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The Wisdom of God: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

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Reprint Compliments of Men At The Cross

VIDEO OF THE DAY

Whatever one thinks of the man, Muhammad Ali, the fighter (Ali) was an unsurpassed warrior. But to see him now, a trembling victim of Parkinson Disease, one can hardly imagine him floating like a butterfly and stinging like a bee. Nevertheless, we saw him put on a show in the ring, and what we saw astounded us.

Most memorable of all were his bouts with Smokin' Joe Frazier. Joe was a half foot shorter than Ali, built like a block of granite, and familiar with only one style of boxing ... hard and straightforward. He was known to pursue his opponents relentlessly, moving in tight, taking blow after blow, until he finally wore them down enough to move in for the kill.

"In spite of Ali's flash and firepower, Joe Frazier's just the man to beat the Champ," said many sports analysts. "Ali's a magician, but the world will see what he's truly made of when he runs out of steam against Smokin' Joe."

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Those who were closest to Ali tell us that for weeks prior to the match, he did nothing but abdominal work-sit-ups after sit-ups-even at the

neglect of his other skills. It was baffling to the media, but Ali seemed to have everything under control.

"If you're coming to see me float like a butterfly and sting like a bee, you're in for a surprise! I'm going to use the rope-a-dope on Mr. Frazier, and he'll never know what hit him."

The rope-a-dope? No one had ever heard of it. Whatever it was, it seemed like foolishness to those who thought Ali's best chance of defeating such an unorthodox opponent was to fight like he had always fought-fast and flashy.

When the fight began, Ali headed for the ropes, and Frazier followed. Round after round, Smokin' Joe pummeled Ali's mid-section, with barely a retaliation from Ali. Meanwhile, Ali kept up his confident banter with the crowd, and soon it became evident to all that Frazier was the "dope" Ali had been talking about. By the late rounds, Ali's abdominal work began to pay off. Worn out by his unsuccessful attack on Ali's torso, Frazier found little strength left in his arms. That's when Ali turned the tables, and within a round the victory was his. For weeks afterwards, the media praised Ali's rope-a-dope tactics. What had once been considered foolish was now the epitome of boxing wisdom.

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Perhaps more than anyone, Paul knew how treacherous an opponent the wisdom of man was to the gospel.

Human wisdom or pride has always been a proud brawler. It will punch and kick and bite and gouge, and do whatever it takes to stay on top. Its pride's core is the belief that man is good enough or clever enough to get to heaven. To the prideful person, the thought of Christ dying on the cross to make it possible for people to live in heaven is foolishness. Consequently, pride is opposed to the cross, and would do nothing more than to pummel it to the canvas.

To the church of Corinth Paul said, For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

In the end, when the worldly-wise thinks God is on the ropes, it will be the power of the cross that is the victor over Satan.

QUESTIONS:

1. Name a time when you felt foolish for following Christ.
2. What does verse 18 mean when it calls the cross, "the power of God"?

3. Name a time when your human wisdom (or pride) hindered you from following Christ.

LIFELINE:

Spiritual fitness is the tool to use when fighting against the Christian's greatest opponent, Satan. Being spiritually fit will allow blow-by-blow to come at you and still gain you victory over Satan. Name ways you can be more spiritually fit as an individual and as a family.

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

18For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19For it is written, "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE." 20Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; 23but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, 24but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 5Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; 27but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, 29so that no man may boast before God. 30But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

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