

## [1 Corinthians 1:26-29](#)

(26) For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: (27) But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; (28) And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: (29) That no flesh should glory in his presence.

*King James Version*

Because Christianity has the unfortunate reputation of being a religion for the simple, the apostle Paul's comments in [1 Corinthians 1:26-29](#) are often misunderstood and misapplied.

In a sense, Paul's words are a snapshot in time; they only describe the reality of the situation when [God](#) calls us. Moreover, they are generalities—the norm—to which there are always exceptions. Paul himself was certainly no intellectual lightweight. Early Christian history has several traditions of converts among the Emperor's court, senators' families, and various high-born houses both in Rome and abroad. Still, generally, God calls His potential children from the middle to lower classes of the great mass of humanity.

Since such are our likely origins, our question must then be: "Does God want us to remain foolish, weak, base, despised, and nothing?" No! He desires us to be humble and think of ourselves as nothing, but He does not want us to remain in the spiritual, mental, and emotional conditions from which He has called us. He is working in us so that we can eventually become wise, mighty, noble, glorified, and something humanly incomprehensible.

Anyone reading the Bible should be able to realize that God's every instruction is designed to promote spiritual *growth* ([Malachi 4:2](#); [Ephesians 4:15-16](#); [II Peter 3:18](#); etc.). Stagnation and backsliding are anathema to God (for instance, Jeremiah 3; [Hebrews 6:4-8](#); [II Peter 2:20-22](#)). How often does God say something to the effect that those who do not grow and produce fruit will be pruned, and if they still do not produce, they will be cut down and burned in the fire ([John 15:1-8](#))? God creates and produces, and He wants to see His children do the same.

If God has made us in His likeness, and He is creating His Son's image in us, is it not reasonable to believe that God wants us to learn to think like His Son? In fact, Paul writes in [I Corinthians 2:16](#) that we already have the mind of Christ! He means that by God's Spirit, given to us after [baptism](#), we can begin to think and evaluate as Christ does (see also [Philippians 2:5-8](#)). If God expects us to learn to think like Christ, a great deal of growth in our ability to think must occur.

True Christianity is a thinking-person's religion! The doctrines of God may be simple in their fundamental principles, but they are almost inexhaustibly profound in their particulars and ramifications. Applying God's instruction to any situation requires careful and deliberate thought. Paul says, "[T]he Holy Scriptures . . . are able to make you wise for salvation through [faith](#) which is in Christ [Jesus](#). . . . [They are given] that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" ([II Timothy 3:15](#), 17). Serious study, meditation, and prayer require deep thought.

Additionally, as Christ's return nears, only the truly thoughtful—the deep thinkers—will be able to see through the cloud of deception [Satan](#) and his agents will produce ([Matthew 24:24](#); [Revelation 12:9](#)). Thus, Peter warns us: "But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers" ([I Peter 4:7](#)).

God gives Ezekiel a striking vision in which water running from God's Temple is measured every thousand cubits. It is at first ankle-deep, then knee-deep, then waist-deep, and finally too deep to stand in ([Ezekiel 47:1-5](#)). Such is the knowledge that flows from God. As we progress in understanding, the depth of God's revelation increases proportionately until we are literally

swimming in the limitless expanse of God's mind! It can be overwhelming, but it is also exhilarating and mind-expanding that God has opened such knowledge, understanding, and wisdom to us.

No matter how deeply we have waded into the "water," more depth awaits. We can never plumb its bottom. But is it not satisfying—and rewarding—and right—to try?

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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