

**FOOLISHNESS**

Looking foolish isn't high on anyone's list of things to do. Our natural tendency is to protect our image in the eyes of others making sure they see us the way we want them to. Even those of who have found freedom from impression management and are more authentic in their interactions rarely would view "being a fool" as an accurate representation of themselves. The problem is, the Bible tells us that by believing the gospel we automatically move into the realm of fools in the eyes of those who don't share our faith.

**Read 1 Corinthians 2:14**

**Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-31**

What about the gospel looks foolish to those who don't believe?

What aspects of the Christian faith seem the most foolish to you?

King David, author of many of the Psalms and man after God's own heart had no problem appearing foolish. He is an example of how worshipping God and focusing on Him can help us keep our lives and worth in proper perspective. It is because of God creating and loving us that we have incredible value, not because of how other's view us. His life shows us that pleasing God is more important and fulfilling than worrying about how we appear to others. One example of David's foolishness for God is in 2 Samuel.

**Read 2 Samuel 6:12-24**

Am I willing to look foolish for God?

What is it that keeps me from doing this?

In what ways should we be distinct from people who aren't following Jesus?

**EVALUATING WHAT DOESN'T SEEM TO FIT**

The Bible is full of stories of people and situations that sound deceptive, seem sinful, smell fishy and look weird. We've explored many of them in the past few weeks together:

Abraham attempting to sacrifice his promised son Isaac.

**∴ that looks weird**

Isaiah running around naked for three years to display the manner of the coming judgment of Egypt and Cush.

Ruth brazenly approaching Boaz in violation of cultural taboos in the hopes that he would marry her.

Hosea marrying a prostitute to depict the pain of God at his chosen people's sin and adultery with other gods.

Mary claiming to be a virgin while being pregnant with Jesus.

Jesus keeping company with the seedy and sinful part of society.

**He dares to be a fool, and that is the first step in the direction of wisdom.**

*--James Gibbons Huenker*

Paul going from killing Christians one day to declaring the truth of the gospel the next.

Often we gloss over the oddness or aspects of these stories that make us uncomfortable or challenge our assumptions about God. When we encounter these stories we need to stop and let them soak in.

**What do they teach us about God and how we view Him?**

**Do we expect the unexpected from our wild and untamed God?**

Applying this reality to our lives today is hard. How can we tell the difference between actions that are from God instead of those that really are crazy, sinful, deceptive and weird? The truth is some of the time we can't tell at all. In some instances we won't know this side of eternity whether what we encounter was from God.

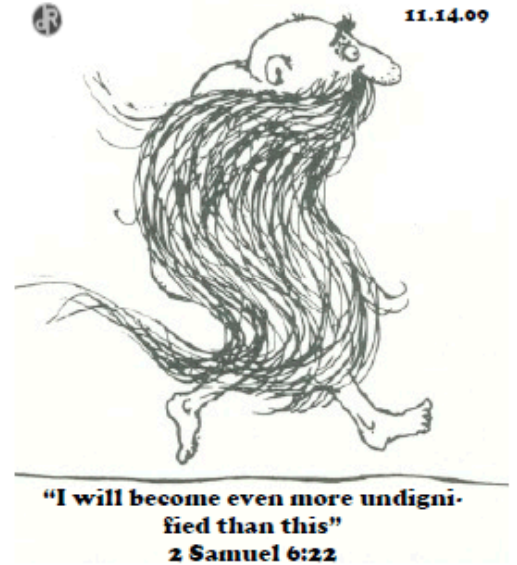
At the same time there are some principles that can be helpful for us as we try to remain open to God's unusual working in the world.

**Are the people who look weird or smell fishy advocating Biblical principles?**

**Is their ministry thriving under their influence?**

**Do they display the fruit of the Spirit in their lives?**

Naturally the problem with these questions is that they are just general guides that don't always apply. If you look at the ministry of Jeremiah, he bore absolutely no fruit. But he was being faithful to what God had called him to do. In fact God had told him that no one would listen to him and no one would repent of their sins and turn back to God because of Jeremiah's message. Perhaps our view of success in ministry should be more about faithfulness than numerical growth.



Are there some other questions we can ask as we seek to discern the difference between people who are crazy for God as opposed to merely crazy?

Can you think of examples like Jeremiah where one we might come to the wrong conclusion based on our evaluation questions?

How can we react in openness and withhold judgment in fishy situations?

What will you take away from the last four weeks studying the sometimes unusual workings of God? What needs to change about you in response?

Notes: