

# 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

## “Right-side Up”

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

**Memory Verse:** 1 Corinthians 1:27 *“But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty.”*

**Lesson Focus:** Last week we introduced the book of 1 Corinthians by saying God turned the city of Corinth upside-down when Paul brought them gospel. We will continue with that theme this week, but clarify that God doesn't take what is good and turn it upside-down to make it a mess. Rather, God takes those who are a weak and foolish mess and turns them right-side up into something beautiful!

**Activities and Crafts:** Coloring Picture of Jesus and Child for 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Bring it Home Discussion for 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>.  
Craft for 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>: Right-side up Cup

**Starter Activity:** Three Cup Challenge

Introduce the lesson by asking kids to see if they can solve the “Three Cup Challenge” (We will provide you with the cups). To set up, place **two right-side up**, and **one upside-down** in the middle. The challenge is to turn all cups right-side up in no more than four moves, turning over **exactly two** cups at each move. (It is actually a trick as it is logically impossible)

Invite a few kids up to try and solve it. Then have some fun and try to amaze the kids by solving it yourself, *but with a subtle twist*. When you reset the cups for yourself, you will **instead** have **two upside-down**, and **one right-side up** in the middle. Try your best to set it up so that they don't notice the switch. “Solve” it after three tries and amaze them!

Afterwards transition into our lesson by first reviewing what was taught last week. We introduced the book of 1 Corinthians with the idea that God, by the gospel, turned that city upside-down. (refer to **Acts 17:6b** which describes the apostles on their missionary journey that eventually brought them to Corinth)

But we need to be a little clearer about what this “turning upside-down” means. It's not that God took something good and neat, turned it upside-down, and made a mess. (**Teachers:** Consider taking a cup of water or a basket of something and turning it upside-down to make that point!).

Rather, the gospel takes what is already upside-down and a mess and turns it right-side up and makes it good! Let's take a look in our text.

## Bible Study:

**1 Corinthians 1:18:** Paul contrasts those who are perishing with those who are being saved. Everyone, including you, is in one group or the other.

Q: What does it mean to be perishing? A: Lost and going to hell! This is serious! And apart from faith in Jesus Christ, the Bible teaches us that ALL are perishing. \*

Moreover, the Bible says the whole world is ALREADY upside-down. \* If you go back to the beginning of the Bible, you will read that God created all things GOOD. But Adam and Eve sinned and turned what God made GOOD upside-down and plunged the world into sin and evil. And to this day, we still live in the same broken, upside-down world. \*

BUT, BUT this is why Jesus came! The gospel, the power of God, restores us! This is the “message of the cross”, the gospel, referred to in this verse. God takes what man turned upside-down and makes it right-side up again! (**Teachers:** Consider using the metal spoons we gave you and illustrating this point by having the kids look at their reflection on the inside of the spoon. Notice the reflection is upside-down! This illustrates your life apart from Jesus Christ. But turn the spoon over and then look at your reflection: right-side up, which is happens when you become a Christian!)

**1 Corinthians 1:19-21:** Here is the next thing God turns right-side up: Wisdom!

Q: What does it mean to be a “wise-guy” or a “smarty-pants”? A: Someone who is proud and thinks they are smarter than everyone else. Well, back then and even still today, people think they are too smart for the gospel! \*

The Bible is very clear where wisdom begins: fearing and honoring God (**Proverbs 9:10**). We have it upside-down when we think WE are OK apart from God. True wisdom begins with knowing God, the One who made all things.

**1 Corinthians 1:22-24:** People of Corinth responded to the gospel in various ways.

Some wanted this or that before they would believe. The same thing happens today. \* But here is the problem. When you require God to do something before you believe, you have things upside-down! **Who do you think you are to boss God around?** \*

But others surrendered and believed seeing God’s power to restore things to being right-side up. These people recognized that they were indeed perishing and needed help! \*

**1 Corinthians 1:25:** This statement puts things properly right-side up! There is nothing man can do to out-smart or out-muscle God!

Jesus Christ looked weak and foolish as He hung on the cross to die. But this was God’s design and plan, that He Himself would take the punishment deserved to all of the perishing people in this upside-down world! Wow!

**1 Corinthians 1:26:** Paul is reminding the Corinthian believers that most of them are not famous, powerful or mighty.

And this is OK, because what we see all throughout Scripture is that God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble! (**James 4:6**)

**1 Corinthians 1:27:** This is our memory verse and another way in which God takes what is upside-down and makes it right-side up. God takes what the world sees as weak and foolish and beautifies it! There are so many examples of this throughout the Bible. (**Teachers:** See a few examples below. Pick the one's you like and emphasize how God chose what looked weak and foolish to men to accomplish His good purposes) \*

**Abraham:** God promised that the Savior of the world would be his descendant. Yet was Abraham a young man married to a young woman? No! (**Genesis 18:13-14**) Only God!

