



January 7, 2018 Discussion Guide

Contrast: *Laying the Foundation*

I Corinthians 1:18

Introduction – I Corinthians chapter 1

Throughout this series we are emphasizing how everything about the Christian worldview, ethic and lifestyle is in clear contrast to any other alternatives. The foundation of the Christian worldview is based on documented historical events that hold huge implications for the world. Human behavior proceeds from our beliefs, no matter what those beliefs are. The Christian worldview embraces non-negotiables as to our belief system, without which the whole narrative of Christian faith crumbles. As Paul begins his reply letter to new Christians in Corinth, he clarifies the truth, necessity, and impact of a belief in the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross.

Discussion Questions – Begin by reading the entire chapter out-loud

1. If you became a Christian later in life, do you remember any surprises as that change took place? Were there implications that came with following Christ that you didn't expect? Lifestyle changes that you didn't realize were a part of the "package"? Was that an exhilarating time – or stressful – or both? Was there anyone who helped to walk you through that time?
2. In chapter 1, Paul points out that this new, small Christian community was losing their focus because they were dividing and quarreling over what person was dominate in their Christian life. Specifically, they were dividing over men who had either led them to faith in Christ, or who had physically baptized them. Why is it a temptation to begin rallying around human personalities, rather than being satisfied with rallying around Christ?
3. Is there a way that we can step back or blunt the confusion that is caused among unbelievers by the proliferation of various Christian denominations today? How would you explain denominational differences to your unbelieving friends?



4. Paul makes clear that the foundation of any gathering of believers in Christ, is not a philosophy concocted by men, nor is it the charisma of one leader or another – but it is the act of Christ dying sacrificially on a cross for our sins. Is there anything about the implications or impact of this event that you find confusing? Offensive? Reassuring? Heartwarming?

5. What are the life implications of accepting that we are sinners who deserve eternal separation from God until Christ came and made restoration of our relationship possible? How does that affect our attitude, self-regard, daily life, relationship with others? How does accepting and living by that fact bring clear contrast in our lives in comparison to the lives of those who don't know Christ?

6. Assuming you are a follower of Christ – has there been a time when an unbelieving family member or friend has commented on a contrasting difference in your life that is a result of your Christian faith? Hopefully that was a positive observation?

Moving Forward: Insights from Steve Hackman

Paul points out the contrast, of how we think spiritual things should or shouldn't happen – and how God says things MUST happen. The Bible documents are like a beacon pointing to the cross of Christ. Try and read Isaiah 53 without seeing Christ on the cross. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John tell us exactly how Christ's crucifixion happened in gut-wrenching detail, and the letters following the Gospels say, "Wow, look what happened!" God died on a cross for us! The cross is so focal to the Christian faith because it is there that love and justice, judgement and grace, and sacrifice and mercy converge in one ugly, beautiful act of redemption.

[You may enjoy reading Hackman's entire blog post]

<http://www.stevehackman.net/bart-campolo-and-the-cross-of-christ/>