

WHAT GOD HAS NOT JOINED TOGETHER

The Wisdom of Man and the Wisdom of God

1 Corinthians 1:19

Today we continue our 2026 theme, What God has (and has NOT) joined together. A few weeks ago, we began addressing doctrines God has NOT joined together even though men often think they do belong together. We have discussed how creation and evolution are not joined together, why denominationalism is not God's pattern for the church, fellowship with unbelievers is not from Him, God does not permit women to take leadership roles in the church, and in our last lesson we discussed how God has not joined together serving Him and mammon (money, stuff). Today, we want to address a root cause that leads to many of the things we have been discussing – the wisdom of man and how God has NOT joined that together with His wisdom.

I. What does the Bible say?

- a. **1 Corinthians 1:18-25** – Paul's first declaration as he writes to the church at Corinth that is laden with problems, he begins with their division. In chapters 1-4 he deals with that division. Where does it come from? Human wisdom.
 - i. 1:18-25 -the world views the message of the cross as foolishness and thus they reject Jesus and God as Savior. Instead they appeal to their own wisdom through which they do not know God. Thus the gospel (Christ crucified) is a stumbling block and foolishness.
 - ii. 1:24-25 Paul notes that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. NOTE: God is not foolish. This is hyperbole making the point that even on His worst day (which is not), His wisdom would be greater than man's best days. Man cannot adequately explain away God and His purpose, though he certainly tries.
 - iii. 3:1-3 – describes the wisdom of this world as carnal (meaning of the flesh or world) and leads to division, strife, envy and behaving like mere men – which means however you want reasoning away any accountability.
 - iv. 3:18-20 – the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. Spiritually it will NOT lead to redemption. And as a whole, it does NOT lead to a better world. Man's wisdom does NOT give us real meaning.
 - v. This is why it is NOT compatible with the wisdom from above. In fact, in 1 Cor. 2:7-16 we find that the wisdom of this world is not compatible with the Spirit of God (and His wisdom) because that would require accepting His will by faith. See vs. 14.
- b. **James 3:13-17** – James contrasts the wisdom from above contrasted with the wisdom of this world. The wisdom of this world includes bitter envy, self-seeking in the heart, pridefully speaking against God's truth, envy, confusion and "every evil thing". That is why James described it as earthly (worldly – NOT from heaven), sensual (appealing to your flesh) and demonic (of the devil). This then leads to a description of the wisdom from above which we will touch on in a moment.
- c. **There are other verses that contrast God's wisdom with man's wisdom.** We will see some of these as we move ahead.

II. Consider what the wisdom of God is

- a. God's wisdom is His perfect knowledge that comes from Him. That may sound like circular reasoning, but the point is that God created this world and all that is in it. Therefore, He knows what is best.
 - i. His wisdom cannot be surpassed. Proverbs 3:19 – *by wisdom He founded the earth*.
 - ii. Romans 11:33 - *Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!*
 - iii. What we know of His wisdom is what He has revealed to us – 1 Corinthians 2:7-12

- iv. Isaiah 55:8-9 – His ways and thoughts are higher than ours. 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 noted this.
- v. Colossians 2:1-3 – understanding, knowledge and wisdom – in Him are hidden all the treasures of it.
- b. BUT we can know ENOUGH of His wisdom to live in a godly and righteous way.
- c. James 3:17-18 – the wisdom from above is contrasted with the wisdom of this world. Notice the qualities he mentions – First (a word meaning foundational or that which everything else is built upon) it is pure. God’s word is unpolluted and undiluted. When we are pure it leads to the qualities – peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, merciful and full of good fruits and living without partiality or hypocrisy. These are all good qualities that we need if we desire to live a quality life.
- d. Proverbs 9:10 – *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”*
- e. It is eternal – 1 Corinthians 2:6-7 – ordained before the ages for our glory.
- f. Jesus Christ is the culmination of His wisdom – demonstrated to its fullness in the cross. 1 Corinthians 1:18, 24, 30 – Christ became for us wisdom from God – and righteousness, sanctification and wisdom.

III. **Why is man’s wisdom not compatible with the wisdom of God?**

- a. What is human wisdom? By definition it is when people depend on themselves, other humans and ONLY what is materially observable, more than God and His will. When man says, “I do not believe in God (or believe God) because I cannot see Him”, that is human wisdom.
- b. Because it comes from a different source. Proverbs 14:12 – *There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.* The above passages CONTRAST God’s wisdom with that of man. When Jesus condemned the religious leaders in John 8:44, He noted they were of their father the devil – he was the source of their corruption. 2 Corinthians 11:3, Paul expressed concerns citing how the serpent (Satan) deceived eve by his craftiness, *“so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”*
- c. It is egocentric – it is about what you want. It is about what man wants. It is about YOU. It is built upon pride. Romans 1:18-25ff.
- d. It can lead to one forgetting God and thinking He is not needed, or worse – He does not exist. **Romans 1:28** notes how they did not like to retain God in their knowledge... which lead to all sorts of deviant conduct.
- e. It can be persuasive – 1 Corinthians 2:4 – Paul contrasts his defense of Christ and God with the persuasive words of human wisdom. Why is it persuasive? Because when man chooses to not retain God in his knowledge, he will find ways to explain Him and His will away.
- f. It redefines what God says – Galatians 1:6-9 – Paul warned of *“a different gospel, which is not another.”* While many who appeal to worldly wisdom outright reject God, there is a problem they have to contend with. God’s word exists. So what do you do? You question and corrupt it in every conceivable way. Even among professed believers, many still appeal to human wisdom to justify what they want to do when it stands opposed to what God wants us to do.
- g. It appeals to emotions above truth – Jeremiah 17:9-10, *“The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.”*
- h. It appeals to current trends/viewpoints/popularity – when one wants to do or be what is popular, he will find a way to justify it.
- i. It appeals to traditions of men and binding such – **Colossians 2:8**, *Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.* This was a serious problem that Jesus dealt with among the corrupt and worldly Jewish leaders. An example of this is John 11:49-50, *And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that*

it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish."

