

Wisdom – school age

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

January 29, 2023

Opening Activity

Starter Activity: Three Cup Challenge

Introduce the lesson by asking kids to see if they can solve the “Three Cup Challenge” To set up, place two right-side up, and one upside-down in the middle. The challenge is to turn all cups right-side up in no more than four moves, turning over exactly two cups at each move. (It is actually a trick as it is logically impossible) Invite a few kids up to try and solve it.

(Not sure we can get this next part past some of the older kids. So, just rearrange the cups and have them try it again).

When you reset the cups for yourself (or another child), you will instead have two upside-down, and one right-side up in the middle. Try your best to set it up so that they don't notice the switch. “Solve” it after three tries and amaze them!

Say: Two weeks ago, we talked about the Book of Corinthians. We mentioned this book is a letter written by Paul to the church in Corinth and we talked about Spiritual Gifts.

Ask: Who remembers why Paul wrote the letter to the church? What was happening there? What was the idea of spiritual gifts?

Say: Today, we are going to continue our discussion but this time Paul is going to turn some of their idea's upside down. But we need to be a little clearer about what this “turning upside-down” means. It's not that God took something good and neat, turned it upside-down, and made a mess. (*Teachers: Consider taking a cup of water or a basket of something and turning it upside-down to make that point!*). Rather, the gospel takes what is already upside-down and a mess and turns it right-side up and makes it good! Let's take a look in our text.

Open the Bible

(supplies: metal spoon for each child)

ASK: If I asked you about who the greatest people in our world are, who would you name? (*Chat a bit with kids about famous or important people. Who are the best sports stars? Movie stars? Political gurus? Think about those types of people and how they act. Show a few pictures of haughty or cocky figures in society. Consider especially politicians or extra wealthy figures*).

Say: In the letter to the church in Corinth, Paul has something to say about people who think too much of themselves. (*Display the Bible verse on the screen to discuss*)

Say: (1 Corinthians 1:18): Paul contrasts those who are perishing with those who are being saved. Everyone, including you, is in one group or the other. Q: What does it mean to be perishing? A: Lost and not going to heaven! Faith in Jesus is the only way to

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be saved. This is why Jesus came! This belief, restores us! God takes what people had turned upside-down and makes it right-side up again! (*Teachers: Consider using the metal spoons we gave you and illustrating this point by having the kids look at their reflection on the inside of the spoon. Notice the reflection is upside-down! This illustrates your life apart from Jesus Christ. But turn the spoon over and then look at your reflection: right-side up, which is happens when you become a Christian!*)

Say: (1 Corinthians 1:19-21): Here is the next thing God turns right-side up: Wisdom! Q: What does it mean to be a “wise-guy” or a “smarty-pants”? A: Someone who is proud and thinks they are smarter than everyone else. (boastful) Well, back then and even still today, people think they are too smart for the gospel! The Bible is very clear where wisdom begins: fearing and honoring God.

- (Proverbs 9:10: The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. – Meaning: This doesn't imply terror or panic but rather humility, deep reverence and submission. The belief that God is holy and hates and punishes sin).

We have it upside-down when we think WE are OK apart from God. True wisdom begins with knowing God, the One who made all things.

1 Corinthians 1:22-24: People of Corinth responded to the gospel in various ways. Some wanted this or that before they would believe. The same thing happens today. * But here is the problem. When you require God to do something before you believe, you have things upside-down! People can't tell God what to do. Those that believed in God and offered humility and respect have it right-side up. These people recognized that they were indeed perishing and needed help! * 1 Corinthians 1:25: There is nothing man can do to out-smart or out-muscle God! Jesus Christ looked weak and foolish as He hung on the cross to die. But this was God's design and plan, that He Himself would take the punishment deserved to all of the perishing people in this upside-down world! Wow!

We put other people up on a pedestal for their “human strength” and value things that are genuinely petty in the long run and big picture...how can we make sure our focus and emphasis are on things that matter?

Our whole being should be found in Christ. Our value, boasting, and joy can come only from Him. Remember that our identity can be placed in several things in our mind's eye, but ultimately there is only one hero who is worthy of boasting, and only one thing that gives us power. All of the positive skills or attributes we might have ultimately come from Him. When we remember that, God will honor our humility and raise us up again.

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Activate Faith

God's is Wise – Craft (from <https://www.thinkingkidsblog.org/god-is-my-light-craft/>)



Check out the website for specific directions on this craft. For in-person Sunday school, the owl will be pre-cut and we will put the light together during class.

Prayer: God, help us to be good examples of Jesus' love by the way we act and what we say. Help us to tell others about you so that they will know you and follow you. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.