

Dr. Gary Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 11, Response to Chloe's Household, Part 2 (1:1-2:5) Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 11, Response to Chloe's Household, Part 2 (1:1-2:5), Biblicalelearning.org

Dr. Gary Meadors' lecture on 1 Corinthians, specifically chapters 1 and 2, part of Paul's response to Chloe's household's report, examines the divisions within the Corinthian church. The lecture highlights the influence of Roman culture's emphasis on oratory and status as a backdrop to these divisions, explaining that the Corinthians were operating with a **secular mindset rather than a Christian one**. Meadors emphasizes that **biblical understanding requires a rational, not merely emotional, engagement with its truths**. He further explores **Paul's use of rhetorical devices like slogans** and his appeal for unity based on a shared Christian understanding, contrasting Paul's approach with the worldly wisdom the Corinthians admired. Ultimately, the lecture sets the stage for understanding Paul's argument regarding the true source of wisdom and authority in the Christian message.

2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 11 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Pauline Epistles → 1 Corinthians).



**Meadors_1Cor_Sess
ion11.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 11, Response to Chloe's Household, Part 2 (1:1-2:5)

Briefing Document: Dr. Gary Meadors on 1 Corinthians 1:1-2:5 (Lecture 11)

Date: October 26, 2023 (Based on the lecture series title including "2024") **Source:** Excerpts from "Meadors_1Cor_EN_Lecture11.pdf" by Dr. Gary Meadors and Ted Hildebrandt **Subject:** Analysis of 1 Corinthians 1:1-2:5: Paul's Response to Divisions in the Corinthian Church

Main Themes:

This lecture by Dr. Meadors focuses on Paul's initial response to the divisions reported by Chloe's household within the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians 1:1-2:5). The core themes explored are:

- **The Secular Mindset Driving Divisions:** Meadors emphasizes that the divisions in Corinth stem from the believers acting with a "secular mindset," influenced by the values and practices of Roman Corinth, particularly regarding the status and admiration of orators and teachers.
- *"As 1 Corinthians 3:3 says, they were acting in a secular fashion, a secular mindset, to be more specific, which is extremely important because everything we do is a product of the way we think."*
- **The Nature of Unity:** Paul's appeal for unity is presented as primarily a "mental unity" – agreement in thinking, understanding reality, and ethics – rather than just emotional or party unity. Meadors acknowledges that absolute unity is impossible but stresses the need for a core understanding based on the apostles' teachings.
- *"Please note that in the same mind and the same purpose. You see, my friends, unity is first a mental unity, not a party unity, an emotional unity. It's a unity that means that we are thinking the same way, that we describe reality in the same manner, and that we have the same views and the same ethics."*
- **The Primacy of Thinking Over Emotion in Christian Life:** Meadors highlights the biblical understanding of the "heart" as the rational process, contrasting it with the modern cultural emphasis on emotion. True belief involves a mental submission to Christ's claims. Actions are a consequence of thinking ("think-do," not "do-think").

- *"To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with all your heart doesn't mean to have an emotional experience with Jesus. It means to think about his claims on your life and to submit to those claims, own those claims, and confess those claims. It's a mental process. That's a very important concept to get a hold of in the Bible is the meaning of the term heart in Scripture."*
- *"If we don't think straight, we will not live straight. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may demonstrate God's revealed will. It's not the renewing of your emotions and other things."*
- **The Use of Rhetorical Devices, Particularly Slogans:** Meadors introduces the concept of rhetorical devices used by Paul, with a specific focus on "slogans" – sayings or dictums likely used by the Corinthians that Paul quotes and then clarifies or corrects. He also mentions Margaret Mitchell's view of these as "impersonation rhetoric."
- *"What is a slogan? Paul takes the dictums, the sayings of the Corinthians from that interchange. He quotes that saying, and then he responds to it with clarification and correction if necessary."*
- Examples of these potential slogans include "All things are lawful" (6:12, 10:23), "Meats for the belly and belly for meats" (6:13), "We know that we all have knowledge" (8:1), "No idol is anything in the world" (8:4), "There are gods many and lords many" (8:5), "There is no resurrection of the dead" (Chapter 15), and "It is good for a man not to touch a woman" (7:1).
- **The Problem of Valuing Human Wisdom and Eloquence:** Meadors underscores that the Corinthians were wrongly valuing human wisdom and oratorical skill, mirroring the Greek admiration for rhetoric. Paul's commission was not to preach with the "wisdom of words" in the secular sense, as this would detract from the power of the cross and lead people to trust in preachers rather than God.
- *"Some, at least of the Corinthians, were setting too high a value on human wisdom and human eloquence in line with the typical Greek admiration for rhetoric and philosophical studies. In the fact of this, Paul insists that preaching with wisdom of words was no part of his commission."*
- *"That kind of preaching would draw men to the preacher. It would nullify the cross of Christ."*
- **The Nature of the Gospel as Foolishness to the World:** Meadors explains that the message of the cross was seen as embarrassing and not up to the Corinthians'

