

# 1 Corinthians 2 Commentary

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1 CORINTHIANS - PROBLEMS OF A LOCAL CHURCH

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Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission

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**FROM CHART: Note 2 major divisions:**

- **FIRST DIVISION** - Chapters 1-6 = Problems of Congregation - Divisions & Depravities,
- **SECOND DIVISION** - Chapters 7-16 = Personal Problems, Worship Problems

**Paul Apple's Summary DIVISIONS IN THE CHURCH -- EXALT GOD RATHER THAN MAN**

(1 Cor 1:18 - 2:16) The effective communication of the wisdom of God by powerfully preaching the crucified Christ = Exalting God rather than Man

(1 Cor 1:18-25) Wisdom of God: The word of the cross is true power and wisdom --

Only the message of Christ crucified impacts man with the power and wisdom of God

(1 Cor 1:26-31) Nullifying man's pride: Divine election leaves no room for man's pride --

The divine initiative in election nullifies man's pride so that God gets all the credit

(1 Cor 2:1-5) Powerfully preaching Christ --

tThe effectiveness of preaching derives from its focus on the crucified Christ and its dynamic of the power of God rather than from the eloquence or personality or popularity of the particular preacher

(1 Cor 2:6-8) The mystery aspect of the wisdom of God --

The message of the cross is only foolishness to those who don't understand the coming glory

(1 Cor 2:9-16) Spirit taught truth -- Spirit reveals . . . Spirit inspires . . . Spirit illumines --

The Holy Spirit directs the communication and understanding of divine wisdom through three fundamental processes

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**1 Corinthians 2:1 And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God.**

Wuest - And as for myself, having come to you, brethren, I came, not having my message dominated by a transcendent rhetorical display or by philosophical subtlety when I was announcing to you the testimony of God, ([Erdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Amplified - AS FOR myself, brethren, when I came to you, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony and evidence or mystery and secret of God [concerning what He has done through Christ for the salvation of men] in lofty words of eloquence or human philosophy and wisdom;

Phillips - In the same way, my brothers, when I came to proclaim to you God's secret purpose, I did not come equipped with any brilliance of speech or intellect.

NET 1 Corinthians 2:1 When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come with superior eloquence or wisdom as I proclaimed the testimony of God.

NLT 1 Corinthians 2:1 When I first came to you, dear brothers and sisters, I didn't use lofty words and impressive wisdom to tell you God's secret plan.

ESV 1 Corinthians 2:1 And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom.

NIV 1 Corinthians 2:1 When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God.

GNT 1 Corinthians 2:1 Κ γ λθ ν πρ ς μ ς, δελφο , λθον ο καθ περοχ ν λ γου σοφ ας καταγγ λλων μ ν τ μυστ ριον το θεο .

KJV 1 Corinthians 2:1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

YLT 1 Corinthians 2:1 And I, having come unto you, brethren, came -- not in superiority of discourse or wisdom -- declaring to you the testimony of God,

ASV 1 Corinthians 2:1 And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God.

CSB 1 Corinthians 2:1 When I came to you, brothers, announcing the testimony of God to you, I did not come with brilliance of speech or wisdom.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 2:1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God.

NRS 1 Corinthians 2:1 When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom.

NAB 1 Corinthians 2:1 When I came to you, brothers, proclaiming the mystery of God, I did not come with sublimity of words or of wisdom.

NJB 1 Corinthians 2:1 Now when I came to you, brothers, I did not come with any brilliance of oratory or wise argument to announce to you the mystery of God.

- **when:** Ac 18:1-4
- **with:** 1Co 2:4,13 1 Cor 1:17 Ex 4:10 Jer 1:6,7 Ro 16:18 2Co 10:10 11:6
- **the testimony:** 1Co 1:6 Isa 8:20 Ac 20:21 Acts 22:18 2Th 1:10 1Ti 1:11 2Ti 1:8 1Jn 4:14 5:11-13 Rev 1:2,9 19:10
- Highly recommended sermon by Ray Pritchard - [Jesus Christ and Him Crucified](#)
- Also highly recommended if you are a preacher sermon by Alan Carr - [1 Corinthians 2:1-5 The Biblical Pattern For Preaching](#)
- [1 Corinthians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passage:**

1 Corinthians 1:6+ even as the **testimony** ([marturion](#)) concerning Christ was confirmed in you,

Acts 20:21+ solemnly testifying ([diamarturomai](#)) to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith

in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 22:18+ ( and I saw Him saying to me, 'Make haste, and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your **testimony** about Me.'

2 Thessalonians 1:10+ when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our **testimony** to you was believed.

SOPHIA - Personification of Wisdom  
at Library of Celsus in Ephesus

## PAUL'S APPROACH NOT WITH ELOQUENCE OR PHILOSOPHY

[Ray Pritchard](#) summarizes this first section of chapter 2 - It's the answer to the question, "Paul, why do you what you do?" If we want a ministry with a world-changing impact, then we need to heed his answer.

- Paul's message (vv. 1-2),
- Paul's method (vv. 3-4),
- Paul's motive (v. 5).

God's wisdom is shown by an **empty Cross** and **living Savior**, while man's wisdom is exemplified above by a **dead statute of stone** ([SOPHIA - Personification of Wisdom](#)). The foolishness of a wise statute of stone! (cf Ro 1:21-22, 25) The wisdom of God will take you to Heaven for eternity, but the wisdom of man will take you to Hell forever and ever. Amen or Oh My!

Paul will now explain clearly that **superior speech** is not the key to effective ministry, but only a **sacrificed Savior**.

**The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible** has an interesting comment - The Corinthian church was deeply divided. Two of the issues dividing it were a dispute over what kind of preacher should fill their pulpit, and which former minister had contributed the most to their church (cp. 1 Cor. 1:11-16). The church desperately needed to understand what preaching really was. Only if they understood what God intended preaching to be could they hope to solve their differences. One of the strong solutions to division is sound preaching (**ED: A SPECIFICALLY PREACHING OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED**).(1 & 2 Corinthians)

**Matthew Henry** summarizes 1 Cor 2:1-5 - The apostle proceeds with his argument in this chapter, and, I. Reminds the Corinthians of the plain manner wherein he delivered the gospel to them (v. 1-5). But yet, II. Shows them that he had communicated to them a treasure of the truest and highest wisdom, such as exceeded all the attainments of learned men, such as could never have entered into the heart of man if it had not been revealed, nor can be received and improved to salvation but by the light and influence of that Spirit who revealed it (v. 6 to the end).

**Hodge** summarizes this chapter - Paul continues his defence of his way of preaching. He shows (in verses 1–5) that he acted on the principles set out in the preceding paragraph (1 Cor 1:18-25, 31). He shows that the Gospel is the true wisdom (1 Cor 2:6–9). The source of this knowledge, as externally revealed and as spiritually understood, is the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:10–16). the effectiveness of the preacher and the preaching lies in one's dependence on God's power. However, if this is to be realized we must fulfill two objectives: (1) The content of our message must be Christ, and (2) the delivery of our message must be God's power. In other words, God is looking for "**cross-eyed**" preachers !

In 1 Corinthians 1:18-25, 1:26-31, Paul has demonstrated that God deliberately chooses foolish and weak methods and messengers to shame those who are wise and strong and in 1 Cor 2:1-5, Paul uses himself as a prime example of foolishness and weakness.

**And when I came to you, brethren** - "Literally **and I**" which links this chapter with chapter 1, so that in essence chapter 2 becomes Paul's "illustration" of proper boasting and right wisdom, God's superior "philosophy" not man's inferior philosophy. Three times in the previous chapter Paul described preaching, and now he presents himself as a prime illustration of a preaching without cleverness, the foolishness of Christ crucified.

1. 1 Cor 1:17 = "preach the Gospel not in cleverness of speech."
2. 1 Cor 1:21 = "foolishness of the message preached."
3. 1 Cor 1:23 = "We preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness,

One might ask to which *coming* to them does Paul refer? If you look at the Table Summarizing Paul's Ongoing Relationship with the Corinthians, you note Paul wrote 4 letters and made 3 visits. In context this coming clearly refers to Paul's initial visit described in detail in Acts 18:1-17+ (v1 = "After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth." circa 51 AD), during which God used him to

establish the local assembly in Corinth. As in chapter 1 Paul again refers to the Corinthians as his **brethren**, emphasizing that in spite of their divisions, they belonged to the same spiritual family, the family of God.

**Glenn Spencer on when I came** - This is the purpose of the ministry. To go to people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul had gone to Corinth while he was on his second missionary journey (Acts 18:1). He didn't go to make a name for himself. He didn't go to build an empire. He didn't go to match wits with the intellectual elite. Instead he went there broke, working on the side as a tentmaker while investing himself in the ministry of reaching people for Christ. His efforts were blessed by the Almighty and a local Church began in Corinth. Paul's primary purpose was the gospel.

**Brethren** (80) **adelphos** from **a** = denotes unity + **delphus** = a womb) literally means brother referring to a physical brother or figuratively can refer to a brother in the spiritual sense. **Adelphos** (translated **brother** or **brethren**) is used frequently in the Corinthian letters - 52x in 48 verses - 1 Co. 1:1; 1 Co. 1:10; 1 Co. 1:11; 1 Co. 1:26; 1 Co. 2:1; 1 Co. 3:1; 1 Co. 4:6; 1 Co. 5:11; 1 Co. 6:5; 1 Co. 6:6; 1 Co. 6:8; 1 Co. 7:12; 1 Co. 7:14; 1 Co. 7:15; 1 Co. 7:24; 1 Co. 7:29; 1 Co. 8:11; 1 Co. 8:12; 1 Co. 8:13; 1 Co. 9:5; 1 Co. 10:1; 1 Co. 11:33; 1 Co. 12:1; 1 Co. 14:6; 1 Co. 14:20; 1 Co. 14:26; 1 Co. 14:39; 1 Co. 15:1; 1 Co. 15:6; 1 Co. 15:31; 1 Co. 15:50; 1 Co. 15:58; 1 Co. 16:11; 1 Co. 16:12; 1 Co. 16:15; 1 Co. 16:20; 2 Co. 1:1; 2 Co. 1:8; 2 Co. 2:13; 2 Co. 8:1; 2 Co. 8:18; 2 Co. 8:22; 2 Co. 8:23; 2 Co. 9:3; 2 Co. 9:5; 2 Co. 11:9; 2 Co. 12:18; 2 Co. 13:11;

#### Related Resource:

- See Table Summarizing Paul's Ongoing Relationship with the Corinthians - 4 letters, 3 visits

**I did not come with superiority** (**huperoche**) **of speech** (**logos**) (lofty words of eloquence, brilliance of speech, excellence of rhetorical display) - (**Wuest**) - "not having my message dominated by a transcendent rhetorical display." Paul begins by reminding his readers of how he did not preach. Paul was undoubtedly brilliant and could have easily come to Corinth and impress the people with his **superiority of speech**. Instead he came as a humble "tent maker" (Acts 18:3)! Paul did not present the Gospel as a pedantic philosopher or a slick salesman, but as a witness to simple Truth of the Gospel. As testimony to this truth, Paul's enemies used his "non-superior" speech against him declaring "his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech **contemptible** (**exoutheneo** - despised, to be scorned)." (2 Cor 10:10)! The ancient word emphasized oratory in education and the importance of a skilled speaker.

**Hodge** - As speech and wisdom are distinguished here, the former probably refers to the manner or form, and the latter to the matter of his preaching. It was neither as a rhetorician nor as a philosopher that Paul appeared among them.

**Superiority** (5247) is **huperoche** (used only here and 1 Ti 2:2 = "all who are **inauthority**") and is derived from **huper** (over) and **echo** (hold) which literally denotes that which overhangs (a projection) and thus it was a word used to describe the peak of a mountain, the top of a beam, an excess of money, a rank that exceeds another, and in Scripture figuratively to mean superiority or authority. **Superiority** thus refers to flowery speech that is designed to catch the ear. (Compare the other preaching approach to be avoided - "persuasive" in 1 Cor 2:4)

No man can give at once the impression that he himself is clever and that Jesus Christ is mighty to save.

-- James Denney

**THOUGHT** - A preacher can opt to impress people with his cleverness or he can impress them with Jesus, but one cannot do both! This same principle would apply to teaching the Word of Christ. And lest you think "I'm not a preacher" read Paul's words in Ro 10:14+ "How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?" Our pulpit may be the backyard fence or the local diner, but we are all called to preach Jesus to a dying world, for He is the **ONLY ANSWER** to their **GREATEST NEED**! Many of the "pulpits" that "lay" folks have access to will allow them to encounter lost souls who would never cross the threshold of a church. So let me repeat Paul's question "how will they hear without a preacher?" Have you preached Christ and Him crucified to anyone recently?

#### **Preaching is not just for pastors!**

**Alan Redpath** - The moment we accept forgiveness through the blood of the Lord Jesus we are obligated by bearing His name to stand for righteousness, purity, and holiness. Our business in life is to seek to win somebody else for Jesus; the redemptive ministry of the love of God should be expressed through our lives in service to others. That is the mark of the real thing. How desperately we all need **power** to stand for righteousness, **power** to speak for the Lord Jesus, **power** to live for Him day by day. (The Road to Heaven)

**Krell** - Preaching doesn't require a large crowd and auditorium. You can preach wherever God has placed you to serve Him. The only question is, "Will you answer His call and proclaim His testimony?" God is looking for "cross-eyed" preachers.

**Carson on superiority of speech** - "What Paul avoided was artificial communication that won plaudits for the speaker but distracted from the message. **Lazy preachers have no right to appeal to 1 Corinthians 2:1–5 to justify indolence in the study and careless delivery in the pulpit.** These verses do not prohibit diligent preparation, passion, clear articulation, and persuasive presentation. Rather, they warn against any method that leads people to say, 'What a marvelous preacher!' rather than, 'What a marvelous Savior!'" (The Cross & Christian Ministry: Leadership Lessons from 1 Corinthians Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 35.)

**J. H. Jowett** said of **D. L. Moody**: "Moody's excellency was in an earthen vessel, and many doctors of divinity have wondered at the strange association. There were thousands of speakers more eloquent than Moody, but the treasure was not there in overwhelming glory."

**Speech** (3056)(**logos** from **légō** = to speak with words) means something said and describes a communication whereby the mind (the thought in one's mind) finds expression in one's words. This is the meaning in classic Greek = "the word or outward form by which the inward thought is expressed and made known." **Logos** was not used in classical Greek to describe a word in the grammatical sense as the mere name of a thing, but rather the thing referred to, the material, not the formal part. In other words **logos** had the double meaning of thought (thus it gives us our English logic and logical) and speech.

**Logos** in letters to Corinth - 1 Co. 1:5; 1 Co. 1:17; 1 Co. 1:18; 1 Co. 2:1; 1 Co. 2:4; 1 Co. 2:13; 1 Co. 4:19; 1 Co. 4:20; 1 Co. 12:8; 1 Co. 14:9; 1 Co. 14:19; 1 Co. 14:36; 1 Co. 15:2; 1 Co. 15:54; 2 Co. 1:18; 2 Co. 2:17; 2 Co. 4:2; 2 Co. 5:19; 2 Co. 6:7; 2 Co. 8:7; 2 Co. 10:10; 2 Co. 10:11; 2 Co. 11:6

**Or of wisdom** (or by philosophical subtlety, impressive wisdom) - **Wisdom** is a key word in Chapter 2 (1 Cor 2:1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 13) In 1 Cor 1:17 Paul warned against making the Cross of Christ void by using **cleverness** (literally wisdom - **sophia**) **of speech**. In this verse Paul is referring to human **wisdom**, not divine wisdom which he does speak (1 Cor 2:6), God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom (1 Cor 2:7). One writer says **speech** and **wisdom** in this context "are close together in meaning; eloquence is rational talk and wisdom is wordy cleverness." (Barrett)

**Wisdom** (4678)(**sophia** compare **saphes** = clear) is the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of action, based on knowledge and understanding. In Corinthians Paul contrasts God's wisdom with man's wisdom. Godly wisdom refers to being able to take what God has revealed to your heart through His Word and applying it in given situations in a practical way. In contrast the learning and philosophy ("love of wisdom") current among Greeks and Romans in the apostolic age (and in our modern age) tended to draw men's minds (and hearts) away from divine wisdom and thus is often viewed negatively by Paul (cf (1 Cor 2:1, 4, 5, 13).

**Note that SOPHIA is a KEY WORD in 1 Corinthians 1 (8 times) and in 1 Corinthians 2 (7 times)!**

**Sophia** in Corinthians - 1 Co. 1:17; 1 Co. 1:19; 1 Co. 1:20; 1 Co. 1:21; 1 Co. 1:22; 1 Co. 1:24; 1 Co. 1:30; 1 Co. 2:1; 1 Co. 2:4; 1 Co. 2:5; 1 Co. 2:6; 1 Co. 2:7; 1 Co. 2:13; 1 Co. 3:19; 1 Co. 12:8; 2 Co. 1:12

**Philosophy** is a blind man in a pitch black room trying to find a black cat.

#### **Related Resources:**

- [How has Greek philosophy influenced Christianity? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Should a Christian study philosophy? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is godly wisdom? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is wisdom? What is the difference between wisdom and knowledge? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why is wisdom referred to as a she in Proverbs? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How can I tap into the wisdom of God? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How can I get wisdom from God? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How is the fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Proclaiming to you the testimony of God** - Paul came to Corinth **proclaiming** (**kataggello**) openly and with wide distribution (cf **kattaggello** in Ro 1:8), doing so as his habitual practice (present tense) and with a sense of solemnity. While **proclaiming** Christ crucified, without reliance upon human eloquence or wisdom, this does not mean he did not employ any kind of speech or wisdom. It is just that these human elements were not prominent in his evangelism. This was Paul's practice from the very beginning of his ministry (following use **kataggello** describing Paul - Acts 13:5, 38+. Acts 15:36+, Acts 16:17+, Acts 17:13, 23+, Col 1:28+). In context the **testimony of God** refers to the Gospel.

**Krell** - In Paul's day, Greek orators followed certain well-established conventions when they entered a city. Great crowds flocked to hear them because they spoke in the style of traditional Greek rhetoric—with extensive quotations, with literary allusions, and with a refined style that made them seem brilliant, witty, charming, and entertaining. They combined the suave demeanor of [Stone Phillips](#) with the clever wit of [David Letterman](#). Yet Paul utterly rejected this approach to preaching, although he could have done it himself. As a well-educated rabbi, he knew Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Latin. Trained at the feet of [Gamaliel](#), he could hold his own in any argument. If Paul wanted to show off his intellect, he certainly knew how to do it. But he rejected that approach. Instead, he proclaimed **"the testimony of God."** The word **"testimony"** is a legal word that refers to something one presents in a court of law. Paul was conscious that God is a Judge. He was speaking in the presence of a Judge and he was presenting His witness (2 Ti 4:1+). He knew what the truth was and was announcing it boldly. Paul was not preaching his testimony about God; he was preaching God's testimony about God ("the testimony"). His message came from God, not himself. For many today "proclaiming" is a bad word. They say, "Don't preach to me!" Many preachers, afraid of being thought arrogant, avoid talking about preaching. They prefer to think of what they do as "sharing." However, if I only make suggestions or throw out a few ideas and opinions, I would be guilty of arrogance. My opinions are no better than yours. But I am not declaring to you my words; I am declaring to you God's very words (see 1 Pet 4:11a). Therefore, I can preach to you with authority.

**Hodge** - As God had determined to save people not by human wisdom but by the Gospel, Paul, when he appeared in Corinth, came neither as an orator nor as a philosopher, but simply as a witness (of the testimony of God).

**Testimony** synonymous with the **Gospel** in several other Scriptures - 2 Cor 2:1 = **"testimony of God"**, 1 Cor 1:6 = **"testimony concerning Christ,"** 2 Ti 1:8 = **"the testimony of our Lord"**, 1 Ti 2:6 = **"the testimony given at the proper time"** (in context more specifically this refers the atoning work of Christ, which is a critical component of the Gospel); see also Mt 24:14 (**"Gospel of the kingdom" - "a testimony"**) and Acts 4:33 (resurrection is a critical component of the Gospel)

**Proclaiming** (2605) ([kataggello](#) from **kata** = an intensifier, down + **aggelos** = messenger and **aggello** = to declare, report) literally means to "declare down". **Vincent** = "to proclaim with authority, as commissioned to spread the tidings throughout, down among those that hear them, with the included idea of celebrating or commending." It means to announce, with focus upon the extent to which the announcement or proclamation extends and so to proclaim throughout. It means to declare plainly, openly and loudly! It was used of solemn religious messages. Webster adds that our English **"proclaim"** (from **pro** = before + **clamare** = to cry out) means to "declare publicly, typically insistently... in either speech or writing... and implies declaring clearly, forcefully, and authoritatively." **Secular** uses of **kataggello** - "In the secular sphere the term is used for official reports, while in the religious area it announces games and proclaims festivals. Plato has it for philosophical proclamation. Used 3x in the letters to Corinth - 1 Co. 2:1; 1 Co. 9:14; 1 Co. 11:26

**Testimony** (3142) ([marturion/martyrion](#) source of English **"martyr"**) means evidence, proof. The content of what a witness tells. Marturion is the declaration of facts which confirms or makes something known. Marturion is an objective act, circumstance or statement that provides evidence or certifies the truthfulness of something. The content of what is witnessed or said. (See also [marturia/martyria](#)) **Testimony** (marturion) means just that—a testimony or witness. A person can only testify to what he himself has seen or heard or experienced. A witness in a courtroom is to report only what he knows objectively, factually, and personally. He is not to speculate, guess, or deduce. "The word originally referred to one who was a legal witness but came to refer to one whose testimony for Jesus ends in death." 20x in NT - Matt. 8:4; Matt. 10:18; Matt. 24:14; Mk. 1:44; Mk. 6:11; Mk. 13:9; Lk. 5:14; Lk. 9:5; Lk. 21:13; Acts 4:33; Acts 7:44; 1 Co. 1:6; 1 Co. 2:1; 2 Co. 1:12; 2 Thess. 1:10; 1 Tim. 2:6; 2 Tim. 1:8; Heb. 3:5; Jas. 5:3; Rev. 15:5

**TECHNICAL NOTE on testimony** - A few important manuscripts (i46vid) a\* A C pc as well as some versions and fathers) read [musterion](#) ("mystery" - Col 2:2 Christ crucified is the mystery of God, previously hidden Col 1:26) instead of (marturion, "testimony"). But the latter has wider ms support (a(2) B D F G Y 33 1739 1881 Ū and some versions), though not quite as impressive. marturion may have been changed by scribes in anticipation of Paul's words in 2:7, or conversely, musturion may have been changed to conform to 1:6. Transcriptionally, since "the mystery of God/Christ" is a well-worn expression in the corpus Paulinum (1 Cor 2:7; 4:1; Eph 3:4; Col 2:2; 4:3), while "testimony of Christ" occurs in Paul only once (1 Cor 1:6, though "testimony of the Lord" appears in 2 Tim 1:8), and "testimony of God" never, it is likely that scribes changed the text to the more usual expression. A decision is difficult in this instance, but a slight preference should be given to marturion. **Constable** adds "Some early texts have "mystery" (Gr. mysterion) instead of "testimony" (martyrion). The difference is not significant. The gospel was both the message God had previously not revealed that the apostles made known and the message to which they bore witness."

**Matthew Henry** on Verses 1-5. Christ, in his person, and offices, and sufferings, is the sum and substance of the Gospel, and ought to be the great subject of a Gospel minister's preaching, but not so as to leave out other parts of God's revealed truth and will. Paul preached the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27+). Few know the fear and trembling of faithful ministers, from a deep sense of their own weakness. They know how insufficient they are, and are fearful for themselves (ED: ). When nothing but Christ crucified is plainly preached, the success must be entirely from Divine power accompanying the word, and thus men are brought to believe, to the salvation of their souls.

**ILLUSTRATION: D.L. Moody** was once scheduled to preach at Cambridge University. Some of the students were outraged that an American without a college education would dare to speak in that center of culture. They planned to hoot him off the platform. Moody began his sermon by saying, "Young gentlemen, don't ever think God don't love you, for he do!" The scoffers were dumbfounded, and Moody's unpolished words captured them. That was the beginning of revival and of one of the greatest awakenings of the nineteenth century.

**ILLUSTRATION OF NOT COMING WITH SUPERIORITY OF SPEECH** - The difference is illustrated in the account of two men who went to hear a certain famous preacher. Coming away from the service they said, "My, what eloquence! He knows how to choose the right words and how to say them! His oratory is simply irresistible!" The next week they went to hear another preacher, equally as famous. They left the service silently and reverently. Finally one said, "**My, what a Christ!**" (Zodhiates)

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## Win the Lost at Any Cost 1 Corinthians 2:1–5 - Stephen Hooker

**Introduction** There are many noble pursuits in life, but there is at last one which towers over all the rest, that causes all others to stand in its shadow. It is one of the very reasons for the church's existence. It is not an invitation, it is an imperative. It comes not from man but from Christ Himself. It is to this task that I would call the church. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel." Win the lost at any cost. In our text we find the testimony of a man who answered this call. His response may be seen as a model for our own.

### I. The Man

For there to be evangelism, there must be an evangelist. What kind of person can God use?

A. One who is willing to go. "When I came," said Paul.

1. The early church took the great commission seriously. They began at Jerusalem and they went. On the street corners and in the market places, whenever and wherever the message needed to be heard, they "declared it publicly and house-to-house."

2. It seems today that somehow that divine commission has lost some of its urgency. Instead of winning the world to Christ we have become content to gather regularly and talk about winning the world.

B. One who is willing to be used in spite of his fears and shortcomings.

1. Paul confesses that he was with them in "weakness" and "fear." He understood the natural fear we have of confronting someone with a message that we are not even sure that he wants to hear.

2. Paul was also keenly aware of his personal limitations, his lack of "eloquence" and "wisdom." This illustrates that the real ability that God blesses is "usability."

### II. The Manner

A. Evangelism is to be done with integrity not with clever manipulation, not with "wise and persuasive words."

1. Many people are turned off by the mere mention of "evangelism" because of the bad name some non-scrupulous, pseudo-religionists have given it. In some cases today it has been reduced to cheap promotionalism.

2. That is not how Paul came to the Corinthians (see also 2 Corinthians 4:2) His witness was genuine and sincere.

B. Evangelism is to be done with primary dependency upon God rather than man. It is to be done "in demonstration of the Spirit's power." It is, after all, God who "gives the increase."

### III. The Message—"Jesus Christ and him crucified"

A. There was once a great conviction that gripped the church of Jesus Christ—that Jesus Christ is the only savior of humankind and that apart from Him people are lost and doomed to destruction.

1. So important was this to Paul that he said, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel."

2. So important was it to Henry Martyn that when he landed on the shores of India he said, "Here let me bum myself out for God."

B. In our sophisticated society we seldom find salvation worth talking about any more.

1. The church is involved in too many other things that come at the expense of the proclamation of the gospel.
2. Ours is not the age of the rejection of the gospel. It is the age of the unproclaimed gospel.

Conclusion How many of us in the room today have spoken to a lost person about Jesus Christ in the last week, month, year, in the entire time we have been a Christian? If not us, then who? If not now, then when?

**Illustration** H.L. Hendricks once said that he could not find a single verse of Scripture that commands a lost person to go to church but he could quote numerous scriptures that call the church to go a lost world. (Sermon Outlines for Growing Christians)

## 1 Corinthians 2 "THE CHAPTER OF THINGS"

This truth is brought out especially in the KJV where this word "thing" is found 11 times in 8 verses (only 6 times in the NAS). Here are the KJV occurrences:

1. 1 Cor 2:2KJV For I determined not to know any **THING** among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.
2. 1 Cor 2:9KJV But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the **THINGS** which God hath prepared for them that love him.
3. 1 Cor 2:10KJV But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all **THINGS**, yea, the deep **THINGS** of God.
4. 1 Cor 2:11KJV For what man knoweth the **THINGS** of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.
5. 1 Cor 2:12KJV Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the **THINGS** that are freely given to us of God.
6. 1 Cor 2:13KJV Which **THINGS** also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual **THINGS** with spiritual.
7. 1 Cor 2:14KJV But the natural man receiveth not the **THINGS** of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.
8. 1 Cor 2:15KJV But he that is spiritual judgeth all **THINGS**, yet he himself is judged of no man.

See [note below by Archibald Brown](#)

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### The Testimony of God - James Smith

"I came to you declaring the testimony of God." 1 Corinthians 2:1

The gospel is not a cunningly devised fable, but the very word of God; it is a divine testimony; a message from Jehovah to man. It comes directly from heaven, and is addressed to us in love.

By the gospel, God testifies to us that we are totally and entirely lost by nature; that there is neither help nor hope for us but in the Lord Jesus Christ; but that in Him is all that we need, or that our circumstances require. He has . . .

- pardon for all sin;
- a righteousness to justify the ungodly;
- peace for the troubled conscience;
- life for the dying soul;
- holiness for the impure and filthy;
- strength for the weak and languishing;

in a word — a full salvation for the lost and perishing!

He possesses all the wealth of God. He is able to make . . .

- the foolish, wise;
- the guilty, just;
- the filthy, clean;
- the miserable, happy;

- the weak, strong;
- the diseased, healthy;
- the carnal, spiritual; and
- the slaves of Satan, the children of God.

