

SERMON APPLICATION GUIDE

1 CORINTHIANS: A BEAUTIFUL MESS

1 Corinthians 3:18–4:5

DISCUSSION 1: REVIEW & CONTEXT

1. What have been some of the major themes, big ideas, and key points in 1 Cor. 1:1–3:17?
2. How does 1 Cor. 3:18–4:5 elaborate on 3:10–17?
3. Read 1 Cor. 1:18 – 31 again. What are some of the connections between 1:18–31 and 3:18–4:5? What's unique in each passage?

DISCUSSION 2: WISDOM VS FOOLISHNESS

1. In what sense does Paul want us to become a “fool” in the world’s eyes? How might that language be misapplied by Christians in ways we would want to avoid?
2. Why is it so tempting to want to be accepted, affirmed, respected, and esteemed by the world?
3. What are ways we might seek acceptance or respect from the world more than God or in a way that compromises our allegiance to God alone?
4. How does God using us in our weakness, limits, and dependence glorify him or show that God is one at work through us?
5. Why does this cause humility, and why is that good for us?

DISCUSSION 3: DON'T BE DECEIVED

1. “Let no one deceive himself.” (1 Cor. 3:18). Why or how are we prone to deceive ourselves? What are some of the reasons we remain unaware of how we have been deceived, misinformed, or led astray?
2. What are ways we can fight to not be deceived or to remain in a state of denial about being deceived?
3. How should this also create humility and a desire to allow other believers to speak Scripture to us?

DISCUSSION 4: FAITHFULNESS

1. How does Paul’s mindset in 4:1–5 protect us from worrying about what others or the world think about him, while also encouraging greater faithfulness to God?
2. What are ways we might be tempted to be “unfaithful” (4:2)? How can we guard ourselves to remain faithful?
3. Read 4:4–5 again. How do these verses provide a warning or caution as well as motivation for faithfulness?