

I Corinthians 1:26-31

God's choices are for His Glory not ours.

- **What kind of people do we want to see in our churches?** For most of us the answer looks something like this - "We want powerful, healthy, strong people who will influence the world around them and make us proud to be linked with them." We do not want people who by our association make us look bad in the world's eyes.
- **We tend to prefer the rich, powerful, and healthy in our churches because:**
 1. They will draw others to our church.
 2. They build our confidence and self image.
 3. They make life easier for us.
 4. They will set a good standard for us and our children.
- **Our values are revealed in our attitude with respect to three issues.**
 1. Things - How we make, spend, and give money will reveal a lot about our values.
 2. Ideas - Our world view and convictions about what is true reflect our values.
 3. People - Most importantly, the way we treat people, especially those that the world marginalizes will show our values.
- **Two competing stories that have shaped our culture's view of people.**
 1. **Natural evolution** - the survival of the fittest. This is the official story told in our public education system.
 2. **Special Creation** - people are made in the image of God. This is the story that has shaped our public social policy.

Note the inconsistency in our culture, which reflects the tension.

- **As we make decisions there are many voices that we hear.**
 1. **Traditionalism** - "What did we do in the past?"
 2. **Sentimentalism** - "What feels good?"
 3. **Fads** - "Which way is the crowd moving?"
 4. **Scientism** - "What do the experts say?" This is not true science but the pop-science that is often politically motivated.
 5. **Pragmatism** - "What works?"
- **It is not insignificant to note that God's choices for his family may not include many of the people that we admire in the world.** As a matter of fact, God may be deliberate in calling to Himself the kind of people that might embarrass us a bit. God has a goal in mind. It is not to reform the lower classes so that they become the upper classes in society but rather it is to humble the upper classes with His choice of the "forgotten" and "powerless" of the world.

A. God's choices of people both encourage and challenge us.

I Corinthians 1 "26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;"

1. The focus is not on our choice but God's and not for our glory but His.
 - a. "calling" = "chosen by God" = "brethren"
 - b. **It is important to note that God takes major responsibility for who is a part of the church.** We make a big mistake when we assume that we can control who makes up the church. While it is true that God desires that all be saved, His purposes are not centered on human interests but on Divine Purposes.
 - c. For more information on God's choices in calling people to faith see **Apttoteach.org (theology files #704, 705)**
2. Some are wise, mighty and noble, but not many.
3. The church will be made up of many people who are not in power, nor candidates for power as the world measures things.
4. God's choices may encourage the weak and forgotten people of the world.
 - a. **Matthew 5:3** "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven."
 - b. **James 1** "9 But let the brother of humble circumstances glory in his high position; 10 and let the rich man glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away."
5. God's choices may challenge the strong to give special respect to the weak.
 - a. **Matthew 25:45** "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me."
 - b. **I Corinthians 12** "20 But now there are many members, but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; 23 and those {members} of the body, which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our unseemly {members come to} have more abundant seemliness, 24 whereas our seemly {members} have no need {of it.} But God has {so} composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that {member} which lacked,"

B. God's choices are purpose driven.

I Corinthians "27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are,"

1. God does not choose "those who are not" in order to change their status in the world.
2. God has a vested interest in humbling the world's way of valuing people by blessing those not respected by the world.
3. It is a mistake to assume that God is glorified by the biggest crowd that **WE** can draw to His name. While many may be called (in a general sense) only a remnant will be chosen (called in a sense of being redeemed).

C. God's choices show spiritual humility to be a core value in His Kingdom.

I Corinthians 1 "29 that no man should boast before God. 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31 that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord. "'"

1. **Proverbs 6:16-19** “There are six things which the Lord hates. Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: **Haughty eyes**, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that turn rapidly to evil, a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers.”
2. **Satan's downfall was pride. I Tim.3:6** “and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.” Ezekiel 28:11-19; Isa.14:12-17

D. God's choices remind us that our boast is in Christ.

I Corinthians 1 “³⁰ . . . who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, ³¹ that, just as it is written, “*Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.*””

1. Those “in Christ” find their boast in the wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption that is in Christ.
2. Those in the world pride themselves in what “they” have accomplished.

E. What is the root of worldliness?

1. It is not overt moral lawlessness, nor is it open hostility to the Gospel. These are but symptoms of a deeper issue.
2. It is an arrogant way of thinking that displaces *God's Glory* and priorities with man's. Satan is a messenger who sows seed of thought in our minds that lead us away from God's purposes. Gen.3:1-7 and Matt.4:1-11. While Satan draws out attention to us, he has no interest in our welfare or good.

F. How do we avoid misplaced values?

1. Support the honest exposition of Scripture.
2. Follow leaders who model Godly values.
3. Recognizing the true face of worldliness. It is easy to focus on superficial issues like (dress, amusements, political associations, etc.) while ignoring other issues that point to a worldly way of thinking.
4. Resisting the world tendency to press us into its mold. This is best done in the company of others who share the same values and know how to warn and encourage us in our spiritual struggles.

G. What should we do about it?

1. Repent of worldly values.
2. Be intentional about showing Godly values - The glory of God over the glory of man.
3. Expect to reach needy people.
4. Give a special welcome to those the world has passed by.