Christ is all that God can give! Christ has all that a sinner can need. Having Christ — we can need no more; and, if we are taught by the Holy Spirit — we can be satisfied with no less.

The gospel testifies — that we are welcome to all that the fullness of Christ contains, without money and without price. God has set no price upon gospel blessings, because they are invaluable. He has prescribed no conditions, but given a universal welcome. His words are, "Whoever will — let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22:17.) And the testimony declares, that believing; Christ, and all He has, becomes ours! We receive Him. We are entitled to all that He has. We are interested in all He has done. His work is reckoned ours, for our justification; it is received as ours, to be the foundation of our hope; and it is pleaded as ours, and forms a prevailing plea with God. It becomes our joy, our boast, and our song, in the house of our pilgrimage.

The gospel testifies — that true faith always produces penitence, and leads to holiness. The believing heart and the weeping eye go together. If we really believe — we daily repent. We cannot repent of sin — unless we believe in Jesus. And we do not believe in Jesus — unless we repent of sin. Faith produces godly sorrow — and godly sorrow leads to holiness of life. The stronger our faith — the deeper our penitence; and the deeper our repentance — the holier our life.

Never be satisfied with faith without a broken heart; nor imagine that the heart is broken — unless sin is bitter. And if sin is bitter to the soul — it will be sure to be forsaken. Faith and holiness are indisputable evidences of a title to heaven. Faith purifies the heart — and the heart reforms the life.

You have heard the testimony of God, you have read it; but do you believe it? Do you perceive its great importance, and receive it into your heart, as a message of love coming direct from God to you? Do you heartily approve of it? Do you act upon it?

- If you reject the testimony, you treat God with contempt!
- If you deny the testimony — you give God the lie!
- If you postpone the consideration of it — you manifest the greatest folly!
- If you receive the testimony — you set to your seal that God is true!

The testimony being sent — man is brought to the test. The testimony being rejected — the doom of man is sealed. Once more the testimony is placed before your eye, and presented to your heart — it is to be received or rejected? Decide!

## **1 Corinthians 2:2 For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.**

Wuest - for, after weighing the issues, I decided not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and this very One as crucified. ([Erdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Amplified - For I resolved to know nothing (to be acquainted with nothing, to make a display of the knowledge of nothing, and to be conscious of nothing) among you except Jesus Christ (the Messiah) and Him crucified.

Phillips - You may as well know now that it was my secret determination to concentrate entirely on Jesus Christ and the fact of his death upon the cross.

NET 1 Corinthians 2:2 For I decided to be concerned about nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

NLT 1 Corinthians 2:2 For I decided that while I was with you I would forget everything except Jesus Christ, the one who was crucified.

ESV 1 Corinthians 2:2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

NIV 1 Corinthians 2:2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

GNT 1 Corinthians 2:2 ο γ ρ κρι ν τι ε δ ναι ν μ ν ε μ η σο ν Χριστ ν κα το τον σταυρωμ νον.

KJV 1 Corinthians 2:2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

YLT 1 Corinthians 2:2 for I decided not to know any thing among you, except Jesus Christ, and him crucified;

ASV 1 Corinthians 2:2 For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

CSB 1 Corinthians 2:2 For I didn't think it was a good idea to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 2:2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

NRS 1 Corinthians 2:2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

NAB 1 Corinthians 2:2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

NJB 1 Corinthians 2:2 I was resolved that the only knowledge I would have while I was with you was knowledge of Jesus, and of him as the crucified Christ.

GWN 1 Corinthians 2:2 While I was with you, I decided to deal with only one subject-Jesus Christ, who was crucified.

BBE 1 Corinthians 2:2 For I had made the decision to have knowledge of nothing among you but only of Jesus Christ on the cross.

- **To know nothing among you:** 1Co 1:22-25 Joh 17:3 Ga 3:1 6:14 Php 3:8-10
- [1 Corinthians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

2 Corinthians 4:5+ For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

### PAUL'S ONE GREAT THEME: THE CROSS OF CHRIST

**For I determined** - Paul did not check his brain at the city limits of Corinth! Paul's point was, as [Wuest](#)) phrases it "after weighing the issues, (he) decided not" to use his considerable powers of reasoning and debating to present the Gospel. Paul made a conscious choice to preach Christ and that is the challenge for every preacher, every time they preach. Is that the choice you make each week? If not your preaching may be popular, but it is not prioritizing the Person Who [rescues the perishing](#) (and rest assured there is someone in your audience that day who is perishing!)

Paul kept the Cross of Christ the [crux](#)  
the crucial point, the vital truth,  
the central or critical point,  
the heart, the core, the essence.

**Determined** is [krino](#) which in this context means he made a personal decision (judgment), a deliberate act of his will, a conscious choice of his will (determined is active voice), resolving how he would present Christ to the unregenerate sinners in Corinth. Paul did not preach Christ crucified by chance or by force of habit, but because of a definite resolution of his will. In a city filled with "human wisdom" it would have been tempting to seek to sound wise in his presentation (that's what flesh would do), but as a Spirit filled, Word centered, Christ exalting man, he determined otherwise. In so doing he gives us all a good model to emulate as we seek to present Jesus to those (especially the intelligentsia) around us who are dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1+).

**THOUGHT** - It might be easy to read over this section and say these are good principles if you a minister or a pastor, but we need to remember we are all "ministers" for Christ in one form or another, so these principles apply to all believers. But if we are to imitate Paul (and we are - 1 Cor 11:1+), we need to make a conscious decision to tell about Christ crucified, for the time is short and eternity is long!

[Lowell Johnson](#) - Paul had made the decision that he was not going to use gimmicks or clever approaches, but simply give the people a clear presentation of Jesus Christ. It's so easy to get sidetracked by good and worthwhile things. We can preach about social issues, the political debates of our day, the crisis in the Middle East, the economy. For Paul the choice was clear: "Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

Paul was an ambassador, not a salesman.

-- Dave Guzik

**Determined** (decided)(2919)(**krino** gives us English words critic, critical [kritikos] = a decisive point at which judgment is made) has the basic meaning to form an opinion after separating and considering the particulars in the case. **Krino** always involves the process of thinking through a situation and coming to a conclusion. And thus **krino** means to evaluate and determine what is right, proper, and expedient for correction. To distinguish or decide between (in the sense of considering and reaching a decision), to make up one's mind. **Wuest** gives an excellent sense of the progression of meaning of this Greek word - The word **krino** meant originally to **separate**, then to **distinguish**, to pick out, to be of opinion, and finally, to **judge**.

Uses of **krino** in letters to Corinth - 1 Co. 2:2; 1 Co. 4:5; 1 Co. 5:3; 1 Co. 5:12; 1 Co. 5:13; 1 Co. 6:1; 1 Co. 6:2; 1 Co. 6:3; 1 Co. 6:6; 1 Co. 7:37; 1 Co. 10:15; 1 Co. 10:29; 1 Co. 11:13; 1 Co. 11:31; 1 Co. 11:32; 2 Co. 2:1; 2 Co. 5:14;

Paul's words "I determined" remind men of the opening words of Isaac Watts great hymn for Paul "surveyed" the "wondrous cross" and poured contempt on all his pride! Listen to this incredibly beautiful version by Kathryn Scott...

### [When I Survey the Wondrous Cross](#)

When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.

### [At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light,](#)

And the burden of my heart rolled away,  
It was there by faith I received my sight,  
And now I am happy all the day.  
And now I am happy all the day.

Paul determined to glory in and preach the Cross of Christ.

Let the minister be hid so that Christ might be seen.

**To know nothing** (to be acquainted with nothing, to make a display of the knowledge of nothing, and to be conscious of nothing) **among you except** (to concentrate entirely on) **Jesus** ([lesous](#)) **Christ** ([Christos](#)), **and Him** (literally "this [very] One") **crucified** ([stauroo](#)) - Paul was fixated on the Cross of Christ and we should have the same single-minded focus! Paul may have liked the acronym "**KISS**" (see origin below) regarding the proclamation of the Gospel - "**Keep It Simple Stupid!**" **Nothing** is the first word in the sentence for emphasis and is the strongest Greek negative ([ou](#)) which means absolutely **nothing** and gives us the picture of a (Spirit) driven man on mission, a man who was laser focused and (Spirit) energized to present Jesus Christ. Paul understood time and that sought to redeem the time and not be side-tracked by peripheral ploys, like "Where did evil originate from?, etc." Paul sought to present the only One Who has conquered evil and beloved, we should seek to do the same, always taking dead men back to the Man Who died on the Cross. Obviously in saying **nothing**, Paul was not saying that he emptied his mind, but that he set aside his store of knowledge in order to focus his attention on the crucified Christ, Who was his one passion. May He be ours also. In His Name. Amen.

[KISS](#), an [acronym](#) for keep it simple, stupid, is a design principle noted by the U.S. Navy in 1960.[1][2] The KISS principle states that most systems work best if they are kept simple rather than made complicated; therefore, simplicity should be a key goal in design, and unnecessary complexity should be avoided. (To this statement from Wikipedia, we say "Amen!")

God is looking for "Cross-eyed" preachers!

**Crucified** ([stauroo](#)) is in the perfect tense which speak of past completed action (the historical event of the crucifixion of Christ) with abiding effects as the result of His crucifixion. In 1 Co 1:23-24+ Paul declared (in response to requests of Jews and Greeks - 1 Cor 1:22+) "we preach Christ **crucified**, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." Paul was not about to deviate from a message that came with "**the power of God and the wisdom of God**," and neither should we, beloved. Yes, it is **foolishness** ([moros](#), [moria](#) ~ "[moronic](#)") to the natural man (1 Cor 1:18, 21, 23, 25+, 1 Cor 2:14+). Yes, the Gospel will many times result in rejection. But it is the only message that will save a lost soul from everlasting torment! We must say that when He died on the cross, He paid the ultimate penalty to deliver us from our sins.

When someone told **C H Spurgeon** that all his sermons sounded the same, he responded "That's because I take a text and make a beeline to the Cross." May all God's preachers do the same for the glory of the Lamb. Amen

As **Pastor Alan Carr** says "That is our mandate! We are not to concern ourselves with the petty affairs of men. We are not to get caught up in the mundane business of a fallen world. We have been called to a heavenly task, We have been divinely and sovereignly chosen from among all the 7 billion people living on earth today to preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to tell them "how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures," 1"Cor."15:3-4. That is the Gospel, and we are to preach it! We must tell them about Jesus Christ, "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification," Rom." 4:25. That is the Gospel, and we are to preach it! We are to trumpet the message of Rom."10:9;"Acts"16:31, and John"3:16. We are to tell them that "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life," 1" John" 5:12. We are to preach the Gospel! ([The Biblical Pattern For Preaching](#))

**Ray Pritchard** - We have a word for people like Paul. We call a person like him a "[Johnny one-note.](#)" *He was a man of one message.* If you heard him in Thessalonica or Athens or Rome, it was always the same—Jesus Christ and him crucified. He never strayed from his basic message. Someone once asked the great British preacher Charles Spurgeon (many think he was the greatest preacher since the Apostle Paul) why all his sermons sounded alike. "That's simple," he replied. "I take my text wherever I can find it, and then I make a bee-line for the cross." He and Paul came from same mold. *In our text we discover the pastor's life work.* If a man could come to the end of his ministry and have someone say, "He spoke to us only of Jesus Christ and him crucified," his ministry would not have been in vain.... if you want to know how to be right with God, if you want to know how to have your sins forgiven, if you want to know how to go to heaven, then you need the message Paul preached: Jesus Christ and him crucified....The grass withers, the flower fades, only the Word of the Lord lasts forever. And that's why Paul labored as he did "**so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power**" (v. 5). All that comes from man must perish with man; what comes from God lasts forever....three words to summarize Paul's preaching: **clarity, simplicity, boldness.** Paul was so clear that no one could miss his message. He was simple because he spoke plainly about what Jesus Christ accomplished in his death on the cross. And he was bold in stating that truth over and over again. He was a man of one message, a preacher with a one-track mind, a one-note Johnny who would not be silent. *He focused on the cross because that was the one part of the Christian message the world could not duplicate.... To us—and only to us—did God vouchsafe the message of Jesus Christ and him crucified* That is our message, our only message. We are to tell it because no one will if we don't.

*We must say that when he died on the cross, God laid on him all our sins. He took our place, dying where we should have died, bearing our punishment, standing as our substitute, taking our sin and its punishment upon himself.* He died that he might be our Savior and bring us home to God. He was the just dying for the unjust, the good dying for the bad, the righteous dying for the unrighteousness, the holy dying for the sinful. And in his death he won our salvation. Then he rose from the dead on the third day, proving all his claims to be true....Here is the message of the gospel in just ten words: **Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead.** (Pritchard)

**Krell on crucified** in perfect tense says it "suggests that his focus was not as much on the historical event of the cross but on its ongoing effect for those who believe in Jesus, namely, that in this event they can find personal justification, redemption, and sanctification (cf. 1:30). The point is that the death of Jesus Christ covers everything. Jesus is the one person that fixes everything! One final thought before we move on: To give people what they need sometimes you must not give them what they want. Most parents learn this early on. When your daughter is sick she may want another cookie, but what she needs is the medicine the doctor prescribed. If you love her you'll give her what she needs, not what she wants. The same is true as we speak to others about Christ. They may want to hear other things; we must tell them about Jesus, for He alone can save them. Do not back down from people. Do not kowtow to others. God is looking for "cross-eyed" preachers. He wants us to have a solitary focus and agenda.

**Robertson on Him crucified** - This phrase in particular (1 Cor 1:18) was selected by Paul from the start as the centre of his Gospel message. He decided to stick to it even after Athens where he was practically laughed out of court. The Cross added to the [skandalon](#) of the Incarnation, but Paul kept to the main track on coming to Corinth. (WP)

**Spurgeon** - This is the one thing needful for us to know. All our reading and studies will be in vain if we are ignorant of Christ and his atoning blood. If Paul the preacher determined to know nothing but this, we may be sure it is above all things important.

**Krell on Him crucified** - That same choice confronts every Christian messenger. It's so easy to be sidetracked by good and worthwhile things. We can preach about social issues, the political debates of our day, the crisis in the Middle East, or the decline of the family. We can tackle Bible prophecy or we can major on predestination or the gifts of the Holy Spirit. There is a place for all those things, but that place is never at the center. For Paul the choice was clear: "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." He started there

and that became the center of his preaching. Once the center was in place, every other truth could be arranged around it. But Jesus must be in the middle of all things and all things must be properly related to Him.

As **William Barclay** said "Corinth put a premium on the veneer of false rhetoric and thin thinking." Paul avoided the "veneer" of falsehoods to focus on the veracity of the Cross. Paul was unswayed and unperturbed by the fact that "Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom." (1 Cor 1:22+) The only sign Paul sought to proclaim was the sign of Jonah the prophet (which foreshadowed the resurrection) (Mt 12:39-40+).

**Crucified** (4717)(**stauroo** from **stauros** = cross, in turn from **histemi** = to stand) means literally to nail or fasten to a cross and so to crucify -- literal death by nailing to and hanging from a cross (a stake). In Galatians 5:24+ Paul used **stauroo** in a metaphorical sense to refer to crucifixion of the flesh (as a result of the literal crucifixion). Used in 46x in 42v - Matt. 20:19; Matt. 23:34; Matt. 26:2; Matt. 27:22; Matt. 27:23; Matt. 27:26; Matt. 27:31; Matt. 27:35; Matt. 27:38; Matt. 28:5; Mk. 15:13; Mk. 15:14; Mk. 15:15; Mk. 15:20; Mk. 15:24; Mk. 15:25; Mk. 15:27; Mk. 16:6; Lk. 23:21; Lk. 23:23; Lk. 23:33; Lk. 24:7; Lk. 24:20; Jn. 19:6; Jn. 19:10; Jn. 19:15; Jn. 19:16; Jn. 19:18; Jn. 19:20; Jn. 19:23; Jn. 19:41; Acts 2:36; Acts 4:10; 1 Co. 1:13; 1 Co. 1:23; 1 Co. 2:2; 1 Co. 2:8; 2 Co. 13:4; Gal. 3:1; Gal. 5:24; Gal. 6:14; Rev. 11:8

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**Robert Murray McCheyne** was a minister in Scotland in the last century. He was only thirty years old when he died, but he made an enormous spiritual impact on Scotland that still continues. He said, "It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likenesses to Jesus... **A man cannot be a faithful minister until he preaches Christ for Christ's sake, until he gives up striving to attract people to himself, and seeks only to attract them to Christ.**"

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#### **Jesus Christ and Him crucified (Author unknown)**

##### **Jesus Christ and Him crucified, is the way in which God . . .**

- displays His perfections,
- unfolds His purposes,
- maintains His rights,
- confounds His foes, and
- secures His glory in the salvation of His people.

##### **Jesus Christ and Him crucified, is the only way in which . . .**

- death is destroyed,
- sin is conquered,
- righteousness is established,
- rebels are reconciled,
- saints are sanctified,
- and Heaven is opened!

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#### **Charles Spurgeon A sermon that will make the devils in Hell laugh, and the angels of God weep!**

"For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified." 1 Corinthians 2:2

The best sermons are the sermons which are most full of Christ. A sermon without Christ it is a horrible thing! It is . . .

- an empty well;
- a cloud without rain;
- a tree twice dead, plucked by the roots.

It is abominable to give men stones for bread, and scorpions for eggs—and yet they do so who preach not Jesus.

A sermon without Christ! As well talk of a loaf of bread without any flour in it. How can it feed the soul? Men die and perish because Christ is not there, and yet His glorious gospel is the easiest thing to preach, and the sweetest thing to preach—there is most variety in it, there is more attractiveness in it than in all the world besides!

The sermon which does not lead to Christ, or of which Jesus Christ is not the top and the bottom—is a sort of sermon that will make the devils in Hell laugh, and the angels of God weep!

The mark of true Gospel preaching is where Christ is everything, and the creature is nothing; where salvation is all of grace, through the work of the Holy Spirit applying to the soul the precious blood of Jesus.

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**ILLUSTRATION** - If a preacher is not careful, he will get in the way of the gospel instead of being a servant of the gospel. They can obscure Jesus by their preaching, either in the presentation or the message. Like the little girl, who when a smaller man was guest speaking could finally see the stained glass window of Jesus behind the pulpit said, "Where's the man who usually stands there so we can't see Jesus?" (Guzik) (Here's another version - A certain church had a beautiful stained-glass window just behind the pulpit. It depicted Jesus Christ on the cross. One Sunday there was a guest minister who was much smaller than the regular pastor. A little girl listened to the guest for a time, then turned to her mother and asked, "Where is the man who usually stands there so we can't see Jesus?")"

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**ILLUSTRATION** - Take me to the Cross - Billy Graham tells the story of a police officer on night duty in a city in northern England. As he walked the streets, he heard a quivering sob. Shining his flashlight into the darkness, he saw a little boy in the shadows sitting on a doorstep with tears running down his cheeks. The child said, "I'm lost. Please take me home." "I'll be glad to take you home. Where do you live?" the officer replied. But the little boy was so tired and so scared that he couldn't remember his address. The policeman began naming street after street, trying to help the boy remember where he lived. He named the shops and the hotels in the area but the little boy could give him no clue. Then he remembered that at the center of the town stood a church with a large white cross that towered high above the rest of the city. The policeman pointed to the cross and said, "Do you live anywhere near that place?" The little boy's face immediately brightened up. He said, "Yes, sir. Take me to the cross and I can find my way home." That is the mission of the church. We are to point people to the cross, and the cross will lead them safely home to God. This is our message to the world today, and it is God's message to you. The cross is God's provision for your sin. *If you go to the cross, you will find your way home to God.* Many people are lost and confused and the cross of Christ beckons you to come, repent of your sin and receive Christ. Come to the cross and you will find your way home to God. *The church stands today with an utterly unique message that is given to us and to no one else.* In a world of hurting people, to those who are angry and to those who are in despair, to those who have lost their way, to every man and woman, to every boy and girl, the church of Jesus Christ says to everyone who will listen, "Go to the cross and the cross will lead you home." May we never be ashamed of the cross but preach it boldly as the only hope of the world. Amen. ([Pritchard](#))

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### **James Smith, The glorious effects produced by it ("Paul's Determination" 1861)**

Most men have some favorite subject — and Paul had his. Many subjects were embraced in his ministry — but one fixed his eye, filled his heart, and occupied most of his attention. We may be sure, from the wisdom he generally displayed, and the abundance of grace that he possessed — that it was an important and worthy subject. It was "Christ crucified!" Therefore alluding to his first visit to Corinth, he said, "I determined to know nothing while I was with you — except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." 1 Corinthians 2:2. What a wondrous subject! What a wondrous Savior! Paul had seen glorious effects produced, by preaching it elsewhere. He knew that if this doctrine would not win them, and bring them back to God — nothing could.

We have been preaching and writing about Christ crucified for many years. We have also seen the glorious effects produced by it. We have seen . . .

- the hardened — melted down into penitence and love;
- the miserable — made happy;
- the sorrowful — filled with comfort;
- the guilty — put in possession of pardon;
- the filthy — made pure and holy;
- the troubled — made calm and peaceful;
- and the cruel — made kind and gentle!

What an honor God confers upon you, by sending a message to you at all, especially such a message. It is . . .

- a message of mercy — to miserable sinners;
- a message of grace — to unworthy sinners;
- a message of provision made — for very poor and needy sinners;
- a message of comfort — for desponding sinners;
- a message to alarm — for careless sinners;
- a message to solemnly warn — for obstinate sinners;

- an invitation to backsliders to return — that they may once more be happy and holy;
- a message of encouragement, direction, and winning love — to those who believe in Jesus.

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### Still My Determination - 1 Corinthians 2:2 -

From the days of St. Luke, some of history's greatest preachers have originally trained as medical doctors. One of my favorites was Martyn Lloyd-Jones, born and reared in Wales, who moved to London in 1914 at age fourteen. He enrolled at St. Bartholomew's Hospital as a medical student, graduating in 1921. But as he treated people's physical needs, he became increasingly aware of their spiritual ones, and he felt a nagging call to the ministry of preaching. 1 Corinthians 2:2 burned in his heart: "I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

In 1927, he began pastoring in his native Wales. His first sermon was from 1 Corinthians 2:2. Ten years later, he moved to London's great Westminster Chapel as assistant to G. Campbell Morgan. When Morgan retired in 1943, Lloyd-Jones stepped into the pulpit where, for 30 years, he preached "Jesus Christ and Him crucified," dissecting and dividing the Scripture with the precision of a surgeon's scalpel.

On February 6, 1977, he returned to his former church in Wales for the fiftieth anniversary of his ministry. After announcing his text, 1 Corinthians 2:2, he said: I have a number of reasons for calling your attention tonight to this particular statement. One of them—and I think you will forgive me for it—is that it was actually the text I preached on, on the first Sunday night I ever visited this church. I call attention to it not merely for that reason, but rather because it is still my determination. ...

My dear friends, in the midst of life we are in death. This is not theory; this is personal; this is practical. How are you living? Are you satisfied? How do you face the future? Are you alarmed? Terrified? What will you have when the end comes? You will have nothing, unless you have Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

When Lloyd-Jones died four years later, these words were engraved on his tombstone: "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (Robert Morgan - From This Verse)

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### **ILLUSTRATION: A Reminder Of The Cross**

I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. —1 Corinthians 2:2

Today's Scripture:: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Telephone poles play a crucial role in developed countries. They support lines of communication that enable people to "reach out and touch" others in just about any corner of the globe. And in many communities, telephone poles carry power lines that make it possible for people to use lights and appliances.

Think about these poles and the vast roadside forest they form. What is their shape? They look like crosses, don't they?

As I looked at the pole in front of my house, I was reminded of the old rugged cross of Christ. Think of the "lines" of communication and power it carries. Because of that cross, God listens to the prayers of any believer on the face of the earth. And because Jesus shed His blood on that cross for lost humanity, believers in Christ have a deep desire to "reach out and touch" others with the message of the gospel.

For the apostle Paul, the cross was everything. He had one message when he wrote to the Corinthian believers: "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Calvary was the heart of Paul's communication and the basis of his power.

The next time you see a telephone pole, think about the cross of Christ and how much it means to you. By: Mart DeHaan

When Jesus died on Calvary's cross,  
He took our sin and shame;  
He gave to us His righteousness,  
His glory, and His name.  
—Sper

Nothing speaks more clearly of God's love than the cross.

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**1 Corinthians 2:3 I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling,**

Wuest - And as for myself, when I faced you, I fell into a state of weakness and fear and much trembling. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Amplified - And I was in (passed into a state of) weakness and fear (dread) and great trembling after I had come] among you.

Phillips - As a matter of fact, in myself I was feeling far from strong; I was nervous and rather shaky.

NET 1 Corinthians 2:3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and with much trembling.

NLT 1 Corinthians 2:3 I came to you in weakness-- timid and trembling.

ESV 1 Corinthians 2:3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling,

NIV 1 Corinthians 2:3 I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling.

GNT 1 Corinthians 2:3 κ γ ν σθενε κα ν φ β κα ν τρ μ πολλ γεν μην πρ ς μ ς,

KJV 1 Corinthians 2:3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

YLT 1 Corinthians 2:3 and I, in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling, was with you;

ASV 1 Corinthians 2:3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

CSB 1 Corinthians 2:3 I came to you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 2:3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.

NRS 1 Corinthians 2:3 And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.

NAB 1 Corinthians 2:3 I came to you in weakness and fear and much trembling,

NJB 1 Corinthians 2:3 I came among you in weakness, in fear and great trembling

GWN 1 Corinthians 2:3 When I came to you, I was weak. I was afraid and very nervous.

BBE 1 Corinthians 2:3 And I was with you without strength, in fear and in doubt.

- 1Co 4:10-13 Ac 17:1,6-12 20:18,19 2Co 4:1,7-12,16 6:4 7:5 10:1,10 2Co 11:29,30 12:5-10 13:4 Ga 4:13,14
- [1 Corinthians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

2 Cor 3:5-6+ **Not that we are adequate in ourselves** to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but **our adequacy is from God**, 6 Who also **made us adequate** as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but **of the Spirit**; for the letter kills, but **the Spirit gives life**.

Acts 18:9-10+ And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, **Do not be afraid** ([present imperative with a negative](#) - STOP BEING AFRAID) any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent; 10 for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city."

### PAUL SENSE OF INADEQUACY

**I was with** ("when I faced") **you in** ("passed into a state of") **weakness and in fear and in much trembling** - Paul did not come to Corinth with any degree of self-confidence. For a full year and a half (Acts 18:11+) Paul had this attitude! In this context, the description is more about Paul's state of mind than about the state of his physical body. While Paul does use [astheneia](#) in Galatians 4:13+ to refer to a bodily illness, in this context Paul uses **weakness** to express his sense of inadequacy (see "Related Passages" above) In other words, Paul is emphasizing that he had not come to them with confidence in his flesh, but in **weakness** of his flesh. This is a good position to be in because it enables God to work as Jesus explained to Paul (in a time of physical illness (cf 2 Cor 12:7-8) in 2 Cor 12:9+ declaring "My grace is sufficient ([hikanos](#) - adequate, enough) for you, for (MY) **power** ([dunamis](#)) is perfected in (your) **weakness** ([astheneia](#))."

**Hodge** - It was not in the consciousness of strength—self-confidence and self-reliance—that he appeared among them, but as oppressed with a sense of his weakness and insufficiency. He had a work to do that he felt to be entirely above his powers.

**Robertson** - Paul had been in prison in Philippi, driven out of Thessalonica and Berea, politely bowed out of Athens. It is a human touch to see this shrinking as he faced the hard conditions in Corinth. It is a common feeling of the most effective preachers. Cool

complacency is not the mood of the finest preaching.

**And in fear and in much trembling** - The expression **in fear** most likely speaks of Paul's **fear** of failure. He did not fear that the Gospel would fail, but that he would fail to present it in simplicity without reliance on human reasoning or rhetoric. **Much** (not just a little) **trembling** speaks of "the anxiety of one who distrusts his ability completely to meet all requirements, but does his utmost to fulfill his duty." (Gilbrant)

**Hodge** adds that the idea is that he came "in anxiety, or [solicitude](#) of mind arising out of a sense of his insufficiency, and of the infinite importance of his work.

[Pritchard](#) - I am comforted by the thought that Paul was a man like I am—a man of like passions, if you will. *As I consider his life, I realize that nothing in Paul could explain his success—except God!* The New Testament doesn't give us any descriptions of Paul's appearance, but Paul himself quoted his opponents who said of him, "**His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing**" (2 Corinthians 10:10). We do have this early description of Paul that comes from outside the New Testament. He was "a man of middling size, and his hair was scanty, and his legs were a little crooked, and his knees were far apart; he had large eyes, and his eyebrows met, and his nose was somewhat long." If that is accurate, then Paul was no first-century Arnold Schwarzenegger. He wasn't much to look at and he didn't cut an impressive figure in the pulpit. Imagine two members of the Corinthian church meeting each other in the marketplace: "Hey, who's preaching this Sunday?" "Paul." "Paul? Oh, No! I've invited my neighbors to church this Sunday. I thought Dr. Smartypants was preaching. Paul is hard to understand. He's too deep for me. And his sermons are so long."

