

The "Who's Not" List

Christian Life Assembly  
Jim Hoffman

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A "Who's Not" List

**If I would say to you, "You are not all that smart, you are not very strong, and you come from a flawed family", what would you think?**

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A "Who's Not" List



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A "Who's Not" List



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A "Who's Not" List

- The church at Corinth excelled in openness to the Holy Spirit and in His gifts – give them credit for that.
- However, there were lots of needless divisions in the church, and it should not surprise us that a culture with more than 40 strong philosophies of life would be a bit fractured.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Cor 1:19 For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." NKJV

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A "Who's Not" List

- 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1:26 For you see your calling, brethren, that **not many wise** according to the flesh, **not many mighty, not many noble**, are called. 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**; 28 **and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are**, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence. 30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— 31 that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord." NKJV

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A "Who's Not" List

- **Not many wise after the flesh** – not among the world’s intellectual elites.
- While there are some notable exceptions, for the most part the gospel does not appeal to the worldly wise among us.
- The self sufficient in the natural have little interest in the spiritual. - **1<sup>st</sup> Cor 1:27 "God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise".** NKJV

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A "Who's Not" List

- 1<sup>st</sup> Cor 1:18 "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing." NKJV
- The Greek word for "foolishness" is the same word from which we get the word, "moronic". In other words, the gospel makes no sense to them and is for morons.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor 4:3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, **4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe**, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. NKJV

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A "Who's Not" List

- **Not many mighty** – not influential or powerful. These covet power for themselves while rejecting the omnipotence of God.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Cor 1:27 "God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty". NKJV
- All that the world holds as valuable and dear will be shown to be but chaff in the wind compared to the power contained in the gospel.

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A "Who's Not" List

- So why are the world's "mighty" (the politically connected, the influential, and the rich) not interested in the gospel?
- Luke 18:24 And when Jesus saw that he (the rich young ruler) became very sorrowful, He said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! 25 For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." NKJV
- Wealth was seen as a sign of God's approval and Jesus was tearing down that lie of "salvation by finance" so that the rich would see their need of something more than money.

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A "Who's Not" List

- Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, **for it is the power of God to salvation** for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. NKJV
- The strong, the influential, and the powerful in this world run their lives through the rubric of power – how can they use to their power to improve their lives.
- All the while the power of God, (the gospel) goes unnoticed and unclaimed.

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A "Who's Not" List

- **Not many noble** – or "well born".
- 1<sup>st</sup> Cor 1:28 "and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are". NKJV
- The "well born" in America are the rich, the famous, the gifted, and the pretty people – they have little interest in God because to them He is the competition.

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A "Who's Not" List

- Think of the English "royal" family – in the eyes of most citizens of Great Britain these are "well born" people.
- They are accorded special status and privileges for no apparent reason beyond their line of DNA.
- In India there is a "caste" system wherein Hindus are commonly born into a caste, from which they are trapped into certain life outcomes.

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A "Who's Not" List

- The lowest of the classes in the Hindu caste system are called the "untouchables" – these are consigned to the most demeaning work in their system.
- I have a feeling that God is very interested in the "untouchables" because that would be just the kind of person whose redemption would most glorify Him.
- In so many ways our world sees up as down, east as west, and in as out – our values are mostly inverted.

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A "Who's Not" List

- 1st Cor 1:29 "that no flesh should glory in His presence." NKJV
- In verse #29 we come to the crux of the matter – God knows the corruption that is in the flesh of man and rejects it.
- He will have only a few of the wise, the mighty, and the noble in His kingdom because He largely rejects them – and why shouldn't He; they have no interest in Him?

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A "Who's Not" List

- When life as we know it comes to an end, and we are all gathered in heaven, we will look around and see the immense power of God in His redeemed.
- And as we look around we will also see that our fellow heirs of God are not on many, if any, "Who's Who" lists.
- As a matter of fact, to further glorify God, most of those we will see in heaven will be those of us who barely made the "Who's Not" list. 😊

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A "Who's Not" List

- He reaches to the lowest of the low and elevates us to the highest of the high – even to the extent that we become joint heirs of God with Jesus.
- And we will see the wisdom in "no flesh should glory in His presence" as we look at the work He has done!
- There will be no hint of human greatness or human achievement in Heaven – instead, the focus of all creation will be on God, where it rightly belongs.

