

In Healthcare for God's Service-Distinctive in Wisdom

(Suitable for use within a group over approximately one hour, or for an individual's personal Bible reading)

Thinking about life as a student in healthcare

1. Identify 3 people in your clinical placement (class mates, teachers) who you consider to be 'wise'. What are the characteristics displayed by this person that causes you to label them as person possessing wisdom?
2. Is attaining wisdom something you desire? Why?
3. Where have you gone in the past to attain wisdom?

What does God have to say?

Read 1 Corinthians 1:17-25.

1 Corinthians is a letter penned by the Apostle Paul to Christians in Corinth, an important commercial city in Greece within the Ancient World. Significantly, as well as being a centre of trade, Corinth was also a city known to be a melting pot of ideas. Further, in the first century Corinth was a pluralistic society, in which many different religions co existed and were validated. Consequently, although 2000 years separates us from the Christians in Corinth, the social and religious context of 1st century Corinth mirrors (in many ways) our own - the universities and hospitals in which we learn and practice are grounded in a pluralistic ideology and thirst unabatedly for knowledge (where knowledge is seen as the answer to all of society's ills). It is into this environment that Paul preaches about a crucified Messiah.

Putting it into practice

The apostle Paul describes the cross of Christ as both foolishness, and the power of God.

Why foolishness - Crucified Messiah by definition is an oxymoron. Messiah means victorious deliverer. Crucified means defeated, dead, humiliated.

Why Powerful - We who have a trajectory to die and be separated from God's goodness forever (because of our sin) are now revived and given life; we who are cursed are now blessed; we who are condemned have now been forgiven and are justified - all because of the cross of Christ.

1. Have you had colleagues dismiss Christianity as foolish, unsophisticated, not progressive, and/or not in tune with the modern age?
2. How has such criticism made you feel? How does this passage give you direction in responding to such accusations (verbally, in your attitudes, by your actions)?

Proverbs 9:10, 'The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.'

3. If you are a follower of Jesus Christ how will your 'wisdom' differ to that of your unbelieving class mates (how will you be distinctive in wisdom)?

Consider how 1 Corinthians 1:17-25 and Proverbs 9:10 indicate why intelligence alone - apart from God - is limited in providing wisdom.

Be encouraged! Living a life that fears the Lord may look foolish to people around you - however persevere! It is hard to act and think fearing the Lord rather than fearing people, who think you are a fool for doing so! True wisdom is that which fears the Lord, and true wisdom will push us to persevere in serving the Lord despite the fact that this looks foolish to people around us. After all, who would have thought that a man hanging on a cross

4. Will you have the courage to pray that God will give you the opportunity to speak of God's wisdom – the crucified Messiah - to your unbelieving classmates?

Consider your answer in the context that your classmates will demand:

- a. Signs of God's reality beyond what he has already powerfully demonstrated (1 Corinthians 22-23; John 20:30-31); and/or
- b. Arguments to convince them about God *on their terms* (1 Corinthians 22-23).

God is not a problem to be solved, not an idea to be debated, not a monkey to perform at your command. God is a person - who has made you - and with whom relationship is to be had, at great cost to Himself.

Bible Bites

(Suitable to be completed over approximately 20-25 minutes by a group or an individual)

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¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

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. ¹⁹ For it is written:

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;
the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.”

²⁰ Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. ²² Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than man’s wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man’s strength.’

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