Paul's other mentions of **fear and trembling** - 2 Cor. 7:15; Phil. 2:12; Eph. 6:5.

What preacher of the gospel is there anywhere  
who has not often known exactly what Paul is describing?  
-- Gilbrant

**Barnhouse** in his great commentary on Romans emphasizes the importance of a proper understanding of ministry out of our **weakness** rather than out of our supposed "power" writing "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for without me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5). How many Christians read it, "Without me you cannot do very much," cling to their own imagined ability, and so fail to bear fruit! God never mingles His power with ours. Only when we recognize our own absolute nothingness does He work in full power. Paul learned this when he asked for deliverance from his "thorn in the flesh." The Lord replied, "My grace is sufficient for you; for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

**Glenn Spencer** - When Paul went to Corinth he refused to rely upon the skills and schemes of oratory. He would not accommodate the gospel to the style of the Greek philosophers and did not try to decorate the truth with pagan wisdom to make it acceptable to the lost. Humanly speaking, Paul was in an impossible situation. He was a weak and sickly old man with an unappealing message so far as the religious intelligentsia were concerned. However, Paul had something that was much better than everything the world could offer. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. (2 Corinthians 4:7+)

**Weakness** (769) (**astheneia** from **a** = without + **sthénos** = strength, bodily vigor) means literally without strength or bodily vigor = want of strength = lacking strength. It expresses powerlessness. The weak are without strength, incapacitated in some serious way. Literally **astheneia** refers to bodily diseases or ailments (Lk 5:15, 13:11, 12, Jn 5:5, 11:4, 28:9). Another meaning of **astheneia** is incapacity to do or experience something, an inability to produce results, a state of weakness or limitation (1Co 15:43; 2Co 11:30; 12:5, 9, 10, 13:4; Ro 8:27; Heb 4:15; 5:2; 7:28; 11:34) Paul's use of **astheneia** in 1Co 2:3 conveys the sense of weakness in terms of courage. In some contexts **astheneia** (and related words) can be used as the opposite of *dunamis* or power (as in 2 Cor 12:9+).

**Fear** (5401) (**phobos** from the verb **phéboimai** = to flee from or to be startled) refers first to flight, to alarm, to fright or to terror (of the shaking type) (cf. Mt 14:26; Lk 21:26). This type of fear is connected with fear of the unknown, fear of the future, and fear of authorities. It speaks of the terror which seizes one when danger appears and in context is what Paul experienced in Corinth. A Biblical **fear** of God (a fear which Paul clearly had) includes elements of (1) awe of His greatness and glory and elements of (2) dread of the results of violating His holy nature causing Him displeasure and incurring His hand of discipline (He 12:6+, He 12:11+). In classical Greek **phobos** meant panic or flight ('Panic-stricken flight' = Homer) It conveyed the idea of running away, of fleeing panic-stricken from battle. (2) More generally **phobos** means fear in the widest sense means 'awe' or 'reverence' for some exalted ruler and especially for some divinity or some god. It is the feeling which a man experiences in the presence of someone who is infinitely his superior.

**Trembling** (5156) (**tromos** from **trémo** = tremble, gives us our English word "tremor") quaking with fear or quivering often with the implication of fear and/or consternation (Mk 16:8). Tremor can express profound reverence and respect (2Co 7:15). "This word was used to describe the anxiety of one who distrusts his ability completely to meet all requirements, but religiously does his utmost to fulfil his duty. Paul admitted to them his mental weakness and shortness of confidence." (Mattoon)

**THOUGHT** - *He responded in a totally human fashion, which I find greatly encouraging* We've all had his experience when trying to share Christ with others. Have you ever tried to witness to someone only to find that you "tang" gets all "tongued" up? Or have you tried to quote John 3:16 to a lost person only to discover that you've forgotten everything after "For God"? Certainly all of us have had seemingly disastrous witnessing experiences where everything we said ended up sounding like nonsense to us. It happens. Paul certainly knew what that was like. We need "holy nervousness" when we witness to others lest we fail the Lord or fail the person to whom we are speaking. ([Pritchard](#))

**Pastor Keith Krell** - Occasionally, someone asks me if I get scared or nervous before I preach. The answer is yes, and it happens every single time. No matter how many times I've preached or how well prepared I am there is always a sense of nervousness that comes just before I stand up. I hope I don't ever lose that, because if I do I need to stop preaching. If speaking for Christ ever becomes routine, then something has gone wrong inside your heart.

**ILLUSTRATION** - Someone said to **Charles Spurgeon**, "I get so nervous when I preach. When do I get over that?" Spurgeon said, "Pray you never do, for then God cannot use you."

**G. Campbell Morgan** does not speculate on the cause but the effect of Paul's words declaring "So great was his sense of weakness and fear, and so profound his lack of trust in himself that he quaked, he trembled. Those are the secrets of strength in all preaching."

**ILLUSTRATION** - Black Bart was a professional thief whose very name struck fear as he terrorized the Wells Fargo stage line. From San Francisco to New York, his name became synonymous with the danger of the frontier. Between 1875 and 1883, he robbed 29 different stagecoach crews. Amazingly, Bart did it all without firing a shot. Because a hood hid his face, no victim ever saw his face. He never took a hostage and was never trailed by a sheriff. Instead, Black Bart used fear to paralyze his victims. His sinister presence was enough to overwhelm the toughest stagecoach guard. That same kind of fear is what overwhelms Christians from sharing the Gospel or preaching the truths of Scripture.

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A kindergarten teacher wanted to understand her students' struggle to master the fine motor skills of writing, cutting, and tying their shoes. For a period of time, she decided to use her weaker hand for all of her own fine motor tasks. She soon understood how it felt to fumble clumsily with a pair of scissors or a pencil.

In his own ministry, Paul purposefully "disadvantaged" himself for the purpose of upholding the integrity of the gospel. There were methods and means he could have used that might have arguably been more persuasive, but he made the deliberate decision not to employ them. "I resolved to know nothing ... except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (2:2). Paul did not avail himself of the rhetorical devices he could have used to make compelling arguments about Jesus. Instead, for Paul, there was only the cross and the God-Man, Jesus.

From portraits of Paul in the book of Acts, we know that he was capable of powerful oratory. He was well-versed in the Hebrew Scriptures as well as the contemporary poetry and literature of his day. Notice his address to the scholars and philosophers of Athens in Acts 17! But Paul, for all his academic and religious training, gave up the tactics of logical persuasion and argumentation, at least in Corinth, to focus all the power of his message on the Cross. And the Cross, as we've seen yesterday, doesn't fit neatly into common-sense categories.

In the culture of Corinth (and the Roman empire at this time), men were admired and esteemed for their rhetorical abilities. If one succeeded in public speaking, he earned the iconic status that movie stars and professional athletes enjoy in our day. Today, beauty and athletic ability are the currency of fame; in the Roman empire, philosophical wisdom and rhetorical eloquence were sought-after gifts. The Corinthians obviously held these in high esteem, which is why Paul would not, in his preaching, capitulate to their terms and compromise the gospel in any way.

**Apply the Word** - Everything seems upside-down in the kingdom of God. Weakness is power. Humility is strength. Foolishness is wisdom. (See [Spiritual Paradox in the Christian Life](#)) But the force behind preaching that centers on this "foolish" gospel is the Spirit's power. When the Spirit of God animates His Word with power, there is healing, conviction of sin, and worship. There are real encounters with the living God, and in His presence everything is possible. Must we, like the Corinthians, repent of worldly values that displace our allegiance to the crucified Christ?

**1 Corinthians 2:4 and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,**

Wuest - And my message and my preaching were not couched in specious words of philosophy but were dependent for their efficacy upon a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Amplified - And my language and my message were not set forth in persuasive (enticing and plausible) words of wisdom, but they were in demonstration of the [Holy] Spirit and power a proof by the Spirit and power of God, operating on me and stirring in the minds of my hearers the most holy emotions and thus persuading them]

Phillips - What I said and preached had none of the attractiveness of the clever mind, but it was a demonstration of the power of the Spirit!

NET 1 Corinthians 2:4 My conversation and my preaching were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

NLT 1 Corinthians 2:4 And my message and my preaching were very plain. Rather than using clever and persuasive speeches, I relied only on the power of the Holy Spirit.

ESV 1 Corinthians 2:4 and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

NIV 1 Corinthians 2:4 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power,

GNT 1 Corinthians 2:4 κα λ γος μου κα τ κρυμ μου ο κ ν πειθο [ς] σοφ ας [λ γοις] λλ ν ποδε χει πνε ματος κα δυν μεως,

KJV 1 Corinthians 2:4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

YLT 1 Corinthians 2:4 and my word and my preaching was not in persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power --

ASV 1 Corinthians 2:4 And my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

CSB 1 Corinthians 2:4 My speech and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom but with a powerful demonstration by the Spirit,

NKJ 1 Corinthians 2:4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

NRS 1 Corinthians 2:4 My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

NAB 1 Corinthians 2:4 and my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive (words of) wisdom, but with a demonstration of spirit and power,

NJB 1 Corinthians 2:4 and what I spoke and proclaimed was not meant to convince by philosophical argument, but to demonstrate the convincing power of the Spirit,

- **my message:** Ac 20:27
- **not:** 1Co 2:1,13 1:17 Jud 14:15 16:5 2Sa 14:17-20 15:2-6 1Ki 22:13,14 2Ch 18:19-21 Pr 7:21 20:19 Jer 20:10 Eze 13:6,10,11 Ro 16:18 Col 2:4 2Pe 1:16 2:18
- **persuasive words,** Ac 26:28 Ga 1:10
- **but:** 1Co 4:20 Joh 16:8-15 Ro 15:19 1Th 1:5 1Pe 1:12
- [1 Corinthians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**NOT PERSUASIVE WORDS  
BUT IN SPIRIT AND POWER**

**And my message (logos) and my preaching (kerugma) were not in persuasive (enticing) words (logos) of wisdom - (Wuest)** "not couched in specious words of philosophy". He did not rely on logic or rhetoric but the power of the Cross. Paul's preaching was not designed to coerce men into making a decision, for he knew that souls were saved by the grace of God Who Alone draws men to Jesus Christ and Him crucified (cf Jn 6:44). On the other hand this passage could easily be misinterpreted to mean that Paul was rejecting **persuasive** preaching, but clearly he sought to be **persuasive** in preaching before King Agrippa giving his sermon in Acts 26:1-17+ and to which "Agrippa replied to Paul, "In a short time you will **persuade** me to become a Christian." (Acts 26:18-19+). What he was not seeking to do was to persuade men using human wisdom (**words of wisdom**). Similarly in Acts 18:4+ when he was in Corinth Luke records "he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade (**peitho**) Jews and Greeks." But note that his persuasion was in "solemnly testifying (**diamarturomai**, also used in Acts 20:21, 23, 24+, Acts 28:23+) to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ." (Acts 18:5+, cf accusation of the Corinthian Jews against Paul in Acts 18:13+) So it is not that Paul did not desire to persuade his hearers but simply that he did not use human methods of persuasion (such as "superiority of speech or wisdom" 1 Cor 2:1). Paul knew that it was the inherent power (**dunamis**) of the inspired Gospel (Ro 1:16+) that convicts and converts hearts, not the skill of the preacher. In a sense, this is great news for preachers as it puts the pressure on God, not on their golden presentation. Paul is not suggesting that the preacher should not prepare his message, for he should, even as he commanded Timothy to "**Be diligent** (**arist imperative** see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, **accurately handling the word of truth.**" (2 Ti 2:15+). A good vocabulary is fine, but flowery oratory is not!

1 Corinthians 1:21+ For 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.

**Alan Carr** writes that "When the language becomes so verbose, and the rhetoric becomes so stilted and hard to decipher, it becomes obvious that the preacher has lost his desire to feed the sheep, and is more interested in flaunting his supposed intellect. Learn words and love words. They are the tools of our trade. Just as a carpenter uses the saw, the hammer and the ruler to build his creations; the preacher uses nouns, verbs, propositions and adjectives to build his sermons. True intelligence has the ability to make the profound simple. True brilliance does not flaunt its abilities; true brilliance simplifies the difficult so that all can understand. (**ILLUSTRATION**) When criticized for his simple speech, **D.L. Moody** responded by saying, "I have been called to feed Sheep, and not giraffes. I put the cookies on the bottom shelf where the children can reach them." There is nothing wrong with using expressive language to describe the glorious truths of the Word of God. But, the language should never overshadow the message. (from [A Biblical Pattern for Preaching](#))

**Hodge** on differentiation of **my message and my preaching** - If these terms are to be distinguished, the former may refer to his private and the latter to his public instructions; or the former is general, including all modes of address, and the latter specific, limited to public discourse. "My instructions in general, and my public preaching in particular." Both terms, however, may designate different aspects of the same thing. His mode of preaching is described first negatively and then positively. It was not with the enticing words of human wisdom—that is, the persuasive words that human wisdom would suggest. In his endeavors to bring people to the obedience of the faith, he did not rely on his own skill in argument or persuasion. This is the negative statement.

**Robertson** - This looks like a false disclaimer or mock modesty, for surely the preacher desires to be persuasive....gullible people are easy marks for these plausible pulpiteers. Corinth put a premium on the veneer of false rhetoric and thin thinking.

**Carson** - Paul describes in negative terms what the orators called '**presence**'. He cut no charismatic figure for he was there in **weakness** and **fear** and with **much trembling** and his message (better 'oratory') and preaching were not undertaken by means of the **persuasive** techniques of orators by acting out a part, playing on the audience's feelings and with classical demonstrations recommended in the handbooks on [rhetoric](#) (SEE EXAMPLE BELOW). Instead of using one of the demonstration techniques recommended by Aristotle, his message was accompanied by the Spirit's power. (New Bible Commentary)

[Example of Secular Speakers in Paul's Day](#) - Aristotle identifies three steps or "offices" of rhetoric— invention, arrangement, and style—and three different types of rhetorical proof: [ethos](#) (Aristotle's theory of character and how the character and credibility of a speaker can influence an audience to consider him/her to be believable—there being three qualities that contribute to a credible ethos: perceived intelligence, virtuous character, and goodwill); [note 31 pathos](#) (the use of emotional appeals to alter the audience's judgment through metaphor, amplification, storytelling, or presenting the topic in a way that evokes strong emotions in the audience.); and, [logos](#) (the use of reasoning, either [inductive](#) or [deductive](#), to construct an argument).

As **Spurgeon** put it "It is ours to speak the truth boldly, and in every case we shall be a sweet savour unto God; but to [temporise](#) in the hope of making converts is to do evil that good may come, and this is never to be thought of for an instant."

**Message...words** (3056) see above on [logos](#)

**Preaching** (2782)(**kerugma** where **-ma** means the result of <> from **kerusso** = to proclaim or announce in public) means not so much the **act** but the **content** or the **result of preaching**, that which is cried by the **herald** (**kerux** - an officer sent by a king or other high official to proclaim a message or announce good news) or public crier. **TDNT** adds that **kerugma** "has a twofold sense like the word proclamation, signifying both the result of proclamation (what is proclaimed) and the actual proclaiming. In other words, it denotes both the act and the content. In many cases it is hard to say where the emphasis falls." (**TDNT**) In the NT **kerugma** is always used of the public proclamation of God's Word, which brings men to saving faith, builds them up in divine truth, and strengthens them for godly living. **Kerugma** is used only 8x in NT most by Paul - Mt. 12:41; Lk. 11:32; Ro 16:25; 1 Co. 1:21; 1 Co. 2:4; 1 Co. 15:14; 2 Tim. 4:17; Tit. 1:3

**Persuasive** (only here in NT)(3981)(**peithos** from **peitho** = to persuade or convince) is an adjective which clearly means "persuasive," but not necessarily with the negative overtones suggested by the word "enticing." The word **Peitho** was also the name of a Greek goddess, "Persuasion." Some of the Early Church fathers (Origen, Eusebius) thought that Paul here intended a reference to this goddess (but that is highly unlikely given the context -- as an aside there is some good material in the Early Church Fathers but just because they were closer to the time of the writing of the NT does not automatically mean their interpretations are more accurate and in my experience because many of the "fathers" **began to interpret allegorically** they are often less accurate than interpretations that adhere to literal interpretation.

**Wisdom** (4678) see above on **sophia**

**But** - Term of contrast. Note the change of direction (so to speak) from not in persuasive words of wisdom to demonstration of the Spirit and power.

**In demonstration** (proof) **of the Spirit and of power** (**dunamis**) - (**Wuest**) = "were dependent for their efficacy upon a demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Amplified has "hey were in demonstration of the [Holy] Spirit and power a proof by the Spirit and power of God, operating on me and stirring in the minds of my hearers the most holy emotions and thus persuading them]" This verse summarizes why Paul was successful in spreading the Gospel throughout the entire Roman Empire! Paul's preaching was a "**demonstration**," a divine proof, not a personal "**performance**." (What about your preaching dear pastor?) Paul depended on the Spirit for any "success" he would experience. **Demonstration** is **apodeixis** a legal term meaning "legal proof demonstrated in court" and thus signifies that the testimony or proof is irrefutable. Indeed, the Gospel may sound ridiculous to the unsaved mind, but it is irrefutable and divinely powerful! We need to forget about trying to impress the world, attract the world (cf "**seeker friendly**"), or be acceptable to the world. We must continually yield our lives to the Spirit, being filled with Him and His power (Eph 5:18+, Acts 1:8+)..

**KEY WORD IN CHAPTER 2 = Spirit, spiritual** (7x to Holy Spirit) - 1 Cor 2:4 1 Cor 2:10 1 Cor 2:11 1 Cor 2:12  
1 Cor 2:13 1 Cor 2:14 1 Cor 2:15

So here is the preacher's perfect pattern - the Spirit energized preacher preaches the powerful Word (the Gospel the power of God for salvation - Ro 1:16+) and the Spirit supernaturally **demonstrates** (proves irrefutably) the Word to the person's heart and mind like He did to Lydia in Acts 16:14+ Luke recording "A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was **listening**; and the **Lord opened her heart** to respond to **the things spoken by Paul**." We speak the Word of the Cross and the sword of the Spirit "circumcises" their heart.

*If people are impressed by what you say, they are unlikely to be impressed by Jesus*  
-- Ray Pritchard

**Pritchard** - We need the unction of the Holy Spirit that will take our feeble human words and fill them with supernatural power (**ED**: TRUE, BUT REMEMBER WHEN WE SPEAK THE GOSPEL, THAT WORD IS INTRINSICALLY POWERFUL! Ro 1:16+). When that happens, lives will be radically changed.

**Mattoon** - As people were saved and their lives were changed, it proved that Paul's preaching was empowered by the Holy Spirit. God can use a quiet man or a powerful orator like **George Whitefield** to reach people for Christ when these men are yielded and dependent upon the Holy Spirit to work in people's hearts.

**ILLUSTRATION** - **D. L. Moody** was to have a campaign in England. An elderly pastor protested, "Why do we need this 'Mr. Moody'? He's uneducated, inexperienced, etc. Who does he think he is anyway? Does he think he has a monopoly on the Holy Spirit?" A younger, wiser pastor rose and responded, "No, but the Holy Spirit has a monopoly on Mr. Moody." Let me ask, "Does the Holy Spirit have a monopoly on you? Are you under His control?" Speaking to a large audience, D.L. Moody held up a glass and asked, "How can I get the air out of this glass?" One man shouted, "Suck it out with a pump!" Moody replied, "That would create a vacuum and

shatter the glass." After numerous other suggestions Moody smiled, picked up a pitcher of water, and filled the glass. "There," he said, "all the air is now removed." He then went on to explain that victory in the Christian life is not accomplished by "sucking out a sin here and there," but by being filled with the Holy Spirit. (Mattoon)

**Krell** - Note the striking contrast—the wisdom of men versus the power of God. If you build on one, you cannot have the other. Paul's concern throughout this passage is self-reliance. It's not that he doesn't want us to preach to the best of our ability—he most certainly does! He just doesn't want us to rely on our own gifts and strength. **ILLUSTRATION** In the late 90's a British company developed a product called "Spray-On Mud" so city dwellers can give their expensive 4x4 vehicles the appearance of having been off-road for a day of hunting or fishing without ever leaving town. The mud is even filtered to remove stones and debris that might scratch the paint. This product sold very well. When it comes to preaching there are many who are more concerned with the outside than the inside. They wax eloquent and wipe fresh pastry speech all over the place. But this type of preaching has no place in our lives as followers of Jesus. Jesus was a carpenter. He was down and dirty! The Bible was written in Koine Greek, the language of the common man. God wants us to rely on His strength to preach Christ-exalting words. When we preach or share Christ our desire should not be that others say, "What a wonderful preacher!" Our desire is that they should say, "What a wonderful Savior!"

**Hodge** - Positively, his preaching was with a demonstration of the Spirit's power. This may mean, "the demonstration of the powerful Spirit" or "the demonstration of the Spirit and of (miraculous) power," referring to the double evidence of proof of the Gospel—namely, the internal influence of the Spirit and the external evidence of miracles. The word translated power often means miraculous power, but as this cannot be its meaning in the following verse, it is not probable that it was intended to have that sense here. The phrase probably means, "the demonstration of which the Spirit is the author and that is characterized by power," so that the sense is, "the powerful demonstration of the Spirit."

**Godet** writes: "The word **apodeixis** indicates a clearness which is produced in the hearer's mind, as by the sudden lifting of a veil; a conviction mastering him with the sovereign force of moral evidence". Such conviction comes only from "the Spirit" who works on our hearts in "power."

**Lias** comments: "The 'power' of which he speaks was not so much that of working miracles in the ordinary sense of the word, as of touching the heart. He is referring to that conviction of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8), which the Spirit of God produces in the spirit of man, and of the power to produce a change of heart and life which is the leading characteristic of the Gospel"

**Thayer** says **demonstration** refers to "a proof by the Spirit and power of God, operating in me, and stirring in the minds of my hearers the most holy emotions and thus persuading them, 1 Cor. 2:4 (contextually opposed to proof by rhetorical arts and philosophic arguments -- the sense in which the Greek philosophers use the word."

**Hodge** on **demonstration** - Paul relied, therefore, for success not on his skill in argument or persuasion, nor upon any of the resources of human wisdom, but on the testimony that the Spirit bore to the truth. The Holy Spirit demonstrates the Gospel to be true.

**Robertson and Plummer** make this helpful observation: "Paul is not dealing with scientific certainty; but he claims that the certitude of religious truth to the believer in the Gospel is as complete and as 'objective'—equal in degree, though different in kind—as the certitude of scientific truth to the scientific mind." Those who experience the reality of Christ's presence within and the illumination of His Spirit can surely say a hearty "Amen" to this.

**Ralph Earle** on **demonstration** - In view of the current use of the word "demonstration" in our country, it would seem that "proof" would be a better translation here. It is also clearer and simpler. Then too, "demonstration" in religious circles means something outward, whereas the "proof" of the Spirit's power here is an inward conviction of one's sin and of the truth of the gospel.

**Demonstration** (only NT use)(585) (**apodeixis** from **apodeiknumi** = to show forth) literally meant showing forth or showing off (not in a negative sense), a setting forth and thus a "display" and then demonstration in the sense of conclusive proof. On meaning of this word was "legal proof presented in court." Findlay says that **apodeixis** was "the technical term for a proof drawn from facts or documents, as opposed to theoretical reasoning; in common use with the Stoics in this sense"

**Power** (1411)(**dunamis** from **dunamai** = to be able, to have power; derived from **dúna**— conveys meaning of "being able" of "capacity") refers to power especially achieving power. It speaks of inherent power to accomplish supernatural feats and is often translated *miracles* in the NT. It describes inherent power residing in God, by virtue of His nature (e.g., see resurrection power 1 Cor 6:14+) and is supernatural power that overcomes resistance. **Dunamis** is the word generally used by Paul of divine energy to accomplish something supernaturally which cannot be accomplished naturally. Note that while **dunamis** gives us our English dynamite, that is not the best illustration of this power because dynamite explodes and destroys, while Gospel

dunamis creates and enables a new life in Christ. In the present context it speaks of the Gospel's supernatural power to circumcise a heart and make a sinner a saint, a new creation in Christ (2 Cor 5:17+). **Dunamis** is the inherent power residing in Christ and His Gospel by virtue of His nature and the intrinsic nature of the Gospel described in Ro 1:16+ (i.e., the "power of God" to save).

**Dunamis** in letters to Corinth - 1 Co. 1:18; 1 Co. 1:24; 1 Co. 2:4; 1 Co. 2:5; 1 Co. 4:19; 1 Co. 4:20; 1 Co. 5:4; 1 Co. 6:14; 1 Co. 12:10; 1 Co. 12:28; 1 Co. 12:29; 1 Co. 14:11; 1 Co. 15:24; 1 Co. 15:43; 1 Co. 15:56; 2 Co. 1:8; 2 Co. 4:7; 2 Co. 6:7; 2 Co. 8:3; 2 Co. 12:9; 2 Co. 12:12; 2 Co. 13:4



Spurgeon Preaching from Pulpit

**ILLUSTRATION** - The Prince of preachers C H Surgeon understood this vital need in his life. In the huge Metropolitan Tabernacle Spurgeon would sing the hymns down at floor level and then he would mount the 14 steps to the elevated pulpit and with every step he took he would utter **"I believe in the Holy Spirit. I believe in the Holy Spirit"**

**THOUGHT** - Dear pastor, imitate Paul who imitated Jesus (1 Cor 11:1+). Rely on the Holy Spirit to empower your preaching. Preach the Word in the power of the Spirit.

**Related Resources:**

- [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)
- Sermon I preached at ordination of a young preacher

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**The miracle of belief** 1 Cor. 2:4

Paul was a scholar and an orator of the first rank; he is not speaking out of abject humility, but saying that he would veil the power of God if, when he preached the gospel, he impressed people with his "excellency of speech." Belief in Jesus is a miracle produced only by the efficacy of Redemption, not by impressiveness of speech, not by wooing and winning, but by the sheer unaided power of God. The creative power of the Redemption comes through the preaching of the Gospel, but never because of the personality of the preacher. The real fasting of the preacher is not from food, but rather from eloquence, from impressiveness and exquisite diction, from everything that might hinder the gospel of God being presented. The preacher is there as the representative of God—"as though God did beseech you by us." He is there to present the Gospel of God, not human ideals. If it is only because of my preaching that people desire to be better, they will never get anywhere near Jesus Christ. Anything that flatters me in my preaching of the Gospel will end in making me a traitor to Jesus; I prevent the creative power of His redemption from doing its work.

"I, if I be lifted up ..., will draw all men unto Me." (Oswald Chambers)

**Not By Might Nor By Power** — 1 Corinthians 2:4

If in preaching the Gospel you substitute your clear knowledge of the way of salvation for confidence in the power of the Gospel, you hinder people getting to Reality. You have to see that while you proclaim your knowledge of the way of salvation, you yourself are rooted and grounded in faith in God. Never rely on the clearness of your exposition, but as you give your exposition see that you are relying on the Holy Spirit. Rely on the certainty of God's redemptive power, and He will create His own life in souls.

When once you are rooted in Reality, nothing can shake you. If your faith is in experiences, any thing that happens is likely to upset that faith; but nothing can ever upset God or the almighty Reality of Redemption; base your faith on that, and you are as eternally secure as God. When once you get into personal contact with Jesus Christ, you will never be moved again. That is the meaning of sanctification. God puts His disapproval on human experience when we begin to adhere to the conception that sanctification is merely an experience, and forget that sanctification itself has to be sanctified (see John 17:19). I have deliberately to give my sanctified life to God for His service, so that He can use me as His hands and His feet. (Oswald Chambers)

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**Spirit** (4151)(pneuma from pneo = to breath). - Note this is only a summary of the vast amount of material available on Pneuma.

**Pneuma** in NT - 380x in 345 verses and **in the NAS** is translated breath(3), Spirit(239), spirit(103), spirits(32),

**Summary:**

1. a movement of air (a gentle blast 1a) of the wind, hence the wind itself 1b) breath of nostrils or mouth
2. the spirit, i.e. the vital principal by which the body is animated 2a) the rational spirit, the power by which the human being feels, thinks, decides 2b) the soul
3. a spirit, i.e. a simple essence, devoid of all or at least all grosser matter, and possessed of the power of knowing, desiring, deciding, and acting 3a) a life giving spirit 3b) a human soul that has left the body 3c) a spirit higher than man but lower than God, i.e. an angel 3c1) used of demons, or evil spirits, who were conceived as inhabiting the bodies of men 3c2) the spiritual nature of Christ, higher than the highest angels and equal to God, the divine nature of Christ
4. of God 4a) God's power and agency distinguishable in thought from his essence in itself considered 4a1) manifest in the course of affairs 4a2) by its influence upon the souls productive in the theocratic body (the church) of all the higher spiritual gifts and blessings 4a3) the third person of the trinity, the God the Holy Spirit
5. the disposition or influence which fills and governs the soul of any one 5a) the efficient source of any power, affection, emotion, desire, etc.

