**Introduction and Prayer Focus:**

Meditate on the words below from the hymn, “Onward Christian Soldiers,” and ask the Lord to instruct you in how to grow in godliness as a member of your church to be unified and effective in serving alongside your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Like a mighty army moves the Church of God:

Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod;

We are not divided, all one Body we—

One in faith and Spirit, one eternally.

Sabine Baring–Gould, Lyricist, "Onward Christian Soldiers,” Public Domain

This week’s memory verse is 1 Corinthians 1:20–21:

“Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age?

Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God,

the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well–pleased,

through the foolishness of the message preached, to save those who believe.” *(LSB)*

**Day One**

*1 Corinthians 1:18–2:5 —* ***The Word of the Cross***

1. Read 1 Corinthians 1:18*–*2:5 and record five to seven repeated words or phrases, comparisons, contrasts, commands, questions, or other observations from the text.

a. What is the “word” or “message” of the cross to which Paul refers in verse 18? Support your answer from Scripture.

2. What two groups of people does Paul distinguish in verse 18, and how does each group view this message?

3. From 1:19*–*20, what Old Testament passage did Paul quote?

a. **Dig Deeper**: From this Old Testament passage and its surrounding context, summarize how God evaluates and deals with the wisdom and cleverness of humankind.

**Day Two**

*1 Corinthians 1:21–24 —* ***God’s Wisdom***

1. From 1 Corinthians 1:21, what did God do in His wisdom?

1. According to this verse, what is powerless to lead people to know God, and what is the source of salvation’s power?

b Who are the ones who are saved, and what must they believe?

3. From the information that Paul provides about three distinct groups of people in verses 22–24, fill in the responses to the questions below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Group One: | Group Two: | Group Three: |
| a. Who are they? |  |  |  |
| b. What do they ask for or seek? |  |  |  |
| c. How do they view Christ? |  |  |  |

4. **Heart Check:** How have you personally responded to the word of the cross? How is your choice evident in the things you seek in this life and how you prioritize Christ in your life each day?

**Day Three**

*1 Corinthians 1:25–29 —* ***God’s “Weakness” and “Foolishness”***

1. A **paradox** is a statement that contains seemingly opposite or illogical ideas, which, upon closer examination, point to a more profound truth, challenging our normal understanding. What paradoxes are found in   
1 Corinthians 1:25, and what do they teach about God’s wisdom and power?

2. Beginning in verse 26, what shift in focus does Paul begin to make?

3. How did Paul refer to the Corinthians in verse 26, and what did he ask them to consider about themselves and their calling?

4. What do verses 27–29 teach about what kind of people God chooses to bring to salvation and why?

5. From the following passages, list three to five things that God does in a person’s heart when He draws them into His kingdom: Matthew 5:3–10; 19:13–15, 23–26; and James 4:6–10.

**Day Four**

*1 Corinthians 1:29–31 —* ***The Believer’s Boast***

1. What contrast does Paul describe in 1 Corinthians 1:29–31?

2. According to verse 30, list the things that Jesus became for believers.

a. Using a Bible dictionary or other resource, define each of the terms above.

3. In your own words, rewrite verses 30 and 31.

4. **Heart Check:** Are you boasting in any merits of your own regarding your salvation? Confess these to the Lord, then consider the practical implications of what boasting only in the Lord means in your own life. Identify two or three ways that your life can reflect a commitment to boast only in the Lord.

5. If you are a believer, write a prayer of praise to the Lord, thanking Him that “by His doing you are in Christ Jesus.”

**Day Five**

*1 Corinthians 2:1–5 —* ***Paul’s Resolve***

1. What shift of focus occurs in 1 Corinthians 2:1–5? How does this section continue the theme that Paul addressed in 1:18–31?

2. From these verses, use the chart below to identify how Paul **did, and did not,** proclaim the witness of God.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. I did not come with/in… | b. I determined to know/ I was with you in… |

3. According to verse 5, for what purpose did Paul speak to and interact with the Corinthians, and what was his desired outcome?

a. Considering this letter’s overall context of life in the church, what qualities of godly church leaders are seen in these verses?

5. *If you are a believer*, from your study this week, list three to five specific steps that you can take to share the gospel in a manner that points people to Christ alone for salvation. *If you have not yet put your faith in Christ,* write out your understanding of the gospel message and ask a trusted Christian friend to read it with you.

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Ruth Granlund September 24, 2025

I. The Power and Wisdom of the Cross 1:18-25

II. The Pity and Weakness of the Chosen 1:25-31

III. The Plainness and Witness of the Calling 2:1-5

**Additional Resources**

* The Great Exchange – Blog Series - 1 Cor. 1:18-31

John MacArthur, September 19, 2018

<https://www.gty.org/blogs/series/BS235/the-great-exchange>

* Why the World Rejects God’s Word - 1 Cor. 1:18-2:16

John MacArthur, August 9, 2020

<https://www.gty.org/sermons/81-89/why-the-world-rejects-gods-word>