retorical standards influenced by worldly wisdom. The reliance on animal sacrifice as a metaphor for redemption was becoming outdated and offensive to a secular mindset.

- **God's Choice of the Foolish and Weak:** Paul reminds the Corinthians that God chose those considered foolish, weak, lowly, and despised by the world to shame the wise and strong, emphasizing that true status lies in God, not in human achievement.
- *"Consider your own call, brothers and sisters. Not many of you were wise by human standards. Not many were powerful. Not many were of noble birth, but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong."*
- **Paul's Personal Example of Weakness and Focus on Christ Crucified:** Paul's approach to preaching in Corinth was not with lofty secular wisdom but with a focus solely on "Jesus Christ and him crucified," demonstrating the wisdom and power of God through his weakness and fear. Meadors refutes the idea that this was a reaction to a perceived failure in Athens.
- *"When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words of wisdom... For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I came to you in weakness and in fear and much trembling. My speech and proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with the demonstration of the spirit and of power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God."*
- **The Importance of Understanding the Cultural Context:** Meadors repeatedly stresses the need to understand the cultural context of Roman Corinth to properly interpret Paul's words and avoid enculturating the text with modern perspectives.

Most Important Ideas and Facts:

- The divisions in Corinth were deeply rooted in the Corinthian believers' adoption of secular, Roman values, particularly concerning the admiration of eloquent teachers.
- Paul's appeal for unity centers on a shared way of thinking and understanding truth, not just superficial agreement.

- The biblical understanding of the "heart" emphasizes rational thought and submission to Christ's claims as the foundation of Christian life.
- Paul employed rhetorical devices, including quoting and responding to "slogans" likely used by the Corinthians to justify their behavior or beliefs.
- The Corinthians were prioritizing human wisdom and rhetorical skill over the seemingly "foolish" message of the cross.
- God's election of the seemingly insignificant in the world underscores that true value and boasting should be in the Lord, not in human status or achievement.
- Paul intentionally presented himself in weakness, focusing solely on the crucified Christ, to demonstrate the power of God rather than relying on secular eloquence.
- Accurate interpretation of 1 Corinthians requires understanding the historical and cultural context of the letter.

Quotes to Note:

- *"As a person thinks, so are they."* (Meadors quoting Proverbs regarding the link between thought and action)
- *"Unity is the ability to deal with diversity, but diversity cannot stray too far from the central core understandings that the apostles have laid down."* (Meadors on the nature of Christian unity)
- *"Thinking, doing. You do because you think a certain way. It's not doing, then thinking."* (Meadors explaining the priority of thought in biblical ethics)
- *"The message [of the cross] that's offensive, not the manner of the message."* (Meadors on the root cause of offense to a secular mindset)
- *"My speech and proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom... but with the demonstration of the spirit and of power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom, but on the power of God."* (1 Corinthians 2:4-5, quoted by Meadors to highlight Paul's preaching approach)

Next Steps/Further Considerations:

- The lecture will continue in the next session by focusing on 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 and Paul's explanation of the source and authority of his message, likely delving into the concept of divine revelation.

- Meadors recommends reading Walter Kaiser's article, "A Neglected Text in Bibliology Discussions, 1 Corinthians 2:6 to 16," for a deeper understanding of this crucial passage.
- The lecture encourages listeners to self-reflect on the influence of their own culture and secular wisdom on their understanding and practice of Christianity.