[Click for an in depth 20 PAGE discussion of PNEUMA in the New International Dictionary of the New Testament](#)

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**Gingrich - pneuma**

1. blowing, breathing—
    - a. wind Jn 3:8a; Heb 1:7.—
    - b. the breathing out of air, breath 2 Th 2:8.—
  2. breath, (life-)spirit, soul, that which gives life to the body Mt 27:50; Lk 8:55; 23:46; Jn 19:30; Acts 7:59; Jas 2:26; Heb 12:23; 1 Pet 3:19; Rev 11:11.—
  3. spirit as part of the human personality—
    - a. the immaterial part 1 Cor 5:3–5; 7:34; 2 Cor 7:1; Col 2:5; 1 Th 5:23; Heb 4:12.—
    - b. the representative part of the inner life Mt 5:3; 26:41; Mk 2:8; 8:12; Lk 1:47; Jn 4:23; 11:33; 13:21; Ro 1:9; 2 Cor 2:13. One's very self Ro 8:16; Phil 4:23.
    - c. spiritual state, state of mind, disposition 1 Cor 4:21; Gal 6:1; Eph 4:23; 1 Pt 3:4.—
  4. a spirit as an independent being that cannot be perceived by the physical senses—
    - a. as a description of God Jn 4:24a.—
    - b. lesser good spirits or spirit-beings Ac 23:8f; Heb 1:14; 12:9; Rev 1:4; 5:6.—Ghost Lk 24:37, 39.—
    - c. evil spirits Mk 1:23, 26f; Lk 11:24, 26; Acts 5:16; 16:18; 19:15f; Rev 18:2.—
  5. the Spirit as that which differentiates God from everything that is not God—
    - a. the Spirit of God or Christ Mt 3:16; Lk 4:18; Acts 5:9; 16:7; Ro 8:9f; 1 Cor 2:11b, 12b, 14; Gal 4:6; Eph 3:16; 1 Pet 1:11.—
    - b. (the Holy) Spirit Mt 3:11; 12:32; Mk 1:8, 10, 12; 3:29; Lk 2:26; 10:21; 12:10; Jn 1:32f; 3:34; 14:17; 16:13; Acts 1:8, 16; 8:15, 17, 19; 19:2; Ro 5:5; 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; Eph 4:30; Col 1:8; 1 Th 1:6; Heb 10:15; 2 Pet 1:21.—Clearly with independent identity Mt 28:19; cf. 2 Cor 13:13.—
    - c. of a spirit that is not from God 1 Cor 12:10; 2 Cor 11:4; 2 Th 2:2; 1 Jn 4:1–3. [pneumatology]
- 

**Friberg - Analytical Lexicon - pneuma,**

(1) as derived from pne,w (blow), of the movement of air;

(a) blowing, wind (probably Jn 3.8a and Heb 1.7);

(b) breathing, breath (2Th 2.8; possibly Mt 27.50 in the sense "he breathed his last");

- (2) as a condition and agent of life breath (of life), life spirit, soul (Lu 8.55; possibly Mt 27.50 in the sense "he dismissed his spirit");
- (3) as the immaterial part of the human personality, spirit in contrast to the outward and visible aspects of sarx (flesh) and soma (body) (1Co 5.3; 2Co 7.1);
- (4) as the seat of the inner spiritual life of man, the capacity to know God, spirit (Acts 18.25; Ro 8.16b);
- (5) as a disposition or way of thinking spirit, attitude (Gal 6.1);
- (6) as an independent spiritual being, not perceivable by the physical senses;
  - (a) of God himself spirit (Jn 4.24a);
  - (b) as the third person of the Trinity, possessed by and proceeding from God or Christ (Holy) Spirit (Mt 3.11; Acts 16.7; 1Th 4.8; possibly Jn 3.8a);
  - (c) as a demonic nonmaterial being, only evil in the NT spirit (Mt 8.16; Mk 1.23);
  - (d) of an angel as a spirit-being (Heb 1.14; perhaps Heb 1.7);
  - (e) as a bodiless human being ghost, specter, spirit (Luke 24.37, 39)

### **Gilbrant - Classical Greek**

The Greek term *pneuma* is derived from the root *pneu-*, "breath, wind" (cf. *pneō* [4014], "to blow, breathe"). *Pneuma* originally meant "wind" or "breath" and continued to have these meanings into the New Testament (cf. John 3:8; 2 Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 11:11; 13:15; NIV, RSV). Because the breath of an individual was the sign of life, *pneuma* came to include the meaning of the "spirit" that gives life to the body (Dunn, "Spirit," Colin Brown, 3:689).

Greek philosophy appropriated the term for its metaphysical discussion and gave the term added dimensions. Aristotle thought *pneuma* was the force latent within every human being (in the embryo) that shaped the personality of the person. He regarded *pneuma* as the force the soul (*psuchē* [5425]) used to control the body (*sōma* [4835]). However, he looked at *psuchē* as a function (like the sharpness of a knife), but believed *pneuma* had substance (Kleinknecht, "pneuma," Kittel, 6:336f.).

Stoic philosophy replaced the former understanding of the soul with *pneuma*. It linked *pneuma* with *nous* (3426), "mind, understanding." Stoics then devised schemes for defining *pneuma* in its various forms. They said that in its purest forms *pneuma* resembled *logos* (3030), "word," and *theos* (2292B), "god" or "deity." To them *pneuma* became the fifth "element," the ultimate element along with earth, air, fire, and water (Dunn, "Spirit," Colin Brown, 3:690).

Such perceptions led Greek philosophers to consider *pneuma* as the source of "inspiration" (Kleinknecht, "pneuma," Kittel, 6:343f.). They imagined "spirit" to be a sort of material substance that "filled" a person. It might be of either a divine or demonic nature. They also used *pneuma* to denote minor "deities" or demons in the supernatural realm as "spirits."

### **Septuagint Usage**

Throughout the Septuagint *pneuma* translates the Hebrew term *rûach* (about 270 out of about 380 times; *rûach* is translated by *anemos* [415], "wind," on approximately 50 occasions). Three times *pneuma* translates the Hebrew *n<sup>o</sup>shâmāh*, "blowing of breath" or "breath." Thus, both the Greek term *pneuma* and the Hebrew *rûach* demonstrate the same diversity in meaning.

### **Old Testament Background**

The Old Testament uses *rûach* to denote "wind, breath," or "spirit," but has no indication that Greek dualism (the belief that the spirit of a person was distinct and imprisoned within the body) influenced its writers (Dunn, "Spirit," Colin Brown, 3:690f.). Frequently there are numerous texts that might imply the spirit of a person is the principal indication of one's personality. For example, Isaac and Rebecca were grieved in their spirits when Esau took Canaanite wives (Genesis 26:35); Pharaoh's spirit was troubled by his dreams (41:8); Jacob's "spirit" was revived (literally, "given life") when he learned his son Joseph was alive (45:27); because of anguish or despondency of spirit the Israelites could not even listen to Moses (Exodus 6:9). Compare also Deuteronomy 2:30; 1 Kings 21:5; 1 Chronicles 5:26; 2 Chronicles 21:16.

The Old Testament has a great deal to say about the "Spirit" (*rûach*) of God. In fact, the Spirit had an instrumental role in the history recorded in the Old Testament. By the Spirit men and women were equipped as skilled workers, judges, leaders, kings, prophets, and servants of the Lord. Miracles, the

dividing of the Jordan River, as well as the interpretation of dreams are traced back to the action of the Spirit (2 Kings 2:9f. [LXX 4 Kings 2:9f.]; Genesis 41:38).

Significantly, in the Old Testament the Spirit of God moved quickly and temporarily on many of the men and women chosen to be instruments for carrying out God's plan of salvation. Only a few, like David, had the Spirit dwelling in them continually (1 Samuel 16:13 [LXX 1 Kings 16:13]; Psalm 51:11 [LXX 50:11]; 2 Samuel 23:1,2 [LXX 2 Kings 23:1,2]). The prophets, however, testified of the new faith and obedience that the outpouring of the Spirit would bring in the future (Ezekiel 36:26f.; Isaiah 32:15f.; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Zechariah 12:10; Joel 2:28f.). They also saw the Spirit upon the Messiah, not only for the working of the miraculous but also to demonstrate wisdom, understanding, counsel, power, knowledge, and fear of the Lord (Isaiah 11:2ff.).

Joel indicates the Spirit coming after the Teacher of righteousness (Joel 2:23,28, NIV). (The Hebrew words behind the KJV phrase "the former rain moderately" [Joel 2:23] have been variously translated as "the early rain for your vindication" [NASB] or perhaps most accurately "teacher [Hebrew *môreh*] for righteousness" [Hebrew *lits<sup>e</sup>dhâqâh*].) Peter, under the inspiration of the Spirit, identified the "afterward" of Joel to mean "in the last days" (Acts 2:17), by which he meant the last age before the coming (millennial) age. Joel's prophecy uses a form of the Hebrew verb which indicates the outpourings would be repeated until the time of judgment at the end of this age. Peter further saw that this meant times of refreshing can be ours throughout this age until Jesus comes again (Acts 3:19).

Ezekiel saw the Spirit as the key to life in the new age as well as to the full restoration of Israel to the Holy Land (Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26f.; 37:14).

### **New Testament Usage**

Like *rûach* in the Old Testament, *pneuma* in the New Testament sometimes simply denotes the "wind" (John 3:8; Hebrews 1:7, NIV) or "breath" (2 Thessalonians 2:8, NIV; Revelation 11:11; 13:5, NIV). It may also be used of "spirits" or "demons" at times (Matthew 8:16; Luke 4:33; 1 Peter 3:19), or even angels (Hebrews 1:14).

*Pneuma* has often been at the center of the controversy surrounding the dichotomous (body-spirit) and trichotomous (body-soul-spirit) views of man. Those who support a bipartite view of man point to the language of such passages as 1 Corinthians 7:34 and 2 Corinthians 7:1. This is said to be further supported by references to the physical and spiritual effects of salvation and one's dedication to God (Romans 12:1; 2 Corinthians 7:1).

Others however, see texts such as 1 Thessalonians 5:23 (cf. Luke 1:46,47; Hebrews 4:12) as supporting a tripartite view of man. Jesus as true man had a body (John 2:21; Colossians 1:22; Hebrews 10:5,10), a soul (Matthew 26:38; John 12:27), and a spirit (Mark 2:8; 8:12; John 11:33; 13:21). Many consider this threefold breakdown to include the soul as the seat of man's self-consciousness, while the spirit is the part that can come into contact with the divine realm and with God himself. This contact takes place when a person is born again by the Spirit and the Word of God (Acts 10:44-46). The body then becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit who bears witness to the person's spirit that he or she is truly a child of God (Romans 8:16). The spirit of the believer is also refreshed by fellowship with other believers (1 Corinthians 16:18; 2 Corinthians 7:13).

A third perspective sees Scripture's presentation of man as holistic. According to this, it must be remembered that the Hebrew-Christian perspective of man as seen in Scripture is one of a complex unity. Man is presented in Scripture as having multiple aspects: physical, psychological, rational, volitional, emotional, aesthetic, moral, social, etc. On the other hand man is seen as a whole that cannot be dissected into individual parts. Thus, man is aspective but not partitive (Stagg, *Polarities of Man's Existence*, p.45). While we may see man in terms of feeling, will, or reason for the purpose of analysis, these cannot be viewed in isolation from the others. Neither can man's diverse existence be captured in the simple categories of dichotomy or trichotomy (*ibid.*). In this view *pneuma* often characterizes the whole of man in his relationship with God much like *sarx* often characterizes the whole of man in his distance from God (*ibid.*, p.57).

The language of Scripture is diverse and its application is often inconsistent. This diversity concerning the nature of man requires that the reader carefully consider the context of each use of these terms.

The Old and New Testaments alike have a great deal to say about the activity of the spirit of man: the

spirit inquires of the Lord (Psalm 77:6), knows (1 Corinthians 2:11), prays (1 Corinthians 14:14), is troubled (Job 21:4), is stirred (Acts 17:16). Believers can serve God with their spirits (Romans 1:9); with their spirits they can rejoice in God (1 Corinthians 14:15). See also Isaiah 57:15; Daniel 7:15; Psalm 78:8.

The New Testament has much to say about the Spirit in relation to God. He himself is spirit (John 4:24). God is the Father of spirits (Hebrews 12:9). From God alone proceeds the inspiration and revelation of the prophecies (Revelation 22:6). Christ, the second Adam, became a life-giving spirit; the first Adam was a living soul (1 Corinthians 15:45). As God's Son, Christ participates in the life of the Father and has life in himself by His nature and as a source (John 1:1-4; 5:26). Christ even calls himself "the life" (John 11:25; 14:6). The life that is to be found in Christ is revealed in the Scriptures and becomes a reality to everyone believing in His name (1 John 5:11-13).

The fact that Christ is a life-giving spirit (pneuma zōopoious) suggests that because of the fact the Father has given Him to have life in himself, Christ is able to make alive those who are dead in their sins (Ephesians 2:1-5). The Spirit of Christ is therefore called the Spirit of life (Romans 8:2). The person that is "in Christ" is a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). Eternal life is Christ's life within believers that flows as long as they maintain faith in Him, just as the branch never has life independently but must abide or remain in living contact with the vine (John 15:1-6).

More than 250 New Testament occurrences of pneuma speak of the Holy Spirit. "The Spirit" in the absolute sense occurs about 90 times and also refers to the Third Person of the Trinity. His nature is expressed in John 6:63 with the word "to make alive." Here we see an allusion to the Old Testament's presentation of the Spirit as the principle of life itself. The Spirit gives life to everything that is alive: men (Genesis 2:7; Ezekiel 37:4f.); the animal world (Genesis 6:17; 7:15,22; Ecclesiastes 3:19-21). Everyone and everything depends upon the renewing power of the Spirit for existence (Psalm 104:30 [LXX 103:30]; cf. Genesis 45:27; Numbers 27:16; Ezekiel 37:14). All of existence would slip back into a state of death if God were to withdraw His Spirit (Genesis 6:3; Psalm 104:29 [LXX 103:29]).

The Spirit's distinct personality is portrayed in the Bible in vivid terms. There is no question that He is the Third Person of the Godhead. God's sending of the Spirit parallels the sending of the Son (Galatians 4:4,6). Jesus called the Spirit "another Comforter" whom the Father would send in Christ's name (John 14:16,26). The word "another" (Greek *allos* [241]) means "another of the same kind." He would do for us the same sort of thing Jesus did for His disciples. He teaches, reproves, guides, makes intercession, distributes gifts, makes responses, and glorifies Christ (John 14:26; 16:8,13,14; Acts 15:28; Romans 8:26; 1 Corinthians 12:11). To this it should be added that John, in order to emphasize the personality of the Holy Spirit, used at times a masculine pronoun to refer to the Holy Spirit, even though the Greek word *pneuma* is neuter. (The Complete Biblical Library)

**Pneuma in the KJV** - Spirit 111, Holy Ghost 89, Spirit (of God) 13, Spirit (of the Lord) 5, (My) Spirit 3, Spirit (of truth) 3, Spirit (of Christ) 2, human (spirit) 49, (evil) spirit 47, spirit (general) 26, spirit 8, (Jesus' own) spirit 6, (Jesus' own) ghost 2, misc 21; 385 times

Matt. 1:18; Matt. 1:20; Matt. 3:11; Matt. 3:16; Matt. 4:1; Matt. 5:3; Matt. 8:16; Matt. 10:1; Matt. 10:20; Matt. 12:18; Matt. 12:28; Matt. 12:31; Matt. 12:32; Matt. 12:43; Matt. 12:45; Matt. 22:43; Matt. 26:41; Matt. 27:50; Matt. 28:19; Mk. 1:8; Mk. 1:10; Mk. 1:12; Mk. 1:23; Mk. 1:26; Mk. 1:27; Mk. 2:8; Mk. 3:11; Mk. 3:29; Mk. 3:30; Mk. 5:2; Mk. 5:8; Mk. 5:13; Mk. 6:7; Mk. 7:25; Mk. 8:12; Mk. 9:17; Mk. 9:20; Mk. 9:25; Mk. 12:36; Mk. 13:11; Mk. 14:38;

Lk. 1:15; Lk. 1:17; Lk. 1:35; Lk. 1:41; Lk. 1:47; Lk. 1:67; Lk. 1:80; Lk. 2:25; Lk. 2:26; Lk. 2:27; Lk. 3:16; Lk. 3:22; Lk. 4:1; Lk. 4:14; Lk. 4:18; Lk. 4:33; Lk. 4:36; Lk. 6:18; Lk. 7:21; Lk. 8:2; Lk. 8:29; Lk. 8:55; Lk. 9:39; Lk. 9:42; Lk. 9:55; Lk. 10:20; Lk. 10:21; Lk. 11:13; Lk. 11:24; Lk. 11:26; Lk. 12:10; Lk. 12:12; Lk. 13:11; Lk. 23:46; Lk. 24:37; Lk. 24:39; Jn. 1:32; Jn. 1:33; Jn. 3:5; Jn. 3:6; Jn. 3:8; Jn. 3:34; Jn. 4:23; Jn. 4:24; Jn. 6:63; Jn. 7:39; Jn. 11:33; Jn. 13:21; Jn. 14:17; Jn. 14:26; Jn. 15:26; Jn. 16:13; Jn. 19:30; Jn. 20:22;

Acts 1:2; Acts 1:5; Acts 1:8; Acts 1:16; Acts 2:4; Acts 2:17; Acts 2:18; Acts 2:33; Acts 2:38; Acts 4:8; Acts 4:25; Acts 4:31; Acts 5:3; Acts 5:9; Acts 5:16; Acts 5:32; Acts 6:3; Acts 6:5; Acts 6:10; Acts 7:51; Acts 7:55; Acts 7:59; Acts 8:7; Acts 8:15; Acts 8:17; Acts 8:18; Acts 8:19; Acts 8:29; Acts 8:39; Acts 9:17; Acts 9:31; Acts 10:19; Acts 10:38; Acts 10:44; Acts 10:45; Acts 10:47; Acts 11:12; Acts 11:15; Acts 11:16; Acts 11:24; Acts 11:28; Acts 13:2; Acts 13:4; Acts 13:9; Acts 13:52; Acts 15:8; Acts 15:28; Acts 16:6; Acts 16:7; Acts 16:16; Acts 16:18; Acts 17:16; Acts 18:25; Acts 19:2; Acts 19:6; Acts 19:12; Acts 19:13; Acts 19:15; Acts 19:16; Acts 19:21; Acts 20:22; Acts 20:23; Acts 20:28; Acts 21:4; Acts 21:11; Acts 23:8; Acts 23:9; Acts 28:25;

Rom. 1:4; Rom. 1:9; Rom. 2:29; Rom. 5:5; Rom. 7:6; Rom. 8:2; Rom. 8:4; Rom. 8:5; Rom. 8:6; Rom. 8:9; Rom. 8:10; Rom. 8:11; Rom. 8:13; Rom. 8:14; Rom. 8:15; Rom. 8:16; Rom. 8:23; Rom. 8:26; Rom. 8:27; Rom. 9:1; Rom. 11:8; Rom. 12:11; Rom. 14:17; Rom. 15:13; Rom. 15:16; Rom. 15:19; Rom. 15:30; 1 Co. 2:4; 1 Co. 2:10; 1 Co. 2:11; 1 Co. 2:12; 1 Co. 2:13; 1 Co. 2:14; 1 Co. 3:16; 1 Co. 4:21; 1 Co. 5:3; 1 Co. 5:4; 1 Co. 5:5; 1 Co. 6:11; 1 Co. 6:17; 1 Co. 6:19; 1 Co. 7:34; 1 Co. 7:40; 1 Co. 12:3; 1 Co. 12:4; 1 Co. 12:7; 1 Co. 12:8; 1 Co. 12:9; 1 Co. 12:10; 1 Co. 12:11; 1 Co. 12:13; 1 Co. 14:2; 1 Co. 14:12; 1 Co. 14:14; 1 Co. 14:15; 1 Co. 14:16; 1 Co. 14:32; 1 Co. 15:45; 1 Co. 16:18; 2 Co. 1:22; 2 Co. 2:13; 2 Co. 3:3; 2 Co. 3:6; 2 Co. 3:8; 2 Co. 3:17; 2 Co. 3:18; 2 Co. 4:13; 2 Co. 5:5; 2 Co. 6:6; 2 Co. 7:1; 2 Co. 7:13; 2 Co. 11:4; 2 Co. 12:18; 2 Co. 13:14; Gal. 3:2; Gal. 3:3; Gal. 3:5; Gal. 3:14; Gal. 4:6; Gal. 4:29; Gal. 5:5; Gal. 5:16; Gal. 5:17; Gal. 5:18; Gal. 5:22; Gal. 5:25; Gal. 6:1; Gal. 6:8; Gal. 6:18; Eph. 1:13; Eph. 1:17; Eph. 2:2; Eph. 2:18; Eph. 2:22; Eph. 3:5; Eph. 3:16; Eph. 4:3; Eph. 4:4; Eph. 4:23; Eph. 4:30; Eph. 5:18; Eph. 6:17; Eph. 6:18; Phil. 1:19; Phil. 1:27; Phil. 2:1; Phil. 3:3; Phil. 4:23; Col. 1:8; Col. 2:5; 1 Thess. 1:5; 1 Thess. 1:6; 1 Thess. 4:8; 1 Thess. 5:19; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:2; 2 Thess. 2:8; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Tim. 3:16; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 1:7; 2 Tim. 1:14; 2 Tim. 4:22; Tit. 3:5; Phlm. 1:25;

Heb. 1:7; Heb. 1:14; Heb. 2:4; Heb. 3:7; Heb. 4:12; Heb. 6:4; Heb. 9:8; Heb. 9:14; Heb. 10:15; Heb. 10:29; Heb. 12:9; Heb. 12:23; Jas. 2:26; Jas. 4:5; 1 Pet. 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:11; 1 Pet. 1:12; 1 Pet. 3:4; 1 Pet. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:19; 1 Pet. 4:6; 1 Pet. 4:14; 2 Pet. 1:21; 1 Jn. 3:24; 1 Jn. 4:1; 1 Jn. 4:2; 1 Jn. 4:3; 1 Jn. 4:6; 1 Jn. 4:13; 1 Jn. 5:6; 1 Jn. 5:8; Jude 1:19; Jude 1:20;

Rev. 1:4; Rev. 1:10; Rev. 2:7; Rev. 2:11; Rev. 2:17; Rev. 2:29; Rev. 3:1; Rev. 3:6; Rev. 3:13; Rev. 3:22; Rev. 4:2; Rev. 4:5; Rev. 5:6; Rev. 11:11; Rev. 13:15; Rev. 14:13; Rev. 16:13; Rev. 16:14; Rev. 17:3; Rev. 18:2; Rev. 19:10; Rev. 21:10; Rev. 22:6; Rev. 22:17

**Pneuma in the Septuagint** - Gen. 1:2; Gen. 6:3; Gen. 6:17; Gen. 7:15; Gen. 8:1; Gen. 41:38; Gen. 45:27; Exod. 15:8; Exod. 15:10; Exod. 28:3; Exod. 31:3; Exod. 35:31; Num. 5:14; Num. 5:30; Num. 11:17; Num. 11:25; Num. 11:26; Num. 11:29; Num. 11:31; Num. 14:24; Num. 16:22; Num. 23:7; Num. 24:2; Num. 27:16; Num. 27:18; Deut. 2:30; Deut. 34:9; Jos. 2:11; Jdg. 3:10; Jdg. 6:34; Jdg. 8:3; Jdg. 9:23; Jdg. 11:29; Jdg. 13:25; Jdg. 14:6; Jdg. 14:19; Jdg. 15:14; Jdg. 15:19; 1 Sam. 10:6; 1 Sam. 10:10; 1 Sam. 11:6; 1 Sam. 16:13; 1 Sam. 16:14; 1 Sam. 16:15; 1 Sam. 16:16; 1 Sam. 16:23; 1 Sam. 19:9; 1 Sam. 19:20; 1 Sam. 19:23; 1 Sam. 30:12; 2 Sam. 13:21; 2 Sam. 13:39; 2 Sam. 22:16; 2 Sam. 23:2; 1 Ki. 17:17; 1 Ki. 18:12; 1 Ki. 18:45; 1 Ki. 19:11; 1 Ki. 21:4; 1 Ki. 21:5; 1 Ki. 22:21; 1 Ki. 22:22; 1 Ki. 22:23; 1 Ki. 22:24; 2 Ki. 2:9; 2 Ki. 2:15; 2 Ki. 2:16; 2 Ki. 3:17; 2 Ki. 19:7; 1 Chr. 5:26; 1 Chr. 12:18; 1 Chr. 28:12; 2 Chr. 15:1; 2 Chr. 18:20; 2 Chr. 18:21; 2 Chr. 18:22; 2 Chr. 18:23; 2 Chr. 20:14; 2 Chr. 24:20; 2 Chr. 36:22; Ezr. 1:1; Ezr. 1:5; Neh. 9:20; Neh. 9:30; Est. 5:1; Est. 8:12; Job 1:19; Job 4:9; Job 4:15; Job 7:7; Job 7:15; Job 8:2; Job 10:12; Job 12:10; Job 13:25; Job 15:2; Job 16:3; Job 17:1; Job 20:3; Job 27:3; Job 30:15; Job 32:8; Job 32:18; Job 33:4; Job 34:14; Job 41:16; Ps. 11:6; Ps. 18:15; Ps. 31:5; Ps. 33:6; Ps. 34:18; Ps. 48:7; Ps. 51:10; Ps. 51:11; Ps. 51:12; Ps. 51:17; Ps. 76:11; Ps. 77:3; Ps. 77:6; Ps. 78:8; Ps. 78:39; Ps. 103:16; Ps. 104:4; Ps. 104:29; Ps. 104:30; Ps. 106:33; Ps. 107:25; Ps. 119:131; Ps. 135:17; Ps. 139:7; Ps. 142:3; Ps. 143:4; Ps. 143:7; Ps. 143:10; Ps. 146:4; Ps. 147:18; Ps. 148:8; Prov. 15:4; Eccl. 1:6; Eccl. 1:14; Eccl. 1:17; Eccl. 2:11; Eccl. 2:17; Eccl. 2:26; Eccl. 3:19; Eccl. 3:21; Eccl. 4:4; Eccl. 4:6; Eccl. 4:16; Eccl. 6:9; Eccl. 7:8; Eccl. 7:9; Eccl. 8:8; Eccl. 10:4; Eccl. 11:5; Eccl. 12:7; Isa. 4:4; Isa. 7:2; Isa. 11:2; Isa. 11:3; Isa. 11:4; Isa. 11:15; Isa. 19:3; Isa. 19:14; Isa. 25:4; Isa. 26:9; Isa. 26:18; Isa. 27:8; Isa. 28:6; Isa. 29:10; Isa. 29:24; Isa. 30:1; Isa. 30:28; Isa. 32:15; Isa. 33:11; Isa. 34:16; Isa. 37:7; Isa. 38:12; Isa. 42:1; Isa. 42:5; Isa. 44:3; Isa. 48:16; Isa. 57:16; Isa. 59:21; Isa. 61:1; Isa. 61:3; Isa. 63:10; Isa. 63:11; Isa. 63:14; Isa. 65:14; Jer. 4:11; Jer. 4:12; Jer. 10:14; Jer. 49:32; Jer. 51:11; Jer. 51:17; Lam. 4:20; Ezek. 1:4; Ezek. 1:12; Ezek. 1:20; Ezek. 1:21; Ezek. 2:2; Ezek. 3:12; Ezek. 3:14; Ezek. 3:24; Ezek. 5:2; Ezek. 8:3; Ezek. 10:17; Ezek. 11:1; Ezek. 11:5; Ezek. 11:19; Ezek. 11:24; Ezek. 13:11; Ezek. 18:31; Ezek. 20:31; Ezek. 21:7; Ezek. 27:26; Ezek. 36:26; Ezek. 36:27; Ezek. 37:1; Ezek. 37:5; Ezek. 37:6; Ezek. 37:8; Ezek. 37:9; Ezek. 37:10; Ezek. 37:14; Ezek. 43:5; Dan. 2:1; Dan. 2:3; Dan. 2:35; Dan. 4:8; Dan. 4:9; Dan. 4:18; Dan. 5:4; Dan. 5:11; Dan. 5:12; Dan. 5:14; Dan. 5:20; Dan. 5:23; Dan. 6:3; Dan. 7:15; Dan. 10:8; Dan. 10:17; Hos. 4:12; Hos. 4:19; Hos. 5:4; Hos. 12:1; Joel 2:28; Joel 2:29; Amos 4:13; Jon. 1:4; Jon. 4:8; Mic. 2:7; Mic. 2:11; Mic. 3:8; Hab. 1:11; Hab. 2:19; Hag. 1:14; Hag. 2:5; Zech. 1:6; Zech. 4:6; Zech. 5:9; Zech. 7:12; Zech. 12:1; Zech. 12:10; Zech. 13:2; Mal. 2:15; Mal. 2:16;

**1 Corinthians 2:5 so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.**

Wuest - in order that your faith should not be resting in human philosophy but in God's power. ([Eerdmans](#))

[Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Amplified - So that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men (human philosophy), but in the power of God

Phillips - Plainly God's purpose was that your faith should not rest upon man's cleverness but upon the power of God.

NET 1 Corinthians 2:5 so that your faith would not be based on human wisdom but on the power of God.

NLT 1 Corinthians 2:5 I did this so you would trust not in human wisdom but in the power of God.