- j. According to one source God's wisdom and human wisdom are contrasted in the following:
 - i. Its beginning: Human Wisdom begins with self, feelings, culture or human reasoning; God's wisdom begins with "the fear of the Lord."
 - ii. It trusts in: Human wisdom – personal judgment and visible results; God's wisdom – His word and character.
 - iii. Its value – Human wisdom values status, comfort, power & control; God's wisdom values truth, holiness, humility and faith.
 - iv. Concerning the cross: Human wisdom sees it as foolish or unnecessary. God's wisdom describes it as His power and salvation
 - v. Where it leads: Human wisdom leads to pride, confusion, and death – spiritual and physical; God's wisdom leads to life, salvation and obedience.
- k. It leads to rejecting what God clearly says in His word: Human wisdom says:
 - i. Baptism – it is not essential to salvation. But consider Acts 2:38, 22:16, Mark 16:16, Galatians 3:26-27; 1 Peter 3:20-21, etc.
 - ii. Marriage is for life – yet man says marriage is not binding and you can divorce for any reason, OR not get married at all. But Matthew 19:8-9, 1 Corinthians 7:10-16, etc.
 - iii. God doesn't care which church I find – man says, decide what you want in a religion/church and find it. AND, if you can't find it, make one that caters to your personal desires. OR just declare you don't need the church at all. Ephesians 3:10-11 – the manifold wisdom of God is known by the church. And Jesus came to build just one – Ephesians 1:22-23, Matthew 16:18-19.
 - iv. I can worship God the way I want – man's wisdom says worship should first be entertaining. But John 4:24 says we worship God "in Spirit and in truth". 1 Corinthians 11-14 emphasize proper worship, as do other passages.
 - v. I don't care who I offend – worldly wisdom says I can say what I want, to who I want and when I want. My speech is about me and that is what is most important. Phil. 2:4, 1 Cor. 8:9
 - vi. Compromising with error – man says that God doesn't care how you worship and serve him as long as you conform to a handful of standards (which man will decide). But God is clear that we cannot fellowship with error – 2 John 9-11, Ephesians 5:11, Romans 16:17-18, etc.
- l. Truly, God's wisdom is NOT compatible with the wisdom of man.

IV. **Some other thoughts:**

- a. We are NOT saying that wisdom is not important. It is! In fact it good and needed to be pleasing to God. He wants us to use our wisdom for good and according to His will. Proverbs 4:5-8, *Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you; Love her, and she will keep you. Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding. Exalt her, and she will promote you; She will bring you honor, when you embrace her.* That is why the wisdom from above is contrasted with the wisdom of this world!
- b. Much good has been accomplished in the world because of wisdom. Man using His reasoning and intelligence has produced so much good. We do not deny that, BUT in such matters, it does NOT negate the distinction between godly wisdom and worldly wisdom. Our primary focus in this study is dealing with the philosophy of where your thoughts and reasoning originate.
- c. True wisdom will keep us from being caught up in the wisdom of man. God has given us wisdom to help us. **James 1:5** – if you lack wisdom ask for it. God's word is the source of His wisdom and thus the wisdom of the godly.

- d. Look at where this world is, primarily the product of man's wisdom. Every war, every broken home, every crime, every greedy decision, every dishonest politician or leader has appealed to the wisdom of this world being better than the wisdom of God. In our schools we teach that we are nothing more than meat computers and that our ancestors are apes, and even lower forms of life before that. And then we wonder why our youth acts like animals. Much of what is broken around us is the result of man rejecting the wisdom of God.
- e. Can one who appeals to worldly wisdom have good and honest qualities? Absolutely, and many do. There are good atheists and people in all religions. In fact MOST, even among the worldly have some or even many good qualities. The average person just wants to live their life and stay out of trouble. They do this by applying "the wisdom from above" whether they accept it or not. BUT, that does not dismiss the wisdom of God. If anything, it gives greater credence to God's wisdom – because these are the qualities that WILL make us and society around us better.
- f. BUT because God says so WITH WISDOM AND REASON, human wisdom cannot save you. You may possess worldly wisdom but it will NOT save you. And that is the problem. As we noted toward the beginning of this lesson, we need the blood of Jesus to save us. It is the ONLY thing that leads to salvation – 1 Cor. 1:18, *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.*

Concluding thoughts: 1 Corinthians 3:18-23, *Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness"; and again, "The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile." Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours. And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.*

Truly God has NOT joined together His wisdom with man's wisdom. When it comes to salvation, you have to make a choice who you are going follow. As a follower of God, we may not have all the answers and we may not understand WHY, but we do have the answers we need to save us. And you will only find them in His word. 2 Peter 1:3 tells us that God's divine power has given us "*all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue.*" We can choose to reject God's word because we don't have all the answers, but understand that when you do, you ARE appealing to the wisdom of man and Satan who is the enemy of God. You may go down that path, but understand that when the Lord does return and we stand before Him in judgment, your eternal destiny will be determined by the path you choose. Moses told the children of Israel in Deuteronomy 30:19, *I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;* Whose wisdom are you choosing to follow? Think about it!