4. Study Guide: Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 11, Response to Chloe's Household, Part 2 (1:1-2:5)

1 Corinthians 1:1-2:5 Study Guide

Key Concepts and Themes:

- **Divisions in the Corinthian Church:** The primary problem addressed by Paul, stemming from allegiance to different human leaders (Paul, Apollos, Cephas, Christ).
- **Worldly vs. Godly Wisdom:** Paul contrasts the secular mindset and values of Roman Corinth with the wisdom and power of God revealed through the gospel.
- **The Meaning of "Heart" in Scripture:** Understanding "heart" as the rational, thinking part of a person, not primarily emotional.
- **Rhetorical Devices:** Paul's use of persuasive techniques like appeals, admonitions, and potentially the incorporation of Corinthian "slogans."
- **The Nature of the Gospel:** The message of the cross as seemingly foolish to the world but the power of God for salvation, emphasizing humility and God's action.
- **Paul's Apostolic Authority:** Paul defends his ministry by highlighting that his message and approach are rooted in God's revelation, not human eloquence or wisdom.
- **Epistemology and Axiology:** The interconnectedness of thinking (knowing) and doing (ethics) in a Christian life.
- **Status and Dignity:** The Corinthian obsession with social standing contrasted with God's choice of the weak and foolish.

Detailed Breakdown:

- **Introduction (Meadors):** Sets the context of Roman Corinth, emphasizing the importance of orators, status, and a secular mindset as underlying the divisions. Highlights the biblical understanding of the "heart" as rational thought.
- **Paul States the Problem of Division (1:10-17):** Chloe's household reported the divisions.
- These divisions are linked to acting "worldly" or "in the flesh," adopting a secular worldview.

- Specific divisions based on following different teachers: Paul, Apollos.
- Paul appeals for unity in mind and purpose, emphasizing a mental unity based on shared understanding of reality and ethics, not mere emotional agreement.
- The appeal is framed as an admonition (nouthetic), urging them to align their actions with their Christian identity (think-do).
- Introduction of the concept of rhetorical devices used in this appeal genre, specifically mentioning "slogans" – Corinthian sayings Paul quotes and responds to.
- Discussion of Margaret Mitchell's "impersonation rhetoric" perspective on these slogans.
- Examples of potential slogans (e.g., "All things are lawful," "Food for the stomach...").
- **Rhetorical Evaluation of the Problem of Divisions (1:18-4:21, focused on 1:18-2:5): Appeal to the Nature of the Gospel (1:18-25):** The cross is seen as foolishness by those with a secular mindset but is the power and wisdom of God. The Corinthians' rhetorical standards led them to undervalue the gospel.
- **Pseudo-Human Wisdom Fails to Understand the Message of the Cross:** Contrasts worldly wisdom with God's wisdom.
- **Pseudo-Human Wisdom and Human Pride (1:26-31):** God chose the foolish, weak, and lowly to shame the wise and strong, undermining the Corinthian focus on status. True boasting should be in the Lord.
- **Paul's Personal Example (2:1-5):** Paul's approach to ministry in Corinth was not characterized by lofty secular wisdom but by a focus on "Jesus Christ and him crucified," demonstrating the wisdom and power of God. He came in weakness and fear, relying on the Spirit's power, not human persuasion, so that their faith would rest on God, not human wisdom. Contrasts Paul's approach with the expected behavior of impressive orators in that era.

Quiz:

1. According to Dr. Meadors, what was a major underlying issue contributing to the divisions in the Corinthian church, and how did it manifest?
2. Explain Dr. Meadors' interpretation of the biblical meaning of "heart." How does this differ from a common cultural understanding?

3. What is a "slogan" in the context of 1 Corinthians, as described by Dr. Meadors? Provide one example mentioned in the lecture.
4. How did Paul's approach to preaching in Corinth contrast with the typical Roman orator, according to the lecture?
5. What does Dr. Meadors mean when he says the Corinthians were acting in a "secular fashion" or with a "secular mindset"? Provide an example from the lecture.
6. Explain the relationship between "thinking" and "doing" from a biblical perspective, as outlined in the lecture.
7. Why did Paul not rely on "lofty words of wisdom" when he first came to Corinth, according to the lecture? Was he against speaking well?
8. According to Dr. Meadors, what should be the foundation of Christian faith, as opposed to "human wisdom"?
9. What was the significance of Chloe's household in the context of 1 Corinthians, chapters 1-2?
10. How does the lecture connect the Corinthian emphasis on human wisdom and eloquence to their potential view of the "message of the cross"?