ESV 1 Corinthians 2:5 so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

NIV 1 Corinthians 2:5 so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

GNT 1 Corinthians 2:5 να πιστις μη εν σοφια ανθρωπων αλλ εν δυναμει θεου .

KJV 1 Corinthians 2:5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

YLT 1 Corinthians 2:5 that your faith may not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

ASV 1 Corinthians 2:5 that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

CSB 1 Corinthians 2:5 so that your faith might not be based on men's wisdom but on God's power.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 2:5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

NRS 1 Corinthians 2:5 so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

NAB 1 Corinthians 2:5 so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

NJB 1 Corinthians 2:5 so that your faith should depend not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

GWN 1 Corinthians 2:5 so that your faith would not be based on human wisdom but on God's power.

BBE 1 Corinthians 2:5 So that your faith might be based not on man's wisdom but on the power of God.

- but: 1Co 1:17 3:6 Ac 16:14 2Co 4:7 6:7
- [1 Corinthians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Matthew 16:15-17 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father Who is in heaven (POWER OF GOD).

### PAUL'S SOLE/SOUL PURPOSE DIVINELY STRENGTHENED FAITH

**So that** - Term of purpose. This is Paul's motive. The purpose of Paul relying on God's supernatural power (of Christ crucified) for speaking, not his natural power (of speech) or the common rhetorical practices of secular speakers was to assure that the results might be all of God, solely and wholly the result of His supernatural power.

**Your faith (pistis) would not rest on the wisdom (sophia) of men** (man's cleverness - 1 Cor 1:17+) - **Rest on** conveys the idea of "depend on," "based on," Paul does not want their faith in Jesus to depend on his eloquence, on his human wisdom for the latter offers no insight/revelation into the eternal transcendent truths of God's way of salvation. The firm foundation for their faith was to rest on the proclamation of a crucified Christ. Recall that the saints in Corinth had fallen into the seductive snare of following their favorite teacher (1 Cor 1:12+), but this passage should discourage such a practice for no man has the wisdom of God or the power of God.

"It is possible for arguments to be logically irrefutable, yet totally unconvincing."

-- Leon Morris

**Hodge** - It might have been easy for him to argue the Corinthians into a conviction of the truth of the Gospel by appealing to its superiority to pagan beliefs and to evidences of its divine origin afforded by prophecy and miracles. He might have exhibited the folly of idolatry and the absurdity of pagan rites and ceremonies and convinced them of the historical truth of Christianity. The conviction thus produced would be rational and important; but it would not be saving faith. Faith founded on such evidence is merely speculative.

**But** - Term of contrast. The contrast is between the natural and the supernatural. Between man's wisdom and God's wisdom. Human reason is true foolishness before God, but God's wisdom manifests supernatural power and is the only true foundation for a firm faith. This truth makes me think of some of Paul's very last written words to Timothy commanding him to "Preach the Word!" (see sermon I preached on this passage)

**Spurgeon** - If men believed because of the preacher's grand speech, their faith would be good for nothing. If one man can convert you, another can unconvert you. God's power is needed; no minister can give us faith.

**On the power ([dunamis](#)) of God** - This is ultimate foundation of any faith that is stable! Paul has previously described the **Word of the Cross** as the **power of God** (1 Cor 1:18+). In Romans 1:16+ Paul says "the gospel...is the **power ([dunamis](#)) of God** for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." The preaching of **Christ crucified** is "**the power ([dunamis](#)) of God and the wisdom ([sophia](#)) of God.**" (1 Cor 1:23-24+).

Phrase **power of God** - 14x in 13v - Job 27:11; Matt. 22:29; Mk. 12:24; Lk. 22:69; Acts 8:10; Rom. 1:16; 1 Co. 1:18; 1 Co. 1:24; 1 Co. 2:5; 2 Co. 6:7; 2 Co. 13:4; 2 Tim. 1:8; 1 Pet. 1:5

**Stevenson** on what is the **power of God** - The power of God is seen in the **cross**. "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** (1 Corinthians 1:18). "We preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, 24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the **power of God** and the wisdom of God. (1 Corinthians 1:23-24). The crucifixion of Christ is the ultimate manifestation of the power of God. It was there that sin was conquered. It was there that Satan was defeated. It was there that our redemption was obtained. ([The Simplicity of the Gospel](#))

**Pritchard** - This was Paul's strategy and it ought to be ours as well: Take the Word of God. Preach it accurately. Pray for the power of God to bless the Word of God. Trust God for changed lives as a result.

The Word of God, preached in the power of God, always results in lives changed by God.

-- Ray Pritchard

**Hodge** - That exercise of divine power, therefore, to which he refers as the ground of faith is the powerful working of the Spirit, bearing witness with and by the truth in our hearts. A faith that is founded on the authority of the church or on arguments addressed to the understanding or even on the moral power of the truth as it affects the natural conscience, such as Felix had, is unstable and inoperative. But a faith founded on the demonstration of the Spirit is abiding, works by love, and purifies the heart.

**THOUGHT** - I was guilty of "persuasive words" ("wisdom of men") one Saturday afternoon when I spoke with an atheist for 5 hours straight and finally "broke him down," so that he said "Okay, I believe in your Jesus." He even went to the Easter service with me the next day and cried during the service. Within 2 months he had a change of heart and was writing me hateful notes about the foolishness of the Cross and Bible. About 6 months later he joined a nudist colony! It was painful lesson for me that God did not need my persuasive words of wisdom, but only the profound word of the Cross. Don's "faith" had rested on my "wisdom" not God's power! I also think God was showing me my pride for thinking I had put another "[notch on my belt](#)" of saved souls! It was a lesson I have not forgotten some 20 years later, for as Jonah declared "Salvation is from the LORD." (Jonah 2:9) I wish I had understood 1 Corinthians 2:4!

As **Spurgeon** reminds us "The **power** that is in the Gospel does not lie in the eloquence of the preacher, otherwise men would be the converters of souls (OF WHICH I WAS GUILTY, ALBEIT A "FALSE CONVERSION"!), nor does it lie in the preacher's learning, otherwise it would consist in the wisdom of men. We might preach until our tongues rotted, till we would exhaust our lungs and die, but never a soul would be converted unless the Holy Spirit be with the Word of God to give it the power to convert the soul."

Phrase **power of God** - 14x in 13v in Bible - Job 27:11; Matt. 22:29; Mk. 12:24; Lk. 22:69; Acts 8:10; Rom. 1:16; 1 Co. 1:18; 1 Co. 1:24; 1 Co. 2:5; 2 Co. 6:7; 2 Co. 13:4; 2 Tim. 1:8; 1 Pet. 1:5

**Faith** ([4102](#))([pistis](#)) is synonymous with trust or belief and is the conviction of the truth of anything, but in Scripture usually speaks of belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it. Swindoll gives a practical description of **pistis** writing that **faith** "implies both knowledge and action. One may receive knowledge of a certain truth and may even offer verbal agreement, but "trust" or "confidence" is not said to be present until one's behavior reflects that truth." As **pistis** relates to God, it is the conviction that God exists and is the Creator and Ruler of all things well as the Provider and Bestower of eternal salvation through Christ. As faith relates to Christ it represents a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through Whom we obtain

eternal salvation and entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.

**Faith** is not believing in spite of evidence (that's superstition).

**Faith** is obeying in spite of circumstances and consequences.

**Wisdom** (4678) see above on [sophia](#)

**Power** (1411) see above on [dunamis](#)

**ILLUSTRATION of faith resting on the POWER OF GOD** - The renowned preacher **C H Spurgeon** once tested an auditorium in which he was to speak that evening. Stepping into the pulpit, he loudly proclaimed, "**Behold the lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world.**" (John 1:29+) Satisfied with the acoustics, he left and went his way. Unknown to him, there were two men working in the rafters of that large auditorium, neither one a Christian. One of the men was pricked in his conscience by the verse Spurgeon quoted and became a believer later that day! Such is the penetrating power of God's eternal word! Little wonder that Paul is so insistent on our "preaching of the Word" (2 Timothy 4:2+), specifically Christ crucified!

**Stevenson** gives a true **illustration** of the impact of faith not resting on the power of God - When I was a student in Bible College, there was a scandalous affair in which the president of the college left his wife and ran off with a young girl. As a result of this scandal, quite a number of the students were spiritually uprooted. To this day, there are people whose spiritual lives have been shipwrecked by that affair. This was a direct result of holding a man in an exalted position. Many of those students had based their faith on the persuasiveness of a man's preaching rather than on the power of God. ([The Simplicity of the Gospel](#)) (ED: As I write this in Feb, 2021, the evangelical world has been rocked by the revelation of long-term sexual perversion by Ravi Zacharias one of the most prominent names in Christianity in the last 20 years. And I know of some believers who have been severely shaken in their faith by this news, for they had placed their trust in this man and his teachings! UPSHOT? PLACE YOUR TRUST ONLY IN ONE MAN - JESUS CHRIST!)

#### Related Resources:

- [What does the Bible say about faith? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is a leap of faith? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How can you believe in salvation by faith alone when the only occurrence of 'faith alone' in the Bible \(James 2:24\) says that salvation is not by faith alone? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the biblical understanding of faith vs. works? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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**Krell** summarizes how can we be foolish preachers for Christ. Several biblical principles may help.

- Pray for a prepared heart. Ask the Lord that He would supply you opportunities to preach His Word. Pray for boldness to be willing to walk through an open door (Col 4:3). Pray that those you speak to will be receptive.
- Meditate on Scripture. As you read God's Word, ask the Lord to speak to you. Pray for insights into the text. Think about this Scripture continually. Follow a crock pot approach. Let the Word sit, soak, and simmer in you. This will ensure that you are always prepared (1 Pet 3:15).
- Listen to people. When we listen to people's hurts we can learn a lot. Often the felt needs of people will well up sermons within us. God will actually bring a Scripture passage to mind that we can share.
- Focus on the essentials. Don't get lost in the minutia of theological details. Instead, focus on the testimony of God and Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Paul says that the power is in the gospel. Make sure that you keep the main thing the main thing.
- This passage has communicated that the content and delivery of our message must be Christ and the power of His cross. God has called us to be "cross-eyed" preachers.

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**Philpot** - True faith I may call the *grand tidal wave* of the soul. I will endeavor to explain the expression. We see the river Thames day by day ebbing and flowing. What causes this change? You answer, "It is produced by the sea in the Channel alternately coming up and retiring." It is a true explanation. But what makes the sea of the Channel alternately come up and retire? There is what is called "a grand tidal wave" that comes across the Atlantic Ocean, which, as it ebbs and flows, affects all the minor tides of the neighboring seas; and thus the tide of the Channel, and that of the river Thames, ebb and flow in unison with this huge Atlantic wave.

In the same way faith is the tidal wave of the soul; and all the graces and fruits of the Spirit ebb and flow just as faith rises, or just as faith sinks. If faith rises in the soul, all the graces and fruits of the Spirit rise with it; light increases, life is deepened, the fear of God strengthened, hope brightened, and love augmented. And when this great tidal wave of faith falls in the soul, all the minor tides of the Spirit's graces fall in unison with it. Thus when faith recedes and becomes low in the soul, all the other graces of the Spirit sink

with it; consolation ebbs out altogether, hope recedes to a narrow streamlet, life dwindles to a scanty current, and love is reduced to a shallow channel. And as in the Thames we see, at low tide, the muddy banks which the stream has forsaken, so as faith sinks to a low ebb in the soul, there seems little else left but the mud and mire of corruption.

But what makes the grand tidal wave itself move? There is a cause for that also. It is drawn up by, and obeys the attraction of the sun. And is not this true spiritually of the grand tidal wave of faith in the soul? Is it not drawn up by the Sun of righteousness, as the natural sun draws up the wave of the ocean, and makes it ebb and flow? And when that glorious Sun ceases to draw up faith, does it not ebb and sensibly sink in the soul, as the natural sea sinks when the sun recedes from it?

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**Hodge summarizes the first 5 verses:**

**1. The proper method to convert people in any community, Christian or pagan, is to preach or set forth the truth concerning the person and work of Christ.** Whatever other means are used must be subordinate and auxiliary, designed to remove obstacles and to gain access for the truth to the mind, just as the ground is cleared of weeds and brambles in order to prepare it for the precious seed.

**2. The proper state of mind in which to preach the Gospel is the opposite of self-confidence or carelessness.** The Gospel should be preached with a sense of weakness and with great anxiety and solicitude.

**3. The foundation of saving faith is not reason;** that is, it is not arguments addressed to the understanding, but rather the power of God as exerted with and by the truth on the heart.

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## Distortion

Read: 1 Corinthians 2

Your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. —1 Corinthians 2:5

Cartographers (mapmakers) deal with the problem of distortion when they display the round shape of the earth on the flat surface of a map. Since there is no perfect way to do this, some world maps depict Greenland as larger than Australia.

Christians have to deal with the problem of distortion as well. When we try to understand the spiritual realm within the limitations of the physical world, we can end up exaggerating minor things and minimizing important things.

The New Testament often addresses the distortion that results when the ideas of popular teachers become more important to us than what God says. God's purpose, said the apostle Paul, is "love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith" (1 Tim. 1:5). Sound teaching does not distort God's Word or divide the church. Rather, it unites believers and builds up the body of Christ to care for one another and to do the work of God in the world (1 Cor. 12:25).

All human attempts to explain God are inadequate, and can even distort our priorities, confuse our thinking, and flatten our understanding of the spiritual life. To keep from distorting God's truth, we must rely on God's power rather than man's wisdom (1 Cor. 2:5). ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

This mortal life is far too brief,  
Eternity too vast,  
To follow human sophistries  
And lose the soul at last.  
—Clayburn

To detect error, expose it to the light of God's truth.

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**1 Corinthians 2:6 Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away;**

Wuest - There is a wisdom, however, which we are in the habit of speaking among those who are spiritually mature, but not a wisdom of this present age or even a wisdom of the rulers of this age who are in the process of being liquidated. ([Erdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Amplified - Yet when we are among the full-grown (spiritually mature Christians who are ripe in understanding),

we do impart a [higher] wisdom (the knowledge of the divine plan previously hidden); but it is indeed not a wisdom of this present age or of this world nor of the leaders and rulers of this age, who are being brought to nothing and are doomed to pass away.

Phillips - We do, of course, speak "wisdom" among those who are spiritually mature, but it is not what is called wisdom by this world, nor by the powers-that-be, who soon will be only the powers that have been.

NET 1 Corinthians 2:6 Now we do speak wisdom among the mature, but not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are perishing.

NLT 1 Corinthians 2:6 Yet when I am among mature believers, I do speak with words of wisdom, but not the kind of wisdom that belongs to this world or to the rulers of this world, who are soon forgotten.

ESV 1 Corinthians 2:6 Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away.

NIV 1 Corinthians 2:6 We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.

GNT 1 Corinthians 2:6 Σοφ αν δ λαλο μεν ν το ς τελε οις, σοφ αν δ ο το α νος το του ο δ τ ν ρχ ντων το α νος το του τ ν καταργουμ νων·

KJV 1 Corinthians 2:6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

YLT 1 Corinthians 2:6 And wisdom we speak among the perfect, and wisdom not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age -- of those becoming useless,

ASV 1 Corinthians 2:6 We speak wisdom, however, among them that are fullgrown: yet a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, who are coming to nought:

CSB 1 Corinthians 2:6 However, we do speak a wisdom among the mature, but not a wisdom of this age, or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 2:6 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.

NRS 1 Corinthians 2:6 Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish.

NAB 1 Corinthians 2:6 Yet we do speak a wisdom to those who are mature, but not a wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age who are passing away.

NJB 1 Corinthians 2:6 But still, to those who have reached maturity, we do talk of a wisdom, not, it is true, a philosophy of this age or of the rulers of this age, who will not last long now.

GWN 1 Corinthians 2:6 However, we do use wisdom to speak to those who are mature. It is a wisdom that doesn't belong to this world or to the rulers of this world who are in power today and gone tomorrow.

- **those:** 1Co 14:20 Job 1:1 Ps 37:37 Mt 5:48 19:21 2Co 13:11 Eph 4:11-13 Php 3:12-15 Col 4:12 Heb 5:14 Jas 3:2 1Pe 5:10
- **not:** 1Co 2:1,13 1:18,19 Lu 16:8 2Co 1:12 4:4 Eph 2:2 Jas 3:15
- **of the:** 1Co 2:8 Job 12:19,21 Ps 2:1-6 Isa 19:11-13 40:23 Ac 4:25-28
- **come:** 1Co 1:28 Ps 33:10
- [1 Corinthians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Colossians 1:28+ We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man **complete** ([teleios](#)) in Christ. 29 For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His **power** ([dunamis](#)) -- NOTE PAUL'S RELIANCE OF GOD'S POWER NOT HIS OWN) which mightily works within me.

Hebrews 5:14+ But solid food is for the **mature** ([teleios](#)), who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

1 Corinthians 14:20+ Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be **mature** ([teleios](#)).

James 1:4+ And let endurance have its **perfect** ([teleios](#)). result, so that you may be **perfect** ([teleios](#)) and complete, lacking in nothing.

**Yet we do speak** (are in the habit of speaking) **wisdom** ([sophia](#)) - Paul is saying while he did not preach relying on human wisdom, what he did preach was the wisdom of God which is "undiscoverable by human wisdom." (Hodge)

**Pritchard** has an helpful comment on **wisdom** - **Wisdom** comes from one of two places—God or the world. God's wisdom leads us in one direction; the world's wisdom leads us in another direction (Read . James 3 God's wisdom and the world's wisdom stand forever at odds with each other. You can have one or the other, but you can't have both at the same time. This principle explains so much that happens around us. It tells us why unbelievers think like they do, and it helps us understand why they sometimes ridicule what we believe. Put simply, they lack the true wisdom that comes from God. There are some things the world simply does not know

James affirms Pritchard's statement of **two sources of wisdom** writing - "Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of **wisdom**. 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. 15 This **wisdom is not that which comes down from above**, but is earthly, natural, demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. 17 But the **wisdom from above** is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. 18 And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." (James 3:13-18+)

**Hodge** - In 1 Cor 1:17–31 Paul had asserted the insufficiency of human wisdom, and in 1 Cor 2:1–5 he had said he was not a teacher of human wisdom. Was it to be inferred from this that he despised knowledge, that he was illiterate, or that he taught nonsense? Far from it; he taught the highest **wisdom**. It is plain from this whole discussion that by the wisdom of the world Paul means the knowledge of God and divine things that people derive from reason. It is also clear that what he says of the worthlessness of that knowledge has reference to it as a means of salvation. The objection urged against him was that he did not teach philosophy. His answer was that philosophy cannot save people. Whatever may be its value within its own sphere and for its own ends, it is worse than useless as a substitute for the Gospel. **He was not for banishing philosophy from the schools, but from the pulpit. Let the dead bury the dead; but do not let them pretend to impart life.**

**Arnold** - Paul does claim a wisdom for Christianity and it is the greatest wisdom of all. This is God's wisdom and it is contained in the gospel. The gospel, in its narrowest sense, refers to the truth about salvation. In a wider sense it refers to all of Christianity, a whole way of viewing life from a God-centered perspective. This wisdom, therefore, is a body of truth, explaining the way of salvation and all that is related to salvation. The gospel or the Cross is the key to understanding divine, spiritual wisdom. This is a wisdom which comes from God not man. The "we" probably refers to the Apostles who were given divine revelation from God and later penned this revelation for others.

**Among those who are mature** ([teleios](#))(full-grown spiritually mature Christians who are ripe in understanding) - In other words those who are not mature Christians cannot fully understand the real depths wisdom found in the Gospel. Not everyone interprets mature as referring to believers who are more "mature" in their faith.

**MacArthur** for example says "**Mature** ([teleios](#)) can mean "perfect" (KJV) or "complete," but can also refer to a person who has full membership in a group, one who is fully initiated. Here Paul uses this term in the same way it is used in other forms by the writer of Hebrews (6:1; 10:14) to refer to salvation. Those who are mature are those who are redeemed and are completely trusting in Jesus Christ. The apostle is not saying that he speaks God's wisdom only when he is with believers who are advanced in the faith, but only when he is among believers who are truly in the faith—the saved.

**Hodge** interprets those who are **mature** as "the people of God (believers) as distinguished from the people of the world (unbelievers); and by **wisdom**, not any higher doctrines, but the simple Gospel, which is the **wisdom of God** as distinguished from human wisdom." ([Click here and see Hodge's comment on verse 6 for his rationale](#) as to why he feels "**mature**" refers to believers as opposed to unbelievers and not just to more spiritually minded)

**Leon Morris** notes that while some (see below) "think that Paul is here contrasting simple Christians, who know the story of the cross, with the more 'mature' who go on to profound wisdom. But his words do not bear this out. He is developing the thought that the divine wisdom which brought about Christ's saving act in the cross is the real wisdom, and further, that this wisdom is in total opposition to the worldly wisdom so beloved in Corinth. (TNTC-1 Cor)

**Stevenson** on **mature** - Who does Paul speak of when he describes "the perfect"? It is the believer. The one who has trusted in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior has been perfected because he has been identified with the One who is perfect. ([The Wisdom of the Gospel](#))

**Schreiner** agrees with **Morris** - The wisdom disseminated, however, is limited to among the mature (tois teleiois). By the mature

Paul does not refer, as some have argued in the history of interpretation, to an elite group initiated into the deeper secrets of the Christian faith. All believers have access to the same truth and the same wisdom in the cross, and thus all those who are saved (1:18)—that is, those who are believers (1:21), called (1:24) and spiritual (2:13, 15)—are in view here. Lack of maturity exists when believers fail to live according to the wisdom granted to all believers. (TNTC-1 Cor)

**Arnold** interprets **mature** differently - the **mature** is a reference to those who are full grown, the competent, and must refer to those who are spiritually mature Christians. The wisdom Paul is talking about is potentially available to all Christians because all Christians have the Holy Spirit, but it is only understood and appreciated by those who are properly prepared to receive it; that is, **those Christians who have reached practical spiritual maturity**. Only those who are mature spiritually are able to grasp the deep things of God and enter into the highest type of wisdom. This statement about God's wisdom being grasped by the mature was a subtle slam by Paul at the Corinthian Christians who thought they were very mature because they had head knowledge and had mystical experiences but in reality they were babies in Christ. As babies, they were exalting leaders and were impressed with human wisdom which caused division in the local church. They were also running their individual lives and their local church on human wisdom, indicating they were baby Christians who never grew up.

**Swindoll** agrees with **Arnold** - Only the mature in Christ can possess this wisdom, which should give spiritual babes the incentive to grow. For the deeper we grow in the truth of God—taught not by human wisdom, but by the Spirit—the more wisdom we'll have to grow toward spiritual maturity (Heb. 5:14–6:1).

**Cornerstone Bible Commentary** on **mature** (**teleios**) - In Greek mystery religions, it (**teleios**) referred to people who had completed the initiation phase of their training. The NLT properly reflects that Paul intended to differentiate between novice believers and those who demonstrated mature conviction.

**Mark Taylor** on **mature** - The context clearly indicates that behavior is a primary issue and that the distinction Paul makes is between maturity and immaturity as 3:1–4 shows (see also 14:20). Others, however, make the case that "mature" is a term applicable to all believers, just as Paul speaks elsewhere of all Christians as "saints," "beloved," "elect," "called," and "faithful." The "mature" are those who love God (2:9) and those who have received the Spirit (2:12), who enables them to understand God's wisdom. The only wisdom Paul preaches is the wisdom of the cross, not more sophisticated instruction for a select group. It is the same wisdom for beginners and more advanced Christians, but the measure of this wisdom is one's grasp of the deep things of God embodied in the cross that manifests itself in behavior. (NAC-1 Cor)

**Robertson** on **those who are mature** - to the necessary difference in teaching for babes (1 Cor 3:1) and adults or grown men (common use of teleios] for relative perfection, for adults, as is in 1 Cor. 14:20; Phil. 3:15; Eph. 4:13; Heb. 5:14). Some were simply old babes and unable in spite of their years to digest solid spiritual food,

**W E Vine** - The word **teleios** literally signifies that which has attained its end; here, rendered "perfect," it denotes the full-grown, the mature, in contrast to the "babes" (3:1); it is so used in 14:20, "men," and in Ephesians 4:13, "fully grown"; Philippians 3:15; Hebrews 5:14. Such are described in 3:1 as "spiritual," though the terms are not synonymous. The "perfect," however, do not consist of a kind of caste outside of which are the immature; there is no direct analogy to the "initiates" of the pagan Greek "mysteries" (though there may be a slight reference to the existence of such); for the purpose of God is that no believer should remain in immaturity, with the spiritual faculties undeveloped; hindrances to the development (see, e.g., 3:3) should be removed. The apostle states it as his aim to "present every man perfect in Christ" (Col. 1:28). God has made full provision for the spiritual growth of His children in the Scriptures (1 Pet. 2:2).

**Mature** (5046) (**teleios** from **telos** = an end, a purpose, an aim, a goal) means complete, mature, fully developed, full grown, brought to its end, finished, wanting nothing necessary to completeness, in good working order. Uses 17x in NT - Matt. 5:48; Matt. 19:21; Rom. 12:2; 1 Co. 2:6; 1 Co. 13:10; 1 Co. 14:20; Eph. 4:13; Phil. 3:15; Col. 1:28; Col. 4:12; Heb. 5:14; Heb. 9:11; Jas. 1:4; Jas. 1:17; Jas. 1:25; Jas. 3:2; 1 Jn. 4:18

**A** (heavenly) **wisdom** (**sophia** - knowledge of the divine plan previously hidden) **however, not** (a wisdom) **of this age** (of the world) - Men foolishly speculate about earth being invaded by an advanced alien intelligence, and totally miss the "invasion" of this planet by the "other worldly" **wisdom** from God. This **wisdom** does not belong to the world and is not attained by the people of the world. This **wisdom** was here before the world came into existence. Heavenly **wisdom** found in the Gospel is a gift from God, for those who seek it (cf Isaiah 55:6-7) and ask for it in faith (cf James 1:5-8+, Hebrews 11:6+). In context this describes those who are **mature**.

**Krell** - The **wisdom** that Paul declares is "not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away." It is not like the wisdom that may come from Oprah, Dr. Phil, or influential political officials. The wisdom they utter is here today and gone tomorrow. However, God's wisdom is eternal. Isaiah the prophet said it best, "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever" (Isa 40:8). Since God's wisdom revealed through His Word is eternal, how can we not invest in it?

**Arnold** on **not** (a wisdom) **of this age** - God's wisdom is completely different from that wisdom which the world knows. The wisdom

of this age is merely human reasoning. The world has one basic philosophy with man at the center. This secular philosophy may take many forms -- eastern mysticism, humanism, transcendental meditation, New Age self-improvement, etc., but it is always man-centered. Even the great religions of the world, Mohammedanism Confucianism, Hinduism, etc., are man-centered because they teach man must do something to be saved. Every plan of salvation that is devised by man is a plan based on works; in contrast, Christianity is based on grace. God gives forgiveness to men on the basis of what Christ has done for them. Christianity is the only religion, the only plan of salvation, whereby man's forgiveness and acceptance before God is not based on human works, acts or motivations, but on the pure grace of a sovereign God.

**Nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away** ([katargeo](#) - who are being brought to nothing and are doomed to pass away; who are in the process of being liquidated) - NET has "who are perishing." NLT has "who are soon forgotten." NIV minces no words describing the **rulers of this age** as those 'who are coming to nothing.' (Woe!) The phrase **are passing away** recalls Paul's earlier words in 1 Cor 1:28 when he declared "the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that **He may nullify** ([katargeo](#)) **the things that are.**" **Rulers** is not just political but all who in this age, in the world's eyes, would take first place as men of influence whether by wisdom, birth or power. **Passing away** is in the present tense describing they and their wisdom **passing away** as already in process! "The gradual nullification of these "rulers" before the final and certain triumph of the power of Christ in his kingdom." (Robertson)

**CBC** - The **NLT** rendering ("not the kind of wisdom that belongs to this world or to the rulers of this world, who are soon forgotten.") draws out the implication of the gradual irrelevance of human rulers as generations succeed generations and certainly once this temporary age is over.

**MacArthur** - Paul is saying "all human wisdom is passing away. It is empty, futile, and comes to naught." (**ED**: BELOVED, DOES THIS TEMPORAL FATE OF MAN'S WISDOM NOT MAKE YOU WANT TO FOCUS ON BECOMING WISE WITH THE ONLY WISDOM THAT ENDURES ETERNALLY? AND THE BEST WAY IS BY READING THE BIBLE, INSTEAD OF READING THE LATEST BEST SELLERS, WATCHING THE MOST POPULAR MOVIES, ETC, ETC - SEE 1 Peter 1:25+ "THE WORD OF THE LORD **ENDURES FOREVER.**" And this is the word which was preached to you.;").

**Arnold on the rulers of this age** - This means more than just the unsaved officials of Paul's day (Jews and Romans) but must be expanded to the leaders of thought, the mind benders, the shapers of public opinion, the philosophers, sociologists, the politicians of any day. **These brilliant minds know nothing of God's wisdom.** They do not understand this body of truth and that is why all their proposals, schemes and plans never really solve anything in the long run. Without God at the center of man's thinking, the universe and life are a riddle, a maze and make no sense at all. We are the victims of a cosmic joke. This divine wisdom cannot be learned in the secular university. No philosopher speaking outside the Christian framework ever unfolds this truth. No psychologist or psychiatrist who is not instructed from the scripture knows anything about this divine wisdom. This truth can only be taught by Christians because it is spiritually understood.

