

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:18-23  
(Conclusion of 1:10-3:17)

**Dual commands—3:18-20**

- 1) What are the commands?
  - a) The danger of self-deception—<sup>18</sup> *Let no one deceive himself.*
  - b) Contradict the world's view of self—*let him become foolish*
    - i) Who? *If* (assumed true for sake of argument) *anyone among you<sup>pl</sup> assumes he is wise in this age,*
    - ii) Why? *so that he may become wise.* (in a Godward manner)
  - Don't deceive yourself into thinking that divisive quarreling in the name of human leaders (3:4) and ruining a congregation (3:17) is wisdom. It is **not** wise.
- 2) The reason for the commands is based on Scripture—<sup>19</sup> *For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before* (in the presence of) *God.* (cf. 1:18-25)
  - a) An ironic quote: *For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness";* (cf. stated by Eliphaz in Job 5:13)
    - i) People are ready to do anything [πανουργία] to avoid doing things God's way.
  - b) An awesome quote: <sup>20</sup> *and again, "The Lord knows the thought processes of the wise, that they are futile."* (cf. Psalm 94:11)
    - i) God knows the heart of every person—cf. Acts 1:24; 15:8
      - (1) OT—Genesis 20:6; Deuteronomy 8:2; 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 8:39; 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles 28:9; 29:17; 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 6:30; 32:31; Psalms 44:21; 139:1, 23; Proverbs 24:12; Jeremiah 12:3; 17:9-10
      - (2) NT—Matthew 9:4; Luke 16:15; Romans 8:27; 1<sup>st</sup> John 3:20; Revelation 2:23

**Single summarizing command—3:21-23**

- 1) What is the command? <sup>21</sup> *So then let no one boast in people,* (particularly church leaders)
  - a) Cf. 1:31
  - b) People boast in whom they perceive to be the best pastor because they think they picked the best one and are therefore superior to others who follow someone else.
- 2) Why?
  - a) Concept stated with a manward emphasis —*for all things are yours,*
    - i) Relating to the Christian leaders they were dividing over—<sup>22</sup> *whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas,*
      - (1) All legitimate leaders are yours to use for your spiritual benefit. Don't rob yourself of the wealth of a wide legitimate heritage.
      - (2) We should never reduce the God-sized dimensions of biblical Christianity to all that can be embraced by only one Christian teacher, no matter how able or wise he may be.
    - ii) Relating to all creation—*or the world or life or death,*
    - iii) Relating to all time—*or things present or things to come*
  - b) Concept restated with a Godward emphasis —*everything is yours,*
    - i) <sup>23</sup> *and you<sup>pl</sup> belong to Christ,*
    - ii) *and Christ belongs to God* (the Father).
- Understanding the immense privileges we possess in Christ assists us in defeating the miserable and divisive self-centeredness with which so many struggle.

**Take-home truth:** Beware of allowing personal preferences to become a matter of division.