Answer Key:

1. A major underlying issue was the adoption of the secular mindset and values of Roman Corinth, particularly the emphasis on the status and eloquence of orators. This manifested in the Corinthians valuing and aligning themselves with different Christian teachers based on their perceived wisdom and rhetorical skills.
2. Dr. Meadors explains that in the Bible, the "heart" primarily refers to the rational process, the mind, and how a person thinks. This differs from the common cultural understanding that often associates the heart with emotions and feelings.
3. A "slogan" in 1 Corinthians, as described by Dr. Meadors, is a dictum or saying likely used by the Corinthians themselves, which Paul then quotes and responds to with clarification or correction. An example is "All things are lawful."
4. Paul's approach to preaching contrasted with typical Roman orators because he did not come with impressive rhetoric or try to win them over with secular wisdom. Instead, he focused on the message of Christ crucified, even in weakness and fear, relying on the power of the Spirit.

5. When Dr. Meadors says the Corinthians were acting in a "secular fashion" or with a "secular mindset," he means they were evaluating and living according to the values, wisdom, and standards of the non-Christian world, specifically Roman Corinth, rather than a biblical worldview. An example is their competitiveness between teachers, mirroring the orator culture.
6. The lecture emphasizes that from a biblical perspective, thinking and doing are intrinsically linked. Actions are a product of the way we think (epistemology informs axiology), and the Bible does not separate the two. Transformation comes through the renewing of the mind, leading to changed behavior.
7. According to the lecture, Paul did not rely on "lofty words of wisdom" in a secular manner to impress the Corinthians. However, this did not mean he was against speaking well; rather, he chose to communicate God's wisdom in a way that focused on Christ crucified, not worldly eloquence.
8. According to Dr. Meadors, the foundation of Christian faith should rest on the power of God, demonstrated through the Spirit, rather than on human wisdom or persuasive rhetoric. Paul's goal was for their faith to be in God, not in human teachers.
9. Chloe's household provided the oral communicate that informed Paul about the divisions and problems existing within the Corinthian church. This report prompted Paul's response and the addressing of these issues in his letter.
10. The lecture suggests that the Corinthians, valuing human wisdom and eloquence, might have viewed the "message of the cross" – with its emphasis on suffering and sacrifice – as lacking in rhetorical sophistication and therefore embarrassing or not up to their worldly standards of wisdom and power.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Analyze the significance of the cultural context of Roman Corinth in understanding the divisions within the early Corinthian church as discussed in the lecture. How did the emphasis on rhetoric and status contribute to these divisions?
2. Discuss the lecture's explanation of the contrast between worldly wisdom and God's wisdom in 1 Corinthians 1:1-2:5. How does Paul challenge the Corinthian understanding of wisdom and power through the message of the cross?
3. Evaluate the role and nature of "slogans" or "impersonation rhetoric" in Paul's letter to the Corinthians, according to the lecture. How might Paul's engagement with these sayings have served his rhetorical and pastoral purposes?
4. Examine Dr. Meadors' interpretation of Paul's personal example in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5. How does Paul's approach to ministry in Corinth serve as a model for Christian leadership and the communication of the gospel?
5. Based on the lecture, discuss the interconnectedness of epistemology (how we know) and axiology (how we act) in the Christian life. How does a secular mindset impact both the thinking and behavior of believers, according to the source material?