**THOUGHT** - Most of us believers are not wise, not mighty, not noble (1 Cor 1:26-27+), and so we might often feel inadequate in the presence of the powerful people like Warren Buffett or the brilliant minds like Carl Sagan or Albert Einstein or Bertrand Russell. And perhaps we become a bit dejected that we were not given all these attributes in this present life. Oh, yes, we know that our rewards and blessings are coming in the future. But this verse should undergird our confidence and faith in the present because while our IQ or bank account may be no match for these brilliant, wealthy, aristocratic men and women of our world, we have something they cannot even begin to fathom. We have access to the wisdom of God, something priceless which they do not possess and could not purchase! Their lofty wisdom is already in the process of fading away, while our wisdom in Christ will endure in this life and the life to come. So be encouraged beloved by your "spiritual IQ", your "brilliance" regarding the wisdom of God, for you surpass all of the rulers of this age! John add that "The world is **passing away**, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever." (1 John 2:17)

**Vine** - "**The rulers of this world**" are those whose policy is occupied solely with the affairs of this present world-period, during which mankind is in the darkness of alienation from God, and under "the prince of this world."

Note on **rulers** - Beginning with Marcion and continuing to Origen (Conzelmann 1975:61), many early writers thought this word (archōn [758, 807]) referred to demons, evil spirits who command the arena of human activity. This is related to the view that ancients believed the lights in the sky were super-spirits who orchestrated world affairs (still persisting in astrological charts today). Although Paul did use this word in the singular to refer to Satan, in line with other NT authors (Eph 2:2; cf. Matt 9:34; 12:24; John 14:30; 16:11), in this context the meaning is almost certainly human rulers since its repetition in 2:8 clearly refers to those governing bodies and individuals who presided over Jesus' crucifixion (Cornerstone Bible Commentary)

**Wisdom** ([4678](#)) see above on [sophia](#)

**Passing away** (Bringing to end, doing away with, nullifying) (2673)(**katargeo** from **kata** = intensifies meaning + **argeo** = to be idle or inactive from **argos** = ineffective, idle, inactive from **a** = without + **érgon** = work) literally means to reduce to inactivity. The idea is to make the power or force of something ineffective and so to render powerless, reduced to inactivity, done away with, put out of use, causing them to be useless and ineffective. The wisdom of rulers will come to an end. The word often portrays things that are destroyed, as in 1 Cor 15:24, 26.

**Katargeo** in the letters to Corinth - 1 Co. 1:28; 1 Co. 2:6; 1 Co. 6:13; 1 Co. 13:8; 1 Co. 13:10; 1 Co. 13:11; 1 Co. 15:24; 1 Co. 15:26; 2 Co. 3:7; 2 Co. 3:11; 2 Co. 3:13; 2 Co. 3:14.

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## THE WISDOM OF THIS AGE -

- Philosophy admires the Life of Jesus, but would pass over the Death of Jesus.
- Philosophy believes in the Example of Jesus, but turn from the Redemption of Jesus.
- Philosophy doesn't object to the Cradle of Jesus, but it Vigorously opposes to the Cross of Jesus.

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## 1 Corinthians 2:7 but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory;

Wuest - But we speak God's wisdom in the form of a mystery long hidden but now revealed and understandable, that wisdom which has been kept secret which God foreordained before the ages with a view to our glory, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Amplified - But rather what we are setting forth is a wisdom of God once hidden [from the human understanding] and now revealed to us by God—[that wisdom] which God devised and decreed before the ages for our glorification [to lift us into the glory of His presence].

Phillips - The wisdom we speak of is that mysterious secret wisdom of God which he planned before the creation for our glory today.

NET 1 Corinthians 2:7 Instead we speak the wisdom of God, hidden in a mystery, that God determined before the ages for our glory.

NLT 1 Corinthians 2:7 No, the wisdom we speak of is the mystery of God-- his plan that was previously hidden, even though he made it for our ultimate glory before the world began.

ESV 1 Corinthians 2:7 But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.

NIV 1 Corinthians 2:7 No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.

GNT 1 Corinthians 2:7 ἢ λαλοῦμεν θεοσοφίαν ἡμυστήριον τὴν προκεκρυμμένην, ἣν προορίσεν θεὸς πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων ἐξ ὅθεν μὲν·

KJV 1 Corinthians 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

YLT 1 Corinthians 2:7 but we speak the hidden wisdom of God in a secret, that God foreordained before the ages to our glory,

ASV 1 Corinthians 2:7 but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory:

CSB 1 Corinthians 2:7 On the contrary, we speak God's hidden wisdom in a mystery, a wisdom God predestined before the ages for our glory.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,

NRS 1 Corinthians 2:7 But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.

NAB 1 Corinthians 2:7 Rather, we speak God's wisdom, mysterious, hidden, which God predetermined before

the ages for our glory,

NJB 1 Corinthians 2:7 It is of the mysterious wisdom of God that we talk, the wisdom that was hidden, which God predestined to be for our glory before the ages began.

GWN 1 Corinthians 2:7 We speak about the mystery of God's wisdom. It is a wisdom that has been hidden, which God had planned for our glory before the world began.

- **hidden wisdom:** Ps 78:2 Isa 48:6,7 Mt 11:25 13:35 Ro 16:25,26 Eph 1:4 3:4-9 Col 1:26,27 2Ti 1:9 1Pe 1:11 Rev 13:8
- **to our glory:** Romans 5:2, 1Pe 5:1,10 2Pe 1:3
- [1 Corinthians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **GOD'S WISDOM A MYSTERY HIDDEN BUT PREDESTINED**

**But** - Term of contrast. Paul has said what wisdom is not and now explains four things that this wisdom is = (1) God's (2) A mystery (3) Hidden (4) Predestined. As **Hodge** says God wisdom "is the revelation of the counsels of eternity in connection with human redemption."

Note Paul teaches four things about wisdom in this passage - It is God's wisdom. It is a mystery. It has been hidden. It has been predestined.

**We** (present tense - continually) **speak God's wisdom** ([sophia](#)) **in a mystery** ([mysterion](#) - long hidden but now revealed and understandable) - **God's wisdom** in contrast to the wisdom of man, the wisdom of this age. Paul uses the word **mystery** of truth that was formerly concealed but is now revealed by the Spirit to all who have eyes to see and ears to hear. **Mystery** as used in the NT not mean something full of suspense with a surprise ending (however in a sense there *will be a "surprise ending"* for all who fail to understand God's mystery during this short life!).

**Robertson** on the superiority of **God's wisdom** - Every age of the world has a conceit of its own and it is particularly true of this twentieth century, but God's wisdom is eternal and superior to the wisdom of any age or time. God's wisdom is alone absolute.

Later Paul uses **mystery** declaring "Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the **mysteries** of God (ALL THE TRUTH ENTRUSTED TO PAUL, BUT ESPECIALLY THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL)." (1 Cor 4:1+)

**Stevenson** has an interesting comment on [mystery religions](#) in the ancient world "When you were initiated into the cult, you were given the secret knowledge of the cult. In so doing, you became initiated into its mysteries. These mysteries were kept from the outsider. They were only for the initiated. Christianity is like that. You cannot stand on the outside and look in and understand its truths. It is only when you have come to Christ in faith and have been "initiated" into the family of God that you can begin to understand the glorious wisdom of the cross. ([The Wisdom of the Gospel](#))

**Wisdom** ([4678](#)) see above on [sophia](#)

**Mystery** ([3466](#))([mysterion](#) from **mustes** = one initiated [as into the [Greco-Roman "mystery" religions](#)] from **mueo** = to close or shut) in the NT is a truth never previously known, a truth which human intellect could never discover, but one which has now been made known by divine revelation. In Paul's day **mysterion** was a technical term utilized by the "mystery religions" which referred to a secrets concealed by strange customs and ceremonies and confided only to those initiated into the "mystery cult". **Mysterion** embraced ideas such as "a secret rite," "secret teaching," and "a divine mystery which is beyond human comprehension." The "mystery-religions" had their secrets and signs just as seen in modern secret societies. Those initiated into these pagan cults, knew these secret signs. Uses of **mysterion** in letters to Corinth - 1 Co. 2:7; 1 Co. 4:1; 1 Co. 13:2; 1 Co. 14:2; 1 Co. 15:51.

**The hidden** ([apokrupto](#) in perfect tense - which has been kept secret) **wisdom** ([sophia](#)) - This wisdom was **hidden** in the sense that it was not revealed to a natural (unregenerate) man's understanding (see Ro 16:25+; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3:5). "This word (**hidden**) always means something that people must be *initiated* into—something undiscoverable by human reason." (Hodge) Was this wisdom of God available before the Cross, in the Old Testament? Of course it was for God wanted none to perish but for all fallen men to come to repentance (2 Pe 3:9+). In fact we see this wisdom from the very outset when Adam sin and spiritually died, God in what is known as the [protevangelium](#) declared "I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel." (Ge 3:15+)

**Hidden** ([613](#))([apokrupto](#) form **apó** = from, away + **krupto** = hide, conceal by covering) means to hide away from the common gaze, and therefore secret. **Apokrupto** is used by Paul here (and 1Cor 2:7, Col 1:26) in a

figurative sense to describe knowledge that cannot be known except through divine revelation. It is used in secular Greek writings of a "hidden trade (craft or skill)". Lk. 10:21; 1 Co. 2:7; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:26

**Arnold** - God's wisdom is the Cross and the plans and purposes of God--the deep things of God. This wisdom is a "secret" or "mystery." A mystery is not something insolvable but a secret which man cannot penetrate by his own reasoning processes. A mystery is a secret that can only be known as God reveals it and makes it known. God's wisdom is revelation from Himself, and man must be aided by God if He is going to understand it. A wisdom that has been hidden. God's wisdom has been and still is hidden from the world. The worldling cannot understand the gospel unless God works upon him to do so. God's wisdom is understood spiritually by faith and not by any human reasoning. The gospel is so profound; it is so subtle, so mysterious; it so surpasses the most exalted creations of human wisdom that it cannot be understood or appreciated by men unless they are aided by the Spirit of God.

**Cornerstone Bible Commentary** has an interesting note that "Paul's discussion (**hidden wisdom**) elaborates on incisive comments Jesus makes in Mt 11:25–26+ and Luke 10:21–22+.

**Which** (His heavenly wisdom in the Gospel) **God predestined** (which God devised and decreed) **before the ages to our glory** (for our glorification) - **NIV** = "God destined for our glory before time began." The cross was not a last minute idea, a divine afterthought, but was included in God's before the world was created. So in eternity past God determined to reveal the plan of salvation in His wisdom, the Gospel. Paul speaks of this in his last letter writing to Timothy explaining that God "has **saved us** and **called us** with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus **from all eternity** (NET = "**before time began**")." (2Ti 1:9+)

**Arnold on predestined** - Salvation, brought to a believing sinner through the gospel by faith in Jesus Christ was no afterthought in the mind of God. It was a plan set in motion before the world ever began. In the eternal counsels, salvation was pre-planned by God Himself. In eternity past, all three members of the Godhead covenanted together to save sinners through Jesus Christ on the basis of faith. God the Father covenanted with the Son and the Holy Spirit to elect a people to be saved; therefore the Father is the **Originator** of salvation. God the Son covenanted with the Father and the Holy Spirit to redeem to Himself through His own sacrifice those that the Father elected and gave to the Son; therefore, the Son is the **Executor** of salvation. God the Holy Spirit covenanted with the Father and the Son to come to this earth and apply the death of Christ to the elect by faith, awakening the hearts of people and bringing them the knowledge of Christ through the new birth so they would become the children of God; therefore the Holy Spirit became the **Applier** of salvation. The plan of the Godhead to save people is called in the Bible "the eternal covenant." "Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord," (Heb. 13:20+). Theologically this is called the Covenant of Redemption. (See **Dr S Lewis Johnson's** discussion of [The Mysterious Counsel Chamber, or the Covenant of Redemption](#))

**To our glory** speaks of **glory** that believers can experience and manifest even now in this present age as we partake of His Word of Truth and the Spirit transforms us from glory to glory (2 Cor 3:18+). However more likely **to our glory** speaks of the blessed promise of our future glorification, for example as described by John who writes "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, **we will be like Him** ([Our eternal glorification](#)), because we will see Him just as He is." (1 Jn 3:2+)

**Arnold on to our glory** - The salvation the Trinity planned in eternity was not only for the glory of God but also for our glory. This includes both our future glorification when we shall be sinless and our daily glorification as we are being changed progressively into Christ's likeness. "And we... are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (II Cor. 3:18). The gospel was designed to make men and women become what God originally created people to be. The Westminster Shorter Catechism says, "The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." Christ somehow fulfills our humanity that has been marred by sin. Salvation was designed for the saint's glory and happiness. The gospel which is God's wisdom is designed to produce beautiful, godly, holy people, not only outwardly but inwardly as well—loving, compassionate, strong and yet merciful and tenderhearted people who are filled with grace, beauty and strength.

**Hodge on our glory** - The word "**glory**" is often used for all the benefits of salvation. It includes all the excellence and blessedness that Christ has secured for his people (see Romans 5:2+ = "we exult in hope of the glory of God" = our future glorification). The idea that the scheme of redemption that the apostle here calls God's secret wisdom was formed in the divine mind from eternity, far out of the reach of human penetration, and has under the Gospel been made known for our salvation is one often presented by the apostle (see Romans 16:25-26+; Ephesians 3:9+).

**Predestined** (4309) (**proorizo** from **pró** = before + **horizo** = to determine, as by a boundary or limit in turn from **horos** = boundary, limit <> Source of our English word "*horizon*" = God's boundary between heaven and earth) literally means to mark out beforehand or set the the limits or boundaries in advance of any place or thing. Though **proorizo** meant simply to plan in advance, in the New Testament it conveys the idea id a divine

decree of God, whereby He determined in advance that something should happen. Used 6x in the NT - Acts 4:28; Ro 8:29; Ro 8:30; 1 Co. 2:7; Eph. 1:5; Eph. 1:11

**Glory** (1391)(**doxa** from **dokeo** = to think) in simple terms means to give a proper opinion or estimate of something. Glory is something that is a source of honor, fame, or admiration. It describes renown, a thing that is beautiful, impressive, or worthy of praise. Doxa in the Corinthian letters - 1 Co. 2:7; 1 Co. 2:8; 1 Co. 10:31; 1 Co. 11:7; 1 Co. 11:15; 1 Co. 15:40; 1 Co. 15:41; 1 Co. 15:43; 2 Co. 1:20; 2 Co. 3:7; 2 Co. 3:8; 2 Co. 3:9; 2 Co. 3:10; 2 Co. 3:11; 2 Co. 3:18; 2 Co. 4:4; 2 Co. 4:6; 2 Co. 4:15; 2 Co. 4:17; 2 Co. 6:8; 2 Co. 8:19; 2 Co. 8:23

#### Related Resources:

- [What is the mystery of God referred to in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the mystery of godliness? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What were the mystery religions? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What does the Bible say about predestination vs. free will? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is predestination? Is predestination biblical? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How are predestination and election connected with foreknowledge? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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**Octavius Winslow** on 1 Corinthians 2:7 - There is much of deep mystery in revelation. God, considered both in Himself and in His operations, is a mystery stretching far beyond the most sublime power of finite reason. "Can you by searching find out God? can you find out the Almighty unto perfection?" and of His operations may we not exclaim with the inspired penman, "Lo! these are parts of His ways; but how little a portion is heard of Him!" Christ, too, is the great "mystery of godliness." Whether His complex person is regarded—the union of the Divine and human natures in one—or whether we look at His work—His obedience and death constituting a full atonement to Divine justice in behalf of the sins of His people—it must be acknowledged a depth too profound for human thought adequately to fathom. What can poor finite reason accomplish here? What beams can its feeble, flickering light cast upon this world of mystery? And if ever it stands forth invested in its own native impotence, it is when it sits in judgment upon the doctrines and facts of revelation, discarding or retaining such only as are intelligible to its dwarfish capacity. "Which things," says the apostle, "the angels desire to look into." Mark his expressions! He represented not these celestial beings of purity and intellect as scaling the heights and diving into the depths of redemption's mystery, but "which things the angels desire"—scarcely dare—but "desire to look into." And yet for a fallen and unrenewed mind to sit in judgment upon God's truth can only be exceeded in its temerity by the depravity which prompts it.

If the truth of God, in its doctrines and facts, is a mystery incomprehensible to unrenewed reason, what shall we say of the truth as experienced in the heart? If reason cannot understand the vast framework of truth, how can it comprehend the secret power by which it operates? The very fact, that to be understood it must be experienced, accounts for the difficulty. The transforming operation of the Holy Spirit upon the mind—giving it a new bias, new inclinations, turning its darkness into light, and kindling its enmity into love; the life of God in the soul, creating the man anew in Christ Jesus—that life which is hidden, ever productive of a holy life that is seen—its hopes and its fears, its defeats and its triumphs—the causes which operate to deaden it, and the spiritual nourishment by which it is supported—all, all is incomprehensible to human reason. Truly "the world knows us not."

The cause of this incapacity of reason, in its natural state, to comprehend spiritual and experimental truth is its corruption and perversion by sin. Sin has impaired our mental faculties—enslaved, clouded, and debased our reason. We open God's word, and it declares that since the fall the nature of man has been corrupt, and his reason blind; his understanding darkened, and his heart, the seat of his affections, polluted: "having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." The natural man, while in that state, so far from being able to explore the wide domain of spiritual truth, hates and flees from it when proposed to his consideration, "receiving not the things of the Spirit of God, they being foolishness unto him." This being the state of man, God's word consequently declares it necessary that, before spiritual truth can be understood, he should be "transformed by the renewing of his mind;" that he should be restored to that sound mind, and enlightened understanding, and spiritual discernment, with which his nature was endowed when it came originally from the hand of God; in a word, that he should be born again, created anew in Christ Jesus; that old things should pass away, and that all things should become new. Then, and then only, will he be able to understand the "truth of God in a mystery."

**1 Corinthians 2:8 [the wisdom] which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;**

Wuest - which wisdom not one of the rulers of this age has known in an experiential way, for had they known it, in that case they would not have crucified the Lord of the glory. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Amplified - None of the rulers of this age or world perceived and recognized and understood this, for if they had, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory.

Phillips - None of the powers of this world have known this wisdom - if they had they would never have crucified the Lord of glory!

NLT 1 Corinthians 2:8 But the rulers of this world have not understood it; if they had, they would not have crucified our glorious Lord.

ESV 1 Corinthians 2:8 None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

NIV 1 Corinthians 2:8 None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

GNT 1 Corinthians 2:8 ἡ οὐδὲς τῶν πρυτῶν τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ γινώσκοντος, εἰ γὰρ γινώσκοντες, οὐκ ἔτι τὸν κύριον τῆς δόξης σταύρωσαν.

KJV 1 Corinthians 2:8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

YLT 1 Corinthians 2:8 which no one of the rulers of this age did know, for if they had known, the Lord of the glory they would not have crucified;

ASV 1 Corinthians 2:8 which none of the rulers of this world hath known: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory:

CSB 1 Corinthians 2:8 None of the rulers of this age knew this wisdom, for if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 2:8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

NRS 1 Corinthians 2:8 None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

NAB 1 Corinthians 2:8 and which none of the rulers of this age knew; for if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

NJB 1 Corinthians 2:8 None of the rulers of the age recognised it; for if they had recognised it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;

GWN 1 Corinthians 2:8 Not one of the rulers of this world has known it. If they had, they wouldn't have crucified the Lord of glory.

- none: 1Co 2:6 1:26-28 Mt 11:25 Joh 7:48
- for: Lu 23:34 Joh 3:19-21 8:19 9:39-41 12:40-43 15:22-25 16:3 Ac 3:17 13:27 2Co 3:14 1Ti 1:13
- the Lord: Ps 24:7-10 Ac 3:16,17 7:2 Jas 2:1
- [1 Corinthians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GOD'S WISDOM IS NOT HUMANLY DISCOVERED

*The wisdom* (added by translators) **which none of the rulers of this age has understood** (known in an experiential way, "perceived and recognized and understood") - God's higher, heavenly wisdom (the truth about Him and His message for man) was a "mystery" to them. The point is that these **rulers** had no personal (experiential) knowledge. They knew the facts about Jesus, but they had no personal, intimate relationship with Him as the result of a proper processing of the facts. Facts about Jesus do not save. Only a personal relationship with Jesus saves. Many people (in America) know the *facts* about Jesus, but sadly I fear only a small percentage truly understand and remain spiritually dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1+).

**Understood...understood** (1097) ([ginosko](#)) refers to experiential knowledge, not merely the accumulation of known facts and has many shades of meaning in the NT, in this context meaning to comprehend, to come to know, to perceive. As ([Wuest](#)) paraphrases 1 Cor 2:8 the sense is "known in an experiential way." Louw-Nida

says that in 1 Cor 2:8 **ginosko** means "to come to an understanding as the result of ability to experience and learn." Of course the only way a sinner can come to that understanding is by the divine bestowal of beneficent grace.

**THOUGHT-** We should never be surprised at what the world says or does. They don't understand because they can't understand. They don't see because they can't see. They don't hear because they can't hear. They are truly lost, truly blind, truly deaf, truly dead—and they don't even know it. If you are among those who can see and hear and understand the truth, do not take any credit for it. Get down on your knees and thank God for opening your eyes. Thank God for rescuing you from the pit of despair. Thank God for turning your life around. Thank God for giving you eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart to understand his truth. And then pray like crazy for those who are blind and deaf and without understanding. Ask God to do for them what he has done for you. Speak up and tell them the truth because it is the truth that sets people free. Do not despair if they do not understand. There was a time when you did not understand either. (Pritchard)

**For if they had understood it they would not have crucified** - Stated another way, the crucifixion proved that the rulers did not understand who Jesus was, why He had come and what He accomplished on the Cross. One thinks of Pontius Pilate who asked "What is truth?" (Jn 18:38) not understanding that the Personification of Truth was standing directly in front of him at that very moment! Pilate did not know Who Jesus was. Had he truly known, he would not have given the order to crucify Him! This statement also describes the Jewish religious rulers (especially the hyper-religious Pharisees) who orchestrated the mock trial of Jesus and spurred the crowd to cry 'Crucify, crucify Him.'" (Lk 23:21+). Paul is saying that they crucified because of their spiritual ignorance. Peter uses this truth in his sermon in Acts 3:17+ "And now, brethren, I know that you acted in **ignorance** ([agnoia](#) ~ agnostic), just as your rulers did also."

### [Sweet little Jesus Boy,](#)

They made you be born in a manger.

Sweet little Holy Child,

We didn't know Who You was.

We didn't know you come to save us, Lord;

To take our sins away.

Our eyes was blind, and we could not see,

We didn't know Who You was.

**Hodge** points out "The fact that the rulers of this age were so blind as not to see that Christ was the Lord of glory, Paul cites as proof of their ignorance of God's wisdom. Had they known the one, they would have known the other.

**Arnold** - God's wisdom is so superior to man's wisdom that the rulers could not recognize it when they saw it. What they did was done in ignorance. This is why Christ said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Lk. 23:34+).

**MacArthur** - The crucifixion is proof that the rulers of this age did not have God's wisdom. Had they **understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory**. Neither the leaders of the Jews, to whom the gospel was a stumbling block, nor the leaders of the Gentiles, to whom it was foolishness, understood God's divine wisdom. In their ignorance of God, their willing ignorance, they executed His Son. Paul's own testimony demonstrates that ignorance (1 Tim. 1:12–13). That is the outcome of human wisdom. In the world's eyes, Jesus was anything but glorious

**The Lord of glory** - Only use of this description in the NT. The **Lord of glory** of course is Jesus Who was first given this great in Ps 24:10± "Who is this **King of glory**? The LORD of hosts, He is the **King of glory**. Selah." See also Acts 7:2+ ("The God of glory"); James 2:1; Ephesians 1:17).

**Robertson** says **Lord of glory** "means characterized by glory, "bringing out the contrast between the indignity of the Cross (Heb 12:2) and the majesty of the Victim (Luke 22:69; Lk 23:43)" (Robertson and Plummer). See Jas 2:1; Acts 7:2; Eph. 1:17; Heb. 9:5.

**HCSB** - The rulers of this age did not recognize Jesus as the Lord of glory. Their lack of recognition resulted in His crucifixion, and this in turn became the basis of the gospel. So paradoxically our acceptance was made possible by Christ's rejection.

**Crucified** ([4717](#)) see note above on [stauroo](#)

**Glory** ([1391](#)) ([doxa](#) from [dokeo](#) = to think) in simple terms means to give a proper opinion or estimate of something. **Glory** is something that is a source of honor, fame, or admiration. **Doxa** conveys ideas of weight (OT word for glory is [kabod](#) = "heavy"), worth, wealth, splendor, and dignity. The **glory** of God expresses all that He is in His Being and in His nature, character, power and acts. He is glorified when He is allowed to be

seen as He really is. To be where God is, is glory, which is every believer's reward! To be what God intended will be glory (cf 1 Jn 3:2+). To do what God purposed will be glory.

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**Ray Pritchard** has some practical words related to the statement that they **did not understand** - The world didn't understand Jesus when he walked on the earth, and the world still doesn't understand him today. That fact ought to give us patience when we talk to unbelievers. Sometimes when lost people say foolish things that are rude and unkind, we may be tempted to retaliate with unkind words of our own. That's almost always a bad idea. It's like cursing a blind man because he can't see the color green. The lost are not only lost; they are also spiritually blind. Consider the words of 2 Corinthians 4:4+, "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." Note three important facts from this verse: **(1)** It is the work of Satan to blind unbelievers to the truth of the gospel. He has a personal interest in keeping the lost blind and confused so they will continue to serve him. **(2)** This blindness occurs in the realm of the mind so that unbelievers remain confused about the truth of God. The blindness is mental, moral and intellectual. The light shines all around them, yet they stumble along in the darkness. **(3)** As a result of this moral blindness, unbelievers literally cannot "see" the truth of the gospel. That is why when a person says, "I just don't see what you're talking about," that's not an excuse, it's the literal truth. They don't see it because they can't see it because Satan has blinded their mind.

This helps us in several areas:

**First, it saves us from the folly of thinking we can argue people into the kingdom** We can't and it's generally a waste of time to try. (When I preached this on Sunday, I noticed quite a few people nodding in agreement.) The danger of arguing with unbelievers is that when our ego gets involved, we start to take things personally. We get red-faced, we raise our voice, we get angry, and we start to insult the other person, as if by being rude we can convince them that God really loves them.

**Second, this truth humbles us because it teaches us that salvation is entirely the work of God from beginning to end.** Yes, we are commanded to preach the gospel to the whole world, and we are to speak the truth in love and to tell the world that Jesus saves. But it is **not our words** that will save people. It is the power ([dunamis](#)) resident in the gospel itself (Ro 1:16+). Even though we sometimes talk about "*winning*" people to Christ, in the final analysis, **we don't win anyone**. We preach and pray and share and talk and discuss and answer questions and we become all things to all people so that we might by all means win as many as we can (1 Cor 9:22-23+). But our efforts amount to a big fat zero apart from the mighty working of God's Spirit (see 1 Cor 2:4, cf Acts 1:8+). ([1 Corinthians 2:6-9 What the World Doesn't Know](#))

**Third, this truth frees us to be bold because everything depends on God and not on us.** One hundred and thirty years ago a man named William E. Blackstone wrote a book called *Jesus is Coming* that is still in print today. It was the first popular book on Bible prophecy. Based on his study of the Bible, Blackstone became convinced that one day the Jewish people would be regathered to the Holy Land and that a Jewish state must someday be re-established in Palestine. He was one of the first Christian leaders to say those things publicly. He was a contemporary of D. L. Moody and one of the most respected Christian leaders of the late 1800s. In 1891 he wrote the "Blackstone Declaration" that was signed by 413 Christian and Jewish leaders in the United States. The document, presented to President Benjamin Harrison, was the first public declaration in favor of a Jewish state in Palestine. Mr. Blackstone also had a great burden for world missions and gave over \$6 million to the Lord's work. He founded the Chicago Hebrew Mission—now called the American Messianic Fellowship. His interest in Bible prophecy led him to support the establishment of the nation of Israel and to support missionary endeavors to reach the Jewish people with the gospel. He truly loved the Jewish people and labored to see them have a homeland of their own. And because he loved them, he did all he could to bring Christ to them as well. He was considered by some to be the "father of Zionism." By the time of his death in 1935, he had stirred the conscience of the nation on behalf of the Jewish people, had written the first popular work on Bible prophecy, and had raised millions of dollars for missionary work.

His service for the Lord began in the early 1870s when he found himself scheduled to speak at a church one Sunday night. As a layman, he felt unqualified but in prayer God gave him his text, the words of Jesus in Mark 9:19, "Bring him unto me." Though trembling with fear, he addressed the congregation that night on the truth that though he himself had no ability, God had given him the responsibility to bring others to the Savior so that God could deal with them. He declared that he was only "God's little errand boy." That phrase became the motto of his life. When he wrote his autobiography near the end of his life, he called it, "God's Little Errand Boy." When you hear of the nation of Israel, you should think of William E. Blackstone who was one of the first Christian leaders to see the need for a Jewish homeland. But there is one important part of the story I am leaving out.

