight than they should?
- Where are you tempted to compare, compete, or separate yourself from other believers?
- What is one step you can take to honor Christ more clearly and protect unity with others?

The church does not become one by finding the most impressive leader. It becomes one by gathering around the Savior who was crucified for us.

Let's pray.