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Secular Mindset:** A way of thinking and understanding the world based on worldly values, wisdom, and standards, rather than divine revelation.
- **Worldly Wisdom:** Human wisdom and understanding that is often in contrast to the wisdom of God, focused on earthly perspectives and values.
- **Godly Wisdom:** Wisdom that originates from God, revealed through the gospel and the Holy Spirit, often appearing as foolishness to the world.
- **Rhetoric:** The art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing, utilizing various techniques to influence an audience.
- **Oral Communicate:** A message or report conveyed verbally, in this case, from Chloe's household to Paul.
- **Slogan (in this context):** A short, memorable phrase or saying likely used by the Corinthians, which Paul may have quoted and then responded to in his letter.
- **Impersonation Rhetoric:** The idea that Paul might be imitating or representing the viewpoints of the Corinthians in his writing before responding to them.
- **Epistemology:** The branch of philosophy concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge, its presuppositions and basis, and the general reliability of claims to knowledge.
- **Axiology:** The branch of philosophy concerned with the study of values, including ethics (moral values) and aesthetics (values of beauty).
- **Nouthetic:** Relating to a form of Christian counseling that involves direct admonition or confrontation to encourage godly behavior.
- **Orator:** A public speaker, especially one who is eloquent or skilled. In the Roman context, orators held significant social and political influence.
- **Status and Dignity:** Social standing, honor, and respect within a community, which was a significant concern in Roman Corinth.

5. FAQs on Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 11, Response to Chloe's Household, Part 2 (1:1-2:5), [Biblicalelearning.org](https://www.biblicalelearning.org)

Frequently Asked Questions on 1 Corinthians 1-2:5 based on Dr. Meadors' Lecture

1. What was the main issue facing the Corinthian church that Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians 1-2:5? The primary problem was division within the church, stemming from the Corinthian believers aligning themselves with different human teachers like Paul, Apollos, and Peter, or even claiming to be only of Christ. This division was rooted in a worldly mindset influenced by the competitive nature of Roman Corinth's oratorical culture, where status and admiration for eloquent speakers were highly valued.

2. How did the cultural context of Roman Corinth contribute to the divisions within the church? The Roman culture of Corinth highly prized rhetoric, eloquence, and the status associated with popular orators and philosophers. This secular mindset seeped into the church, causing believers to compare and compete based on their preferred teachers' speaking abilities and perceived status, rather than focusing on the unified message of Christ.

3. What does Dr. Meadors explain about the biblical understanding of the "heart"? Meadors emphasizes that in the Bible, particularly in the context of faith, the "heart" is not primarily the seat of emotions as it is often understood in modern culture. Instead, it refers to the rational process, the mind, and one's thinking. Believing in Jesus with all your heart means intellectually understanding, accepting, and submitting to his claims on your life.

4. What are "slogans" in the context of 1 Corinthians, and why are they important for understanding the letter? Slogans, according to Meadors, are statements or sayings that were likely popular among the Corinthians and reflected their own beliefs or justifications for their actions. Paul often quotes these slogans and then responds to them with clarification or correction. Recognizing these slogans helps us understand the specific issues and viewpoints Paul was addressing within the Corinthian church.

5. How does Paul's personal example in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 contrast with the admired public speakers of his time? Unlike the eloquent and impressive orators valued in Corinthian society, Paul states that he did not come to them with lofty words of worldly wisdom. Instead, he focused on proclaiming "Jesus Christ and him crucified," presenting himself in weakness and fear, relying not on persuasive human rhetoric but on the demonstration of the Spirit and power of God. This was to ensure their faith rested on God's power, not human wisdom.

6. What is the significance of Paul's emphasis on "wisdom" in 1 Corinthians 1-4? The term "wisdom" appears frequently in these chapters, but its meaning varies. Meadors distinguishes between worldly wisdom (smartness about how the world operates), the wisdom of the world (aligning with secular thinking), the wisdom of God (good and true), and wisdom as acting like the world. Paul argues against the reliance on worldly wisdom and emphasizes the need for God's wisdom, which is often perceived as foolishness by the world.

7. How does Dr. Meadors explain the relationship between thinking and doing in a Christian context? Meadors highlights the biblical principle that thinking precedes doing. Our actions are a direct result of our mindset. Therefore, to live righteously, we must first think rightly, aligning our thoughts with God's revealed truth. Transformation comes through the renewing of the mind, not primarily through emotional adjustments.

8. According to the lecture, what was Paul's motivation and approach in addressing the divisions in Corinth? Paul's primary motivation was to appeal for unity in the church, based on a shared understanding of the gospel and a common "mind" and "purpose" in Christ. His approach involved reminding them of their humble beginnings, emphasizing the centrality of the cross (which was considered foolish by worldly standards), and highlighting that true wisdom and authority come from God's revelation, not human eloquence or status. He presented himself as a servant and example, contrasting his methods with those admired by the secular culture of Corinth.