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A "Who's Not" List

- My best take away from this text is my amazement that God would choose to save and use one as common as me.
- The world does not often seek to be with us, or like us, and we sometimes miss the "glory" that comes with being among the not so popular.
- Think about this - because God is glorified the most in saving the least of us, should we seek to be even less?

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A "Who's Not" List

Think about this - because God is glorified the most in saving the least of us, should we seek to be even less?

Make so much of God that we, by comparison, seem like so much less.

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A "Who's Not" List

• 1st Cor 1:28 "and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence." NKJV

• Base things are the things that are "not honorable in character or purpose" and "of humble origin or social status".

• The very things the world and its ruler reject, are the very things that God chooses and uses.

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A "Who's Not" List

• Now that I've proven to you that you are probably not all that smart, all that influential, and probably come from a family that is not all that noble, I want you to revel in your ordinariness.

• For it is in our ordinariness that God calls us to Himself and then uses us for His extraordinary purposes.

• Remember, He does not call many of the wise, the strong, and the well born – He calls the lowest of the low.

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A "Who's Not" List

- To put it where it can impact all of us – do not look for validation of your godliness in what you do, but look for your godly impact on society in what you are.
- Your personal holiness itself serves as a restrainer of evil in your world. (yes, that would be you! ☺ )

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A "Who's Not" List

• 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. 8 We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So then death is working in us, but life in you. NKJV

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A "Who's Not" List

• 1<sup>st</sup> Cor 1:18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." 20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? NKJV

- According to Paul, all that we hold dear about the cross and the substitutionary death of Christ, is thought to be foolish, silly, and absurd to those who do not believe.

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A "Who's Not" List

- "Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"
- Indeed, by contrast it is the wisdom of the world that is weak, puny, and so incomplete that it becomes the real "foolishness" when compared to the wisdom of God.
- The wisdom of the world says mankind is marching on to his own salvation, but God says there is salvation in Christ and no where else.

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A "Who's Not" List

- It could be argued that God chose the most unlikely ones in the universe (sinful rebellious mankind) to glorify Himself.
- Romans 3:9 For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. 10 As it is written: "There is **none righteous**, no, not one; 11 There is **none who understands**; There is **none who seeks after God**. 12 **They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable**; There is **none who does good**, no, not one." 3 "Their **throat is an open tomb**; with their **tongues they have practiced deceit**"; **The poison of asps is under their lips**"; 14 "Whose **mouth is full of cursing and bitterness**." 15 "Their **feet are swift to shed blood**; 16 **Destruction and misery are in their ways**; 17 **And the way of peace they have not known**." 18 "There is **no fear of God before their eyes**." NKJV

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A "Who's Not" List

- And it could also be argued that preaching the cross, where the Son of God died, is the most unlikely place to find the power of God demonstrated to the world.
- Imagine a world that craves wisdom, power, and nobility hearing of a god who sent his own son to earth, and his son died an ignominious death?
- What does the world think of a God who did not come with pomp and circumstance, but came instead in humility to serve, to suffer, and to die?

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A "Who's Not" List

- The world often gets angry at what they perceive to be our ignorance – really, a man rose from the dead?
- Really, a man who died 2000 years ago matters to me today?
- Our light regard for the things they value bothers them – perhaps convicts them.
- The real “fools” of the world regard us a fools.

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A "Who's Not" List

- All that the world values is found in their wisdom, their might, and their nobility, but .... All that is really valuable is not sourced in this world.
- 1st Cor 1:22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness. NKJV
- Signs? Knowledge? They may be valuable to the world, but not pleasing to the God who has said, “without faith it is impossible to please Him”. (Hebrews 11)

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A "Who's Not" List

- 30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— 31 that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.” NKJV
- **If you want a sign** as the Jews did, listen to the words of Jesus when He says, “if you have seen me you have seen the Father.” (John 14)
- **If you insist on wisdom** as the Greeks did, understand that Christ is the wisdom of God – receive Him and you will have the wisdom you seek. (1<sup>st</sup> Cor 1:24)

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A "Who's Not" List

**Questions?**

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