He was a layman, an author, a student of Bible prophecy, a supporter of world missions, and a fervent Christian. He also lived in Oak Park and was a member of the First Methodist Church of Oak Park. But do you know where he lived? William E. Blackstone lived in a house on Lake Street that is now the west parking lot of Calvary Memorial Church. Very old photographs show a house where our parking lot is today. He lived there for many years and raised his family there. Thus there is a connection between our church property and the great events happening in the Middle East today. Part of the story starts right here, less than 50 yards from

where I stand today, in the heart of a man who understood that he was only "God's little errand boy."

When you understand that truth, and when it grips your heart, when you know that the power rests with God and not with you, then you are free to speak up and free to step out in faith even though others may misunderstand and some may oppose you. You can be bold because it doesn't depend on you anyway. It all depends on God! You're just God's errand boy. ([1 Corinthians 2:6-9 What the World Doesn't Know](#))

**1 Corinthians 2:9 but just as it is written, "THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."**

Wuest - But even as it stands written, The things which eye did not see nor ear hear and which did not arise within an individual's heart, so many things as God prepared for those who love Him, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Amplified - But, on the contrary, as the Scripture says, What eye has not seen and ear has not heard and has not entered into the heart of man, [all that] God has prepared (made and keeps ready) for those who love Him who hold Him in affectionate reverence, promptly obeying Him and gratefully recognizing the benefits He has bestowed].

God has prepared for those who love him."

NLT 1 Corinthians 2:9 That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him."

ESV 1 Corinthians 2:9 But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"--

NIV 1 Corinthians 2:9 However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"--

GNT 1 Corinthians 2:9 ἅλα καθὼς γὰρ γράπται, φθαλμὸς οὐκ εἶδεν καὶ οὐκ ἤκουσεν καὶ τὸ καρδιᾶν ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἐβλήθη, τὸ μυστὸν θεοῦ τὸς γὰρ σὺν ἁπασίν.

KJV 1 Corinthians 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

YLT 1 Corinthians 2:9 but, according as it hath been written, 'What eye did not see, and ear did not hear, and upon the heart of man came not up, what God did prepare for those loving Him -- '

ASV 1 Corinthians 2:9 but as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, And which entered not into the heart of man, Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him.

CSB 1 Corinthians 2:9 But as it is written: What eye did not see and ear did not hear, and what never entered the human mind-- God prepared this for those who love Him.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 2:9 But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

NRS 1 Corinthians 2:9 But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him"--

NAB 1 Corinthians 2:9 But as it is written: "What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him,"

NJB 1 Corinthians 2:9 but it is as scripture says: What no eye has seen and no ear has heard, what the mind of man cannot visualise; all that God has prepared for those who love him;

GWN 1 Corinthians 2:9 But as Scripture says: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined the things that God has prepared for those who love him."

- **eye:** Isa 64:4 Joh 3:16 1Pe 1:12
- **the things:** Ps 31:19 Mt 20:23 25:34 Heb 11:16
- **those:** Ro 8:28 Jas 1:12 2:5 1Jn 4:19
- [1 Corinthians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## Related Passages:

Isaiah 64:4 For from days of old they have not **heard or perceived** by ear, **Nor has the eye seen** a God besides You, Who acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him.

Isaiah 65:17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind.

**But** - Term of contrast. He has just stated the unregenerate did not understand God's wisdom. It was (and still is) a mystery to them. But God has revealed the "mystery" to believers, those who love Him.

**Just as it is written** - **Written** is [grapho](#) in the perfect tense which means it was written in the past and stands written, written and applicable for every age, yea, for all time. The text is quoted as proof of the fact that the mysteries of redeeming mercy are not apprehended by natural wisdom but are revealed supernaturally.

**Hodge** makes an interesting point that "The formula **as it is written** is never used by the apostles except in citing the canonical books of the Old Testament; so it cannot be claimed that Paul intended to quote either some book now lost or some apocryphal writing."

There is disagreement as to where this is quoted from in the OT - **Robertson** suggests "It is likely that Paul here combines freely Isa. 64:4, 65:17, 52:15 in a sort of [catena](#) or free chain of quotations as he does in Ro 3:10-18."

**MacArthur** - That free quotation from Isaiah 64:4 and Isa 65:17 is often memorized. **But it is also frequently misapplied**. Paul is not referring to the wonders of heaven, but to the wisdom God has prepared for believers. His point is that the natural eyes, ears, and hearts of men cannot know or comprehend His wisdom. It is prepared only for those who love Him. Neither externally nor internally, objectively nor subjectively, can man discover God. His (**ED: HE IS SPEAKING OF THE NATURAL MAN, UNREGENERATE MAN WHOSE**) external searching is empirical (**ED: based on, concerned with, or verifiable by observation or experience, pragmatic**), experimental—represented by seeing and hearing. God's truth is **NOT** observable by the eye or the ear, no matter how many sophisticated instruments we may use. We are just as helpless in trying to discover His truth subjectively, through our minds (heart). Rationalism cannot reason out God's truth. Man's two greatest human resources, empiricism and **rationalism**, (**ED: a belief or theory that opinions and actions should be based on reason and knowledge rather than on religious belief**) his observation and his reason, are equally **USELESS** in discovering divine truth. **They will always, in fact, eventually turn men against divine truth. Ultimately they lead men to crucify Christ.** But God's truth, God's plan, God's wisdom, is **NOT** hidden from His children. ([1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#)) (Bolding added)

**Spurgeon** - What reason and imagination could not have conceived, the Holy Spirit has revealed; spiritual men have an inner eye and ear to which the Spirit grants discernment.

**Gordon Fee** - If the main point of the citation in 1Cor 2:9 was to support the argument of 1Cor 2:6-8, the final line of the citation, "what God has prepared for those who love him," prepares the way for the main concern of the entire passage, namely that God's wisdom can be known **ONLY** by God's people because they alone have the Spirit. ([The First Epistle to the Corinthians](#))

**Adam Clarke** agrees writing that the words of 1Cor 2:9 "have been applied to the state of glory in **afuture** world; but certainly they belong to the **present** state, and express merely the wondrous light, life, and liberty which the Gospel communicates to them (**ED: AS REVEALED BY THE INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT TO THOSE**) that believe in the Lord Jesus Christ in that way which the Gospel itself requires."

**David Guzik** commenting on 1Cor 2:9 adds that "Most people wrongly take the things which God has prepared for those who love Him to mean the things which are waiting for us in heaven (**ED: Confession** - I for one took it this way for many years because I had memorized it without ever stopping to closely examine the context! Woe! The lesson for me and all of us is to be very careful to examine the context when memorizing Scripture! See **Memorizing His Word** or **Memory Verses by Topic**). While it is true that we cannot comprehend the greatness of heaven, that isn't what Paul means here, because 1Cor 2:10 tells us God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. This glorious thing is has been revealed by the gospel... Paul is communicating much the same message as Ephesians 3:1-7, where he writes about the mystery of the church, and how the church in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets. (Ephesians 3:5) Before the life and ministry of Jesus, God's people had a vague understanding of the glory of His work and what it would do for His people. But they really didn't - they couldn't - fully understand it ahead of time." ([1 Corinthians 2 Commentary](#))

**THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN** - The question is to what does the word "**things**" refer? We have not seen Jesus or Heaven and so naturally these thoughts come into mind with this statement. But as the comments above state, if we let the **context rule** in interpretation ([Keep Context](#)

[King](#)), Paul has been speaking about the **wisdom of God** demonstrated in the good news of the Cross of Christ. This was and still is a "mystery" to the unregenerate mind, because the eyes of their heart have not been opened by the Spirit to see this marvelous spiritual truth (cf 1 Cor 2:14+).

**Lowell Johnson** - This often misused and misquoted. Most of the time it is used to speak of heaven. Yet, the verse is not talking about **things** that we must wait until we get to heaven to enjoy. It is talking about **things** God has prepared for His that can be enjoyed and experienced now.

**Jack Arnold** - Paul loosely quotes from Isaiah 64:4 to show that God has wonderful **things** prepared for those who take God's wisdom seriously and walk by faith in it. God's wisdom is not understood by natural processes. It does not come through the eye gate. A person may read the Bible from cover to cover; he may devour books on theology, but unless there is a work of grace by God, he will never comprehend the gospel. Nor does God's wisdom come through the ear gate. A person may listen to the gospel message every Sunday and never grasp the message. A friend may give an unsaved person tapes explaining the gospel or may sit down and tediously go through the gospel with him, but he will not comprehend the meaning without a work of God. Nor does it come by an emotional experience or a mere intellectual assent to facts about Christ. No, these things are entered into by an enlightening of the Holy Spirit and through faith on the part of the one grappling with the truth. God has prepared truths for the Christian that he could have never dreamed about as an unbeliever. These divine truths are open to those who love and keep on loving God. This wisdom is for those who are growing in grace and in knowledge and in commitment. God desires we should mature, grow up spiritually so we can enter into these wonderful things He has prepared for you. These things do not come to us by any natural processes but by faith which is motivated by the Holy Spirit. God's wisdom cannot be discovered by listening to the great secular voices of the past nor can we read about it in secular history. Yet, God's wisdom is truth without which men and women falter and fail, marriages end in divorce, homes breakup, violence breaks out in society, and all the evils we see around us begin to flood in. Therefore, God's wisdom is the most vital truth the world can know anything about, and this truth is made known to men by the Holy Spirit through the Bible. These truths are available for the believer if he will claim them by faith. ([1 Corinthians 2:6-13 Gods Wisdom](#))

**D L Moody** - MOST people say "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard," and they stop there. But see what the New Testament says, "**God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.**" You see the Lord hath revealed them unto us: "For the Spirit searches all things—yea, the deep things of God."

The promises of God are not mere mottoes to hang on the wall, but checks to be cashed...

--- Vance Havner

**Vance Havner** - These things God has prepared refer not only to joys awaiting us in heaven but blessings available **NOW**. We can have a foretaste of glory and of the powers of the age to come. We can sample the fruit of the land before we reach the heavenly fields or walk the golden streets. If such advance blessings are to be had we ought to lay hold upon them now! (**ED: THIS BEGS THE QUESTION - ARE YOU EXPERIENCING THE RICHES OF YOUR SALVATION IN CHRIST OR ARE YOU LIVING AS A SPIRITUAL PAUPER? YOU DON'T NEED TO ATTEND ANOTHER COURSE IN THE VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIFE. THE KEY IS TAKE IN THE WORD AND LIVE OUT THE WORD [AKA OBEDIENCE]**). The promises of God are not mere **mottoes to hang on the wall, but checks to be cashed**—and if we ever needed them we do now! If there is a bank account in our name we ought to use our checkbook of faith and prayer. While we lay up treasure in heaven we may also draw funds to our credit and heavenly cash for our earthly needs today. (Though I Walk Through the Valley)

**Robertson** - The [Gnostics](#) used this passage to support their teaching of esoteric doctrine as [Hegesippus](#) shows.

**Heart (2588) kardia** does not refer to the physical organ but is always used figuratively in Scripture to refer to the seat and center of human life. The heart is the center of the personality, and it controls the intellect, emotions, and will. No outward obedience is of the slightest value unless the heart turns to God. Kardia is used most often figuratively of the center of our personality, to so to speak to our "**control center**" (to make a play on the "[air traffic control center](#)" at the airport which carefully guards and guides what flies in and what flies out. How applicable to our "hearts" which are so prone to wander!). In short **kardia** refers to the the [affective](#) center of our being wherein lies the capacity of moral preference and volitional desire. The **kardia** generates thoughts that make the decisions which the mind works out. In other words, our logic flows out of our heart-decisions and not vice versa. Gleason Archer called the **kardia**, the "desire-producer that makes us tick" for it is the place where our "desire-decisions" occur, and which establish who we really are. WHO ARE YOU? HAVE YOU HAD A HEART CHECK UP RECENTLY? We are assiduous to do this medically, but woefully lax in doing it spiritually (beloved, I speak from experience!). At regeneration God reverses the spiritual atherosclerosis of our old sinful heart by giving us a total heart transplant! Daily confession and repentance are thereafter necessary to avoid "spiritual atherosclerosis" and gradual, subtle hardening (and becoming cold to the things of God) of our heart! (Read and practice daily "preventative maintenance" = 1 Jn

1:9<sup>+</sup>, Pr 28:13<sup>+</sup>). **Gary Hill** rightly reminds us that "Life is a continuous contest, waged and won in the **heart**. As the **heart** goes, so goes the rest of us. This is true in "both directions": *negatively* (Jn 14:1, 27; Acts 7:51, 8:21; Ro 1:21) and *positively* (Acts 16:14; Ro 2:29; Heb 10:22). ([Discovery Bible](#))

**Kardia** in the Corinthian letters - 1 Co. 2:9; 1 Co. 4:5; 1 Co. 7:37; 1 Co. 14:25; 2 Co. 1:22; 2 Co. 2:4; 2 Co. 3:2; 2 Co. 3:3; 2 Co. 3:15; 2 Co. 4:6; 2 Co. 5:12; 2 Co. 6:11; 2 Co. 7:3; 2 Co. 8:16; 2 Co. 9:7

**ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM** - **Those who love Him** is a description of believers, because unregenerate men and women DO NOT love God (even if they say they love God they do not because they are not even able to love God - READ Ro 8:7+, 1 Jn 4:10+, Col 1:21+, Ro 5:10+). Love is present tense calling for a continual attitude/action, especially as manifest in loving **obedience** (see Jn 14:15, 23, 24), which in turn calls for continual dependence on the Spirit's supernatural enablement (Eph 5:18+, Php 2:13NLT+, Gal 5:22+).

**Stevenson** - I used to think that this passage talked about the blessings that will someday be ours when we arrive in heaven. But Paul is not talking about heaven. He is not talking about the sweet by and by. He is talking about the nasty here and now. Don't miss this! God has prepared some wonderful blessings for us and we possess those blessings right now. You do not have to wait until you are in heaven to become a child of God. You have already been adopted into the family of God and the benefits of being God's child are yours right now. Eternal life is a present possession of those who believe in Him. His people have a righteous standing and are co-heirs of the Kingdom of God. All of these things are present possessions. The world cannot comprehend those blessings. The human eye has not seen them. No ear has heard them. Man's rationality has not revealed it to them. They are not visible. They cannot be seen. They cannot be tasted. They can only be known as God had revealed them to us. ([The Wisdom of the Gospel](#))

**Prepared** (ready) ([2090](#)) ([hetoimazo](#) from **heteos** = fitness - see [hetoimasia](#)) means to make ready, specifically to make ready beforehand for some purpose, use, or activity. Paul's only use in the letters to Corinth (and only 2 other times by Paul in 2 Ti 2:21, Philemon 1:22). Robertson adds 1 Cor 2:9 is "the only instance where Paul uses this verb of God, though it occurs of final glory (Luke 2:31; Matt. 20:23; 25:34; Mark 10:40; Heb. 11:16) and of final misery (Mt. 25:41). But here undoubtedly the dominant idea is the present blessing to these who love God (1 Cor. 1:5–7)."

**Love** ([25](#)) ([agapao](#) see noun [agape](#)) means to love unconditionally and sacrificially as God Himself loves sinful men (John 3:16), the way He loves the Son (John 3:35+, Jn 15:9, 17:23, 24). **Agapao** is a verb and by its verbal nature calls for action and can be known only from the action it prompts. This quality of love is not an emotion but is an action initiated by a volitional choice, a decision of the will which is empowered by the Holy Spirit. **Agapao** is given or offered even if the love is not received or reciprocated. **Agapao** love differs from **phileo** which is based on affection. Agapao is "the purest, noblest form of love, which is volitionally driven, not motivated by superficial appearance, emotional attraction, or sentimental relationship." (MacArthur) "gapao speaks of a love which is awakened by a sense of value in an object which causes one to prize it. It springs from an apprehension of the preciousness of an object. It is a love of esteem and approbation. The quality of this love is determined by the character of the one who loves, and that of the object loved." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#))

**Vance Havner** - These things God has prepared (1Cor 2:9) refer not only to joys awaiting us in heaven but blessings available **NOW**. We can have a foretaste of glory and of the powers of the age to come. We can sample the fruit of the land before we reach the heavenly fields or walk the golden streets. If such advance blessings are to be had we ought to lay hold upon them now! The promises of God are not mere **mottoes to hang on the wall**, but **checks to be cashed**—and if we ever needed them we do now! If there is a bank account in our name we ought to use our checkbook of faith and prayer. While we lay up treasure in heaven we may also draw funds to our credit and heavenly cash for our earthly needs today. (Though I Walk Through the Valley)

## A "Descriptive Definition" of Love

### LOVE IS...

1. ... commanded of believers (John 13:34, 15:12, 15:17)
2. ... empowered by the Holy Spirit in the heart of the surrendered saint (Gal 5:22+)
3. ... commanded of Spirit filled husbands for their wives even as Jesus demonstrated for His bride, the church, giving Himself up for her (Eph 5:25<sup>+</sup>)
4. ... to be given in the same way Spirit filled husbands love their own bodies (Eph 5:28<sup>+</sup>)
5. ... the love with which the Father loved the Son and which may be in believers (Jn 17:26)

6. ... a debt we are to always seek to repay but can never fully discharge (Ro 13:8~~+~~)
7. ... taught by God (1Th 4:9~~+~~)
8. ... manifested by specific actions and attitudes (1Cor 13:4, 5, 6, 7, 8 -notes [13:4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [7](#) [8](#)) ([The Summum Bonum](#))
9. ... shown not just by words but by deeds (1Jn 3:17, cf such love in action as a manifestation of genuine faith in James 2:15, 16~~+~~)
10. ... manifested by keeping God's commandments (Jn 14:15, 21, 23, 24)
11. ... the response Jesus called for one to demonstrate to his or her enemies (Mt 5:44~~+~~)
12. ... love calls for one to love one's neighbor as one's self (Mt 19:19)
13. ... love that seeks the recipient's highest good, not activated by virtue in the recipient (undeserved) (Jn 3:16~~+~~)
14. ... love that finds its perfect expression in Jesus Christ and the Cross (Jn 3:16~~+~~, cp 1Jn 3:16~~+~~)
15. ... the love of the overcomers in Revelation who did not love their life even to death (Re 12:10~~+~~)
16. ... love that cannot be manifested by unregenerate individuals in its true Biblical sense of being Spirit enabled. Agapao when used in the context of the unregenerate means generally to have a high esteem for or to take pleasure in something. This type of agapao love is based on one showing a high regard for the object's perceived value or importance as shown in the following passages...
17. Luke 7:5~~+~~ of a Roman centurion who loved Israel
18. Luke 11:43~~+~~ of Pharisees who loved the front seats in the synagogues and the respectful greetings in the market places
19. John 3:19~~+~~ of unregenerate men who loved the darkness rather than the light
20. John 12:43 of the men who loved the approval of men rather than the approval God
21. 2 Timothy 4:10~~+~~ of Demas who loved this present world and as a result deserted Paul and went to Thessalonica
22. 1 John 2:15~~+~~ of those who love the world which indicates they do not possess the love of the Father within them (Compare uses in LXX translation of Ps 4:2, 11:5, Ps 52:3, 4)
23. 2 Peter 2:15~~+~~ of the false teachers who forsook and went astray from the right way because they like Balaam loved the wages of unrighteousness

**1 Corinthians 2:10 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.**

Wuest - for to us God the Father revealed them through the intermediate agency of His Spirit. For the Spirit is constantly exploring all things, even the deep things of God. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Amplified - Yet to us God has unveiled and revealed them by and through His Spirit, for the [Holy] Spirit searches diligently, exploring and examining everything, even sounding the profound and bottomless things of God [the divine counsels and things hidden and beyond man's scrutiny].

NLT 1 Corinthians 2:10 But it was to us that God revealed these things by his Spirit. For his Spirit searches out everything and shows us God's deep secrets.

ESV 1 Corinthians 2:10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

NIV 1 Corinthians 2:10 but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

GNT 1 Corinthians 2:10 μ ν δ̄ πεκ λυψεν θε ς δι το πνε ματος· τ γ ρ πνε μα π ντα ραυν , κα τ β θη το θεο .

KJV 1 Corinthians 2:10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

YLT 1 Corinthians 2:10 but to us did God reveal them through His Spirit, for the Spirit all things doth search, even the depths of God,

ASV 1 Corinthians 2:10 But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

CSB 1 Corinthians 2:10 Now God has revealed these things to us by the Spirit, for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 2:10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

NRS 1 Corinthians 2:10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

NAB 1 Corinthians 2:10 this God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit scrutinizes everything, even the depths of God.

NJB 1 Corinthians 2:10 to us, though, God has given revelation through the Spirit, for the Spirit explores the depths of everything, even the depths of God.

GWN 1 Corinthians 2:10 God has revealed those things to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches everything, especially the deep things of God.

- **God:** 1Co 14:30 Am 3:7 Mt 11:25-27 13:11 16:17 Lu 2:26 10:21 Eph 3:3,5 1Pe 1:12 Rev 1:1
- **through:** Isa 48:16 59:21 Joh 14:26 16:13 1Jn 2:20,27
- **the Spirit:** 1Co 2:11 12:8-11 Ro 8:26,27
- **the depths:** Job 12:22 Ps 92:5,6 Da 2:22 Ro 11:33-36
- Reciprocal:, Job 11:7 - Canst Job 32:8 - the inspiration Isaiah 54:13 - all Isaiah 64:4 - have not Daniel 2:19 - was Daniel 12:10 - but the wise Matthew 13:44 - like 1 Corinthians 14:2 - howbeit 2 Corinthians 10:14 - we stretch not Galatians 1:11 - that Ephesians 1:9 - made Ephesians 1:17 - revelation 1 Thessalonians 4:8 - who Revelation 2:7 - let him)
- [1 Corinthians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY, HIDDEN WISDOM

**NOTE:** [For more in depth commentary especially word studies click 1 Corinthians 2:10](#)

In 1Cor 2:10-16 Paul gives special attention to the work of the Holy Spirit in revealing (and illumining) the **wisdom of God** (1Cor 1:21, 24, 30, 2:6-8 especially wisdom centered on Christ and "Christ crucified" = 1 Cor 1:23, 2:2). In the preceding passage 1Cor 2:9 Paul quoted from Isaiah 64:4 "For from days of old they have not heard or perceived by ear, Nor has the eye seen a God besides You, Who acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him." Paul's point in using this quotation is to support his declaration in 1 Cor 2:8 that the "**rulers of this age**" (= "**natural**" men as Paul explains in 1Cor 2:14) had no (spiritual) understanding of God's glorious work of redemption accomplished when the "**Lord of glory**" was crucified like a common criminal (cp Lk 23:34+ where Jesus declared "they do not know what they are doing"). The rulers entirely missed the spiritual significance of Christ's death on the Cross (cp 1 Cor 1:18+), as would all men (including Paul) had not the Spirit opened the eyes of our heart to the truth! We are all debtors to mercy alone (Play this great old hymn - [A Debtor to Mercy](#))

A debtor to mercy alone  
Of covenant mercy I sing  
I come with Your righteousness on  
My humble offering to bring  
The judgments of Your holy law  
With me can have nothing to do  
My Savior's obedience and blood  
Hide all my transgressions  
From view

**David Garland** notes that "Paul shifts his focus to the means by which God reveals heavenly truth that is naturally unknowable. How can something that has no place in the human heart be made known? How do humans cross the divide between the world and God? These can happen only through God's Spirit, Who **searches** all things, even the **depths of God**. Human creatures do not have access to **these things** and do not even have the grammar or vocabulary for them until it is graciously bestowed by God's Spirit." (1 Corinthians - Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament)

**Archibald Brown** - "This text (1 Cor 2:10KJV) is vitally united, you will see, to the verse which precedes it, because this verse begins with '**but**,' (ED: NAS = "FOR") and that rivets it to the prior verse — it is the *outcome* of it — and that prior verse (1 Cor 2:9) has, **I suppose, suffered more from misquotation and misapplication than any other verse in inspired writ** (ED: I HAVE TO SAY "AMEN!") You know it well: '*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him.*' That text is always handed over to *Heaven*, and it is read as if it taught that Heaven is such a beautiful, such a glorious place, that really we know nothing whatever about it; that no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and no heart can imagine, all the beautiful things that are stored up in an at present unseen Heaven. **I need hardly say that Heaven**

**was not in the apostle's mind when he penned the words.** You will see that so far from teaching that these things are not to be seen or cannot be known, the apostle goes on to say, in the language of our text, which is never quoted (ED: THUS EMPHASIZING THE VITAL [IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT](#) FOR ACCURATE INTERPRETATION), '**But God has revealed them.**' 1 Cor 2:10(KJV) What a pity it is to cry halt and pull up at the end of the ninth verse, and say, 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for them that love him,' and not to go on to the next verse, 'But God has *revealed* them.' The simple teaching of the passage is this: that mere worldly wisdom can never understand spiritual teaching; that there must be a revelation made by God, and that the work of the Holy Spirit is to make clear to men what they never could learn, either through the eye, through the ear, or by the imagination. God has revealed these glories to us, because there is no other way in which we could acquire a knowledge of them but by revelation. **Mental perception, however keen, is not enough; you cannot fathom eternal realities. God has to draw the veil over these beauties, and reveal the facts in Scripture — and then the Holy Spirit reveals the Scripture again to us. There is thus a double revelation — God revealing his truth in the Word, and then the Holy Spirit revealing the Word unto us.** Is it not true that the eye does not see these things? Millions of eyes can see God's work — but they never see the Artificer; millions of ears can hear the voice of God — but they never recognize that which is spoken. **God must be revealed to be known.** ([1 Corinthians 2:10 The Deep Things of God](#) 1899)

The question to whom does "**US**" and "**WE**" refer (**US** in 1 Cor 2:10,12, **WE** in 1 Cor 2:12, 13)? Some writers feel **US/WE** is restricted to Paul and the other apostles who received inspiration from the Spirit and recorded His revelation. Others feel **US/WE** refers to all believers. I would suggest that even if the **US** refers only to the apostles, the truths revealed about the Holy Spirit in principle would be applicable in the lives of all believers. There are clearly good expositors on both sides of this interpretation. So below are some interpretations of **WE/US**.

Why is this important? As best I can discern the major difference is that if you believe the **WE/US** in verse 10-13 refers to the Paul and the apostles, then the point is that they were the ones who received the direct **REVELATION** (1 Cor 2:10 = "for **TO US** God REVEALED them...") and they were the one's who recorded the **INSPIRED** writings (1 Cor 2:12-13 = "**WE** have received...that **WE** might know the things freely given to **US** by God, which things **WE** also speak."). While Paul does not say "which things we also wrote down," he does say "speak" and thus this would be equivalent to claiming that what he said was **INSPIRED**. Does that make sense? Other resources that discuss inspiration of Scripture will quote Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 2 in support of that doctrine clearly indicating that they interpret the **WE/US** in this section to be referring to **PAUL** and the **APOSTLES** who penned holy writ. For example here are a few resources discussing **INSPIRATION** and citing 1 Corinthians 2...

- **Halley's Bible Handbook** - "Paul claimed for his teaching the inspiration of God (1 Corinthians 2:7-13; 14:37; 1 Thessalonians 2:13)."
- **Gotquestions.org** - "While there are different views as to the extent to which the Bible is inspired, there can be no doubt that the Bible itself claims that every word in every part of the Bible comes from God (1 Corinthians 2:12-13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). This view of the Scriptures is often referred to as "[verbal plenary inspiration](#)." ([What does it mean that the Bible is inspired?](#))
- **H A Ironside's Illustrations of Bible Truth** - 1 Cor 2:12, 13 Verbal Inspiration

The following group interpret **WE/US** as referring to all believers

**William Baker** - Despite the claim that the first-person plural occurrences here through 2:12 are editorial, referring to Paul alone (Kaiser 1981:311), it is contextually better to understand that Paul includes all true believers in his explanation of the Spirit's role in both communicating and receiving the gospel (Garland 2003:99; Lofthouse 1955:75). (Cornerstone Bible Commentary)

**Schreiner** - **We** stands here for all believers, and those who believe have received ... the Spirit who is from God. The mark of believers is that they have 'received' the Spirit, and elsewhere Paul speaks of the inception of the Christian life as receiving (lambanō) the Spirit (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 3:2, 14). Indeed, the mark of being a Christian is the presence of the Spirit in one's life (Rom. 8:9). (TNTC-1Cor)

**Faith Life Study Bible** (Logos) - God has shown the hidden wisdom of God to those who follow Christ (v. 7). Paul argues that people desiring to know more or have greater wisdom should seek to walk more closely with Christ, as God reveals His eternal work to people this way.

**Leon Morris** says here Paul "contrasts Christians with 'wise' heathen. Whatever be the case with others, we are led by God's Spirit. (1 Corinthians: Tyndale)

**Stevenson** - we have received *the Spirit who is from God* (2:12). God has provided His Spirit. That Spirit

teaches us the wisdom of God. What is the wisdom of God? It is the gospel.

**W E Vine** - (comment on v12) We rob ourselves immensely if we do not seek to apprehend these things here and now.

**Bob Utley** (comment on v12) Believers can understand the gospel of Christ and their blessings in Him through the Holy Spirit.