**Moses:** He was a soft-spoken murderer rejected by his people and in exile in the desert. Who would have thought Moses could be the one to take on Pharaoh and lead the people out of Egypt? Only God! (**Exodus 4:12**)

**David:** When Israel was cowering before Goliath, this young nobody trusted that God would help him defeat Goliath (**1 Samuel 17:37**). Only God could have won this battle!

**Mary:** Did God entrust a rich, famous, woman to bring His Son into the world? No! Mary was an ordinary girl that believed in God (**Luke 1:37-38**). Also, did she give birth to Jesus in a palace with pomp and splendor? No! God Himself came humbly!

**The 12 Disciples:** Who were these guys before Jesus chose them? Fishermen, tax collectors, nobodies! (**Acts 4:13**) But after being empowered by the Holy Spirit, God used them to change the world! Only God!

**Nick Vujicic:** How many of you were here for the Nick Vujicic weekend? The world sees a man like him (without arms and legs) as weak and foolish. But what has God done through him? Changed people's lives making them right-side up! **Only God!**

**1 Corinthians 1:28-29:** Now we get to “why” God chooses the weak and foolish things of the world. (**Teachers:** Consider choosing someone strong or popular in class to come up and stick out their arms straight out in front of them. Have them hold a piece of paper with their arms held straight out. Continue with the lesson as they hold the paper until they tire and give up!)

The weak and the foolish have no room for bragging about themselves. Instead of saying, “look at what I have done” they say, “**look at what God has done**”!

**1 Corinthians 1:30-31:** Believers are united to Christ by faith. He is our righteousness. He changes and transforms us. That way HE gets the glory, not us!

**Key Point:** In the beginning of our lesson we used cups to introduce this idea of how God turns us upside-down so that we are right-side up.

Q: Is a cup of any use when it is upside-down? A: Nope!

But when a cup is right-side up, it can then fulfill its purpose.

Q: What is a cup designed to do? Hold water or something to drink!

**Boys and Girls:** We also were DESIGNED for a purpose. God, our Creator, designed us that we would love Him and love others. But we cannot fulfill our purpose if we are perishing (upside-down cup). We must first humbly come before Jesus Christ, trusting in Him by faith, and He makes us right-side up! Then, and only then, we are able to be empowered by His Spirit to fulfill that purpose.

Q: Do you need to receive Jesus Christ for the first time and be made right-side up today? Tell your leader and they will pray with you and talk with you about that.

Q: Do you need to be empowered and filled to fulfill your purpose to love God and others this week? Tell your leader and receive prayer!

# Bring It Home

**Download at:** <https://rncalvary.org/volunteering/childrens-ministry/family-resources/>

**Lesson Theme: “Right-side Up”**

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**Memory Verse:** 1 Corinthians 1:27 *“But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty.”*

**Teachers/Parents:** We introduced the letter of 1 Corinthians last week emphasizing how the gospel turned the city of Corinth upside-down. We continued in that theme this week clarifying that God doesn’t take what is good and make it a mess, but takes a mess and makes it good! Do you know anyone personally (maybe yourself) that was a horrible mess until God pierced them through with the gospel? Share the story!

## Discussion Questions:

- 1) In **1 Corinthians 1:18**, Paul divides all people into those who are perishing and those who are saved. What does it mean to be “perishing”? Which group are you in and why?
- 2) Read **1 Corinthians 1:23**. Why do you think people back then and even still today see the gospel as foolish? How can we help them see it instead as God’s awesome plan to turn what is upside-down and make it right-side up?
- 3) Read **Romans 1:16**. Does this describe your view of the gospel? Why or why not?
- 4) Read **1 Corinthians 1:27**, our memory verse. In class we looked at several examples throughout the Bible where God chose what appeared to be weak and foolish and used them for His great purposes. Ask your kids if they remember any of the examples that stood out to them.
- 5) Back in the beginning of February, RMC hosted [Nick Vujicic](#), a man without arms and legs. How has he been an example of what we read in **1 Corinthians 1:27**?
- 6) In **1 Corinthians 1:31**, we see why God chooses the weak and foolish to accomplish His purposes. Why is that? See **James 4:6** for a hint.
- 7) Read **Jeremiah 9:23-24**. What does God desire want us to do in these verses? Discuss how you can apply this practically to life this week!