**S Lewis Johnson** (comment on v10-12) - To **US** (emphatic position in the Greek text) contrasts **believers** with the world. To them **God has revealed** his wisdom **by his Spirit**, who has been given that **believers** might know the things that are freely given by God. (Wycliffe Bible Commentary)

**Ray Pritchard** - See [comment](#) showing he favors the **we** as referring to all believers).

**Ray Stedman** - As you know, one of the major arguments of our day is over the question of the inerrancy of scripture. People are asking afresh today, "Is everything in the Bible true? Does the Bible speak with authority in every realm of life? Is it true in what it says about scientific, geographic, and astronomic matters, etc? Or is it true only when it tells you how to get to heaven?" I think that question is answered by Paul's statement here. **He says that when the apostles began to speak and to write the Scriptures, they did so by words taught by the Holy Spirit.** ([1 Corinthians 2:10-16 God's Teacher](#))

**Thomas Constable** on v10 - The wonderful mysteries God has prepared for those who love Him are not knowable only by a select group of Christians. **Any and every believer** can understand and appreciated them because the indwelling Holy Spirit can enlighten us." On verse 12 Constable says "'We" is emphatic in the Greek text. All **believers** have received the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:13; Rom. 8:9). He helps us understand the mind of God and the things God has given us." BUT THEN ON VERSE 13 CONSTABLE SEEMS TO SWITCH writing - "Paul and the other apostles spoke the truths that the Holy Spirit had helped them understand (cf. vv. 6-7). They did not choose their words because of what people generally regarded as the best ones to persuade. They did not rely on the rhetorical forms that the orators used either. **The Holy Spirit guided them in their communication of divine truth as well as in their perception of it.** Spiritual thoughts or truths are concepts the Holy Spirit enables us to understand. Spiritual words are those He guides us to use in expressing these thoughts. (NOW CONSTABLE SEEMS TO SWITCH BACK TO BELIEVERS IN GENERAL) The Spirit enables us to speak in language appropriate to the message rather than with human wisdom. In short, the Holy Spirit plays an indispensable role both in our understanding and in our communicating God's revelation. (ED: I PUT THIS QUOTE IN SO THAT YOU CAN SEE HOW CONFUSING THIS SECTION CAN BE BASED ON INTERPRETATION OF THE WE/US).

The following group interpret **WE/US** as referring to Paul and the apostles, not all believers:

**MacArthur** explains that "The **we's** and the **us** of verses 12-13 do not refer to Christians in general but to Paul himself (and the apostles). God's Word is for all believers, but was revealed only to the apostles and the other writers of Scripture. Only those men properly can be said to have been inspired."

MacArthur Study Bible - The wisdom that saves, which man's wisdom can't know, is revealed to us by God. He makes it known by revelation, inspiration, and illumination. Revelation (1Co 2:10, 11) and inspiration (1Co 2:12, 13) were given to those who wrote the Bible; illumination (1Co 2:14-16) is given to all believers who seek to know and understand that divinely written truth. In each case, the Holy Spirit is the divine agent doing the work (cf. 2Pe 1:21). ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Paul Apple** - [see below for his interpretative outline](#) of 1 Cor 2:10-16 - Revelation, Inspiration, Illumination

**Arnold** - In context the "**US**" must refer to the Apostles. The wisdom of God was first revealed to the Apostles who in turn recorded it in scripture through the inspiration process. The truth is that God's wisdom cannot be known by the mind, the senses, nor by study and research. It can only be known by revelation. If the Christian is to understand Christianity, it must come as the Holy Spirit enlightens and illumines him to the truth. The Father has sent the Holy Spirit who is commissioned to instruct us with the Word of God and lead us into the truth of God which will change our lives and expose us to the secret, hidden wisdom of God. When we begin to discover God's wisdom, life is going to be more exciting and adventurous because as we begin to encounter God's wisdom more and more we are set free to be the men and women God had designed us to be. ([1 Corinthians 2:14-16 Understanding The Truth](#))

**R C H Lenski** (comment on v10) - The emphatic  $\mu\upsilon$ , "**TO US**," does not refer to Christians in general but resumes the silent "we" of the two  $\lambda\alpha\lambda\omicron\ \mu\epsilon\upsilon$ , "we speak," occurring in v. 6 and 7, namely the apostles who are

commissioned to speak this wisdom and to make it known.

**MacDonald on to us** - In other words, these truths foretold in the OT were made known to the apostles of the NT era. The **US** refers to the writers of the NT. It was by the Spirit of God that the apostles and prophets were enlightened (Believer's Bible Commentary)

**Kenneth Wuest** explains that in 1Cor 2:10-16 "Paul proceeds to describe the three successive steps in the transmission of truth from the heart of God to the heart of man. These are, **revelation**, the act of God the Holy Spirit imparting to the Bible writers (THUS WE/US REFERS TO APOSTLES), truth incapable of being discovered by man's unaided reason (1Cor 2:10-12): **inspiration**, the act of God the Holy Spirit enabling the Bible writers (THUS WE/US REFERS TO APOSTLES) to write down in God-chosen words, infallibly, the truth revealed (1Cor 2:13): and **illumination**, the act of God the Holy Spirit enabling believers to understand the truth given by revelation and written down by inspiration (1Cor 2:14-16). ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1](#), [Volume 2](#), [Volume 3](#))

**Believer's Study Bible** comment on 1 Cor 2:13 - **Paul claims that his very words are inspired.** Hence, **inspiration** is "**verbal**," extending to the very words chosen by the authors of Scripture under the direction of the Holy Spirit. This is not a "mechanical dictation" theory, nor does it nullify the personality of the author involved. On the other hand, Paul's affirmation does guarantee that when the Bible is heard, God is heard.

**Henry Morris (Defender's Study Bible)** comment on 1 Cor 2:13 - Paul thus claims that his teachings are not really his, but God's, for their very words are taught by the Holy Spirit. **This is a clear claim to divine verbal inspiration of Paul's own epistles.**

**Leake** - I(1Cor 2:12-13) asks "Who are the **"WE"** here? True that all believers have received the Spirit of God - **secondarily** Paul has all believers in mind; but **primarily** here it is the apostles and prophets of the NT - they are the ones directly receiving revelation directly from Spirit of God and commissioned to pass it along to others; writing it down in Scripture.

**Mark Taylor** (New American Commentary) mentions both possible interpretations -

If the **"US"** is parallel with **"WE"** in 1 Cor 2:6, then the more specific reference may be to the apostles and prophets. If **"US"** refers back to the more immediate "those who love him" in 1 Cor 2:9, then all believers are in view rather than an inner circle in the early church. The contrast is not so much between "us" and "them" as it is why they cannot know and we can....(COMMENTING ON 2:12) The **"WE"** in 2:12 is parallel to the plural **"US"** in 2:10 and either refers to all believers or to a more specific group such as the apostles and prophets as the means of God's revelation by the Spirit

**Stephen Olford** has an interesting thought on whether Paul is describing inspiration of Scripture in 1 Cor 2:13 writing "These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (v. 13). We now reach a point in Paul's argument where we need to follow him very closely. **Verse 13 is often used as a proof text** by proponents of **verbal inspiration**—a doctrine that is biblical. But Paul says here, **"we ... speak"** not **"we ... write."** Thus he is referring to **interpretation** rather than **inspiration**. (Anointed Expository Preaching) (**Ed:** He makes a valid point as he simply lets the text say what it says and does not seek to interpret it as is commonly done. I admit that it is difficult to refute his observation. But this passage has been used by so many scholars and expositors to describe inspiration that it would be difficult to change that "traditional" interpretation by many writers." My suggestion is Be a Berean - Acts 17:11+!)

**For to us God revealed (apokalupto) them through the Spirit** - Amplified = "God has unveiled and revealed them by and through His Spirit" **Through the Spirit** (dia tou pneumatos) refers in context to the Holy Spirit, the Agent of God's revelation. Notice that while this is the first mention of the Holy Spirit in this letter, Paul now proceeds to mention Him six times in this section (1Cor 2:10-16 = 1Cor 2:10-twice and once in each of the following verses - 1Cor 2:11, 12, 13, 14).

**John Phillips** on why the things "THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, " (1 Cor 2:9) had to be revealed to us - Man has truly extraordinary intellectual powers. He has explored the secrets of the atom and learned much about the marvels and mysteries of space. He has split the atom, explored the genetic structure of living things, and put men on the moon. There seems nothing man cannot do when it comes to science, technology, and engineering. However, God is not to be discovered by gazing into a microscope or a telescope. We can see His fingerprints everywhere in creation, but we can never know Him, His mind, His heart, His will, apart from divine revelation. The great truths revealed in the Bible never could have been thought out by the mind of man. (Exploring 1 Corinthians)

What does **"them"** refer to in context? Paul has described **"things"** no eye has seen, no ear has heard and now he says God has revealed **"them"** to us. What we as believers know about God, Jesus and the Gospel is not because we figured it out, but it was

because God has chosen to reveal it to us. Otherwise we would be like the rest of the world and not understand these "**things which eye has not seen, etc**". All praise, glory and honor to the Most High God for opening our eyes and ears and mind to understand these eternal truths, which recalls John Newton's famous words...

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,  
That saved a wretch like me.  
I once was lost, but now am found.

**Was blind, but now I see.**

**Morris** makes a good point in like of their division and factions - "That it is revealed takes away all suggestion of superiority. There can be no feeling of pride when it is clear that all is of God. Believers can claim no special skill or insight, only that God has revealed truth to them." (1 Corinthians: Tyndale New Testament Commentaries)

While there is no longer any new revelation, the selfsame Spirit gives **illumination** to all believers, and without His **illumination** we cannot understand the Word.

As the Psalmist writes "The unfolding (opening, unveiling giving understanding of something otherwise difficult) of Thy words gives light. It gives understanding to the simple." (Ps 119:130+)

In fact, it is always a good practice before we open the Word, to go to God asking Him to open our heart to receive the Word, praying "**Open my eyes, that I may behold Wonderful things from Thy law.**" (Ps 119:18+).

**THOUGHT** - Do you remember (sadly I often forget!) to ask God's Spirit to open your "spiritual eyes" before you open His Word? (cf Lk 24:45+)

**Related Resource:**

- Illumination of the Bible

**Charles Hodge** - What was undiscoverable by human reason, God has **revealed** by his Spirit. Unto us, i.e. unto those to whom this revelation, was made, viz. "the holy apostles and prophets," Ephesians 3:5. This revelation was made by the Spirit, for He alone is competent to make it; for He alone searches the deep things of God. ([1 Corinthians 2 - Hodge's Commentary](#))

**For the Spirit searches** (is constantly exploring) **all things**, Not "some" but "**all**" emphasizing the Spirit's **omniscience**. To what THINGS does this refer? Paul has just described "**THINGS** which eye has not seen..." (1 Cor 2:9). It follows that the Spirit searches those **THINGS** and then Paul adds these are the deep things of God.

**Calvin** - Having shut up all mankind in (spiritual) blindness, and having taken away from the human intellect the power of attaining to a knowledge of God by its own resources (**Ed**: Referring to special revelation, not natural revelation, to which all men have access - Ro 1:18-21 - so that all men are without excuse!), he now shows in what way believers are exempted from this blindness, — by the Lord's honoring them with a special illumination of the Spirit.

**Arnold** - God the Holy Spirit is co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father. He knows the deep things of God. He knows God. He knows everything about the character and purposes and motivations of God. The Holy Spirit is immanently qualified to make the revelation of God known to men. The Holy Spirit penetrates into the deep things of God because he is God; there is nothing beyond the Spirit's knowledge.

The verb **searches** might suggest that the Spirit is not omniscient and that He needs to search for truth that He does not already know. Nothing could be further from the truth, for as the third member of the Trinity, the Spirit has all the attributes of God, including **omniscience**. As Leon Morris says the idea of the "**Spirit searches all things** (is) not that He conducts searches with a view to obtaining information, but that He penetrates all things. There is nothing beyond his knowledge." (Ibid)

**C H Spurgeon** gives a great **illustration** of our desperate, constant need of the Holy Spirit to open our natural eyes to supernatural truth...

The Spirit guiding into all truth - Truth may be compared to some cave or grotto, with wondrous stalactites hanging from the roof, and others starting from the floor; a cavern glittering with spar and abounding in marvels. Before entering the cavern you inquire for a guide, who comes with his lighted flambeau. He conducts you down to a considerable depth, and you find yourself in the midst of the cave. He leads you through different chambers. Here he points you to a little stream rushing from amid the rocks, and indicates its rise and progress; there he points to some peculiar rock and tells you its name, then takes you into a large natural hall, tells you how many persons once feasted in it, and so on. Truth is a grand series of caverns, it is our glory to

have so great and wise a Conductor as the Holy Spirit. Imagine that we are coming to the darkness of it. He is a light shining in the midst of us to guide us. And by the light He shows us wondrous things. He teaches us by suggestion, direction, and illumination.

**Even the depths of God** - Amplified -"even sounding the profound and bottomless things of God [the divine counsels and things hidden and beyond man's scrutiny]." Even the "deep things" of God. **Depth** is **bathos** (from **bathus** = deep) which literally indicates distance below a surface and was used in secular Greek to describe the depths of the sea. Figuratively as in this passage, **bathos**, speaks of that which is unfathomable, as in Ro 11.33-note where Paul writes "**Oh the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!**" Paul states that only the Spirit knows God's depths! As an aside John uses the antithetical phrase "the deep things of Satan" (Rev. 2:24-note).

**Charles Hodge** on the **depths of God** - The inmost recesses, as it were, of His being, perfections and purposes. The Spirit, therefore, is fully competent to reveal that wisdom which had for ages been hidden in God (Eph 3:9-note). This passage proves at once the personality and the divinity of the Holy Ghost. His personality, because intelligent activity is ascribed to him; he searches; his divinity, because omniscience is ascribed to him; he knows all that God knows. ([1 Corinthians 2 - Hodge's Commentary](#))

**Pritchard** observes that verses 10-13 teach us four important truths about the Holy Spirit and the believer:

1. The Holy Spirit reveals the truth of God to us. verse 10.
2. The Holy Spirit can reveal the truth of God to us because he knows the mind of God infallibly. verse 11.
3. The Holy Spirit enables us to understand the message of the gospel. verse 12.
4. The Holy Spirit teaches us what to say when we witness to others. verse 13.

**HCSB - Depths of God** refers to the deepest wisdom that God's Spirit reveals to believers. This highest wisdom, as understood from the previous context and throughout the letter, is Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, "and Him crucified" (v. 2).

**Gilbrant** - The word "**searches**" does not suggest incompleteness, but rather the opposite—fullness of knowledge, action, and penetration. The work He does can be done because He is God and understands all divine things. He searches the deep things of God. Salvation belongs here, but much more than just initial salvation is meant. Included is wisdom, knowledge, and judgment—the work of the Holy Spirit himself. (The Complete Biblical Library – Romans-Corinthians)

**Searches** (2045)(**ereunao**) means to make thorough examination, to make a careful or thorough effort to learn something. It is notable that 3 of the 6 uses relate to the exercise on the part of men by which they examine the Scriptures with utmost care. This verb ought to be emblazoned on the heart of every believer that we might always seek to know "What saith the Lord?!"

**ILLUSTRATION - Spiritual Sight Restored** - A little boy was born blind. At last an operation was performed — the light was let in slowly. When one day his mother led him out of doors and uncovered his eyes, and for the first time he saw the sky and the earth, "Oh, mother!" he cried, "why did you not tell me it was so beautiful?" She burst into tears, and said, "I tried to tell you, dear, but you could not understand me." So it is when we try to tell what is in Christ. Unless the spiritual sight is opened by the Holy Spirit we cannot understand. ([1 Corinthians 2-10 Sermons](#))

**ILLUSTRATION - D L Moody** - 1 Cor 2:9-10 - IT is said by travellers that in climbing the Alps the houses of far distant villages can be seen with great distinctness, so that sometimes the number of panes of glass in a church window can be counted. The distance looks so short that the place to which the traveller is journeying appears almost at hand, but after hours and hours of climbing it seems no nearer. This is because of the clearness of the atmosphere. By perseverance, however, the place is reached at last, and the tired traveller finds rest. So sometimes we dwell in high altitudes of grace; heaven seems very near, and the hills of Beulah are in full view. At other times the clouds and fogs caused by suffering and sin cut off our sight. We are just as near heaven in the one case as we are in the other, and we are just as sure of gaining it if we but keep in the path that Christ has pointed out.

**Matthew Henry Concise** - verses 10-16. God has revealed true wisdom to us by his Spirit. Here is a proof of the Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, 2 Peter 1:21. In proof of the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, observe, that He knows all things, and He searches all things, even the deep things of God. No one can know the things of God, but His Holy Spirit, Who is One with the Father and the Son, and Who makes known Divine mysteries to His church. This is most clear testimony, both to the real Godhead and the distinct person of the Holy Spirit. The apostles were not guided by worldly principles. They had the revelation of these things from the Spirit of God, and the saving impression of them from the same Spirit. These things they declared in plain, simple language, taught by the Holy Spirit, totally different from the affected oratory or enticing words of man's wisdom. The natural man, the wise man of the world, receives not the things of the Spirit of God. **The pride of carnal reasoning is really as much opposed to spirituality, as the basest sensuality.** The sanctified mind discerns the real beauties of holiness, but the power of discerning and judging about common and natural things is not lost. But the carnal man is a stranger to the principles, and pleasures, and actings of the Divine

life. The spiritual man only, is the person to whom God gives the knowledge of His will. How little have any known of the mind of God by natural power! And the apostles were enabled by His Spirit to make known His mind. In the Holy Scriptures, the mind of Christ, and the mind of God in Christ, are fully made known to us. It is the great privilege of Christians, that they have the mind of Christ revealed to them by His Spirit. They experience His sanctifying power in their hearts, and bring forth good fruits in their lives.

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**Discovery** - Julie Ackerman Link - Imagine Christmas morning without wrapping paper! The joy would be short-lived, for much of the excitement is the anticipation of finding out what's in the package. Apparently God created us with a "normal" setting that causes us to enjoy the process of discovery, because finding something is often more exciting than having it. That is, after all, why we wrap presents.

Many passages in Scripture allude to this concept. In Proverbs we read of wisdom: "Those who seek me diligently will find me" (Pr 8:17). And the prophet Jeremiah wrote of the Lord: "You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart" (Pr 29:13).

God could have revealed all truth to all people at the very beginning of time, but He chose to reveal Himself gradually (1Cor. 2:7-8). Perhaps that's because we value things more when we have to search and wait for them.

God is not playing a cruel game of hide-and-seek. He is allowing us to enjoy the process of discovering who He is and what He is up to in the universe.

So don't be discouraged over what you don't know about God. Be excited about unwrapping all there is yet to discover. ([Our Daily Bread](#))

More about Jesus let me learn,  
More of His holy will discern;  
Spirit of God, my teacher be,  
Showing the things of Christ to me.  
—Hewitt

**God's gift of Himself to us is a present  
we will always be unwrapping.**

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## **James Smith in Handfuls of Purpose - THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION. 1 Corinthians 2:9-16.**

### **I. This Revelation cannot Possibly be the Invention of Men.**

The eye of man's carnal mind hath never seen it. The ear of man's worldly wisdom hath never heard it. Neither hath it ever entered into the heart of man (apart from the Holy Spirit) the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him (1 Cor 2:9), and since the beginning of the world it hath been so (Isa. 64:4). The world by wisdom knew not God (1Cor 1:21).

### **II. It is a Revelation from God.**

"But God hath revealed them unto us" (1 Cor 2:10). God only could reveal the mysteries of His suffering Son. "O the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God concerning His Son" (Rom. 11:33). This is the glory of the Gospel message, that it is as true and as gracious as the God who gave it (Gal. 1:12).

### **III. What this Revelation Is.**

It is the unveiling of the mystery of Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor 2:2). The revelation of the fact that He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification, and that He is coming again for our final deliverance (Heb. 9:26). It is a revelation of His abounding grace to sinful men, and of His power to save to the very uttermost all that come unto Him.

### **IV. How this Revelation is Made Known.**

"God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit" (1 Cor 2:10). It has come from God, and it comes home to the believing heart by the Spirit of God. For "the Spirit searcheth the deep things of God." "The things of God no man knoweth without the Spirit of God" (1 Cor 2:11). The Holy Spirit is the minister of the things of Christ (1 Cor. 12:8-11). He is the "Spirit of Truth," and He shall teach you all things bearing on the revealed will of the

Father, "for He shall receive of Mine and shall shew it unto you" (John 16:13). Oh, that all His people were so taught of God. With such a "Teacher, come from God," there is no excuse for spiritual poverty. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." For ye may know the letter of the word, and yet be strangers to its mighty power.

#### V. How these Things should be Preached.

"My preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor 2:4). "Our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost" (1Th. 1:5). Without this power, preaching is without authority—"sounding brass." There may be a demonstration of eloquent words and fleshly energy, but without the demonstration of the Spirit it is spiritually powerless (1 Cor 2:13). "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me" (Acts 1:8). Ye ministers of His, "Tarry ye until ye be endued with powers from on high" (Luke 24:49). "For the promise is unto you" (Acts 2:39).

#### VI. The Christian's Attitude Towards this Divine Revelation.

"I am determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2). In Corinth there were many contentions, as there are in the world everywhere to-day. But Paul knew that the one thing needed by all was the power of the Gospel of Christ. The worldly, in their wisdom, would call this narrow-minded; but it is the wisdom of God to offer the Divine remedy for all the world's woes. "I am determined," he declared. "This one thing I do." Would God that this determination was the settled motive in the hearts of all who serve in the preaching of God's Word. The whole counsel of God radiates from the "Christ and Him crucified." "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord" (Phil. 3:8)

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#### Paul Apple's Outline Interpretation of 1 Cor 2:10-16 ([1 Corinthians Commentary](#))

##### I. (1Cor 2:10-11) PROCESS #1 - REVELATION TO THE WRITERS OF THE NT BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD

- A. Revelation To Whom - Identification of the Recipients of Revelation "For to us"
  - B. Revelation By Whom - Identification of the Originator of Revelation "God"
  - C. Revelation How - Explanation of the Process of Revelation "revealed"
  - D. Revelation of What - Content of Revelation "them"
  - C. Revelation Through Whom - Focus on the Crucial Role of the Holy Spirit "through the Spirit"
- 3 Arguments Supporting the Role of the Spirit as the Agent of Revelation
1. Argument from Function - Only the Spirit can plumb the depths of God "for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God"
  2. Argument from Human Illustration - No one else knows our thoughts but us "For who among men knows the thought of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him?"
  3. Argument from Divine Application of the Illustration - Only the Spirit knows the thoughts of God "Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God."

##### II. (1Cor 2:12-13) PROCESS #2 -- INSPIRATION OF THE CANON OF THE NT HOLY SCRIPTURES BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD

- A. NT Writers (Apostles and Prophets) Possess the Spirit of God  
"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God"
- B. NT Writers Know the Body of Truth God Wants Communicated "so that we may know the things freely given to us by God"
- C. NT Writers Were Inspired by the Holy Spirit to Communicate that Truth "which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words."

##### III. (1Cor 2:14-16) PROCESS #3 -- ILLUMINATION OF THE MINDS AND HEARTS OF BELIEVERS BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD

- A. (1Cor 2:14) Natural Man Does Not Understand or Appreciate God's Truth (refers to all of the unsaved = those who do not possess the Spirit of God)
  1. Cannot Appreciate God's Truth Because He Considers it Foolishness "But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, "for they are foolishness to him"

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**ance Havner** - That principle (of 1Cor 2:9-10) applies to the study of the Word. Indeed, if the Bible's message were so hidden that

only scholars and seminary students could find it most of us believers would be hopelessly in the dark. It is part of the miracle of the Book that God has prepared it so that it unfolds itself to the simplest souls and not merely to intellectual investigation. Of course, academic training should help, and does when rightly combined with other preparation still more valuable. No person need feel discouraged over lack of theological education, for there is an understanding of the Word which is utterly independent of scholarship and open to the unschooled as freely as to the learned. We fill our libraries with books about the Bible, and some of us need to learn the truth expressed by the old colored preacher. He had borrowed a commentary from a white preacher and, upon returning it, was asked what he thought of it. He replied that the Bible certainly did throw a lot of light on it! Dr. Campbell Morgan laid aside his books and for years studied only the Bible. The Book is its own best expositor. When men approach the Bible from any principle of study and interpretation except the principle laid down in the Scriptures, the end is always confusion. For the Bible is not an ordinary book, it moves in another realm, and its laws are the laws of that realm. Spiritual preparation and prayerful study unlock its treasures. That is why the pastor of the back-street church may excel the scholarly star preacher. There is a wisdom in "the foolishness of God" greater than the wisdom of men. There is a wisdom of spiritual perception among humble believers that is greater than the wisdom of learned Christians who are hiding the Word in their heads and not storing it in their hearts. We speak of "knowing the Bible by heart" when we mean "by memory." One may know all by memory, and not know it by heart. (By The Still Waters-Sermons)

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### **Archibald Brown What do you understand by 'the deep things of God'?**

Everything that has to do with God is deep; God has no shallows — but *God himself is the greatest depth*. In the 11th chapter of Job at the 7-8th verses you have this remarkable utterance: 'Can you by searching find out God? Can you find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as Heaven; what can you do? deeper than Sheol; what can you know?' I know that we also speak of *God's attributes*. That is a very easy way of trying to get out of a greater difficulty — but when we have uttered the word 'attribute,' what do we mean by it? We speak of God's omnipotence, his omniscience, his omnipresence; but the dear orphan children can utter all these words, and perhaps know them better than some others here. When you have uttered them, what have you done? You have only, after all, uttered that which you yourself cannot comprehend. Every word in the list of Divine Attributes is an ocean which has neither a bottom nor shore! These are the *depths* of Godhead — but that is not what is intended in the text; it is not the depths of Godhead, but the *deep things* of God that are told to us.

From the 9th verse to the close of the chapter you have the word 'things' over and over again — I think eleven times — and if you have your Bibles with you, will you just for a moment cast your eyes down this portion; **it has been called 'the chapter of things.'**

Look at the 9th verse: 'The *things* which God has prepared.'

10th verse: 'The Spirit searches all *things*, yes, the deep things of God.'

11th verse: 'For what man knows the *things* of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the *things* of God knows no man — but the Spirit of God.'

12th verse: 'Now we have received not the spirit of the world — but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the *things* that are freely given to us of God.'

13th verse: 'Which *things* also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches — but which the Holy Spirit teaches; comparing spiritual *things* with spiritual.'

14th verse: 'But the natural man receives not the *things* of God.'

15th verse: 'But he who is spiritual discerns all *things* — yet he himself is discerned of no man.'

So that when you come to this portion you are not dealing with an isolated passage; the deep things are referred to all the way through these verses, and things are a short way of saying 'thinkings.' People say things — but when they say things, they are really saying thinkings, because everything was first a thought. This world before it became a thing was a thought in the Creator's mind. Every cathedral that has ever been built was a thought in the mind of the architect before it became a thing in the hands of the builder. Every book of poems was first of all a thought in the poet's mind — it is etherealized thought.

The things here spoken of are God's thinkings, God's thoughts — but God's thoughts are realities; they are no mere myths, they are things! God's children are not a number of *poor deluded fools that dream of unsubstantial ideas*. There are in the gospel wondrous realities, and the work of the Holy Spirit is to *search, bring out, and teach* us these things that are freely given to us — these things that are mentioned in our text as deep things. Let me mention these things that the Holy Spirit wants you to have and wishes you to enjoy. ([Read the entire excellent sermon](#) where Brown goes on to describe some of the "deep things" - love, wisdom, mercy, righteousness, reconciliation, pardon, blessings, joy, future glory)

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The statement, “I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor 2:2), should be for us all, not a record of achievement but, humbly before God, the desire of our hearts in our ministry for Him. That is the way the course of the ship of the church (or the life) must be set to catch the breeze of the Spirit of God from heaven.

That brings me right to the very heart of the message of this portion of Scripture. Paul is addressing himself to a situation which, humanly speaking, is far too big for him — a situation in which many a preacher has found himself ever since. He sees in Corinth what I would call, in the first place, a mission to be fulfilled:

“That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (1 Cor 2:5).

In a city like Corinth, so full of human pride and sin, Paul knows perfectly well that the little group of Christians cannot face the challenge of presenting Christ if their faith is based only on intellectual assent. Their faith must stand on the rock of revelation rather than on the sands of human philosophy. Nothing but the miracle of the grace of God revealed in lives transformed by the Spirit of God can ever convict a Corinth. If these young Christians lack reality, they will crumble under the pressure and be sucked into the quicksand of sin around them. Corinth is far too clever for them, and far too sinful; therefore their faith must stand in the power of God and not in the wisdom of men.

This is Paul’s concern for the young church, the mission that as preacher, servant, and ambassador of the cross, he knows must be fulfilled, or else the outcome will be disaster. Somehow the little band of believers must confront that great city with the reality of their faith, proving that their message is something that God has communicated to them from heaven itself.

That is equally true today. Whether or not we realize it, if you and I are even to survive as Christian people (putting it on the lowest level), let alone live triumphantly in Christ, a theoretical presentation is totally inadequate. The world we live in is too clever and sinful for that and if we have nothing more, we will be sucked under by the whirlpool of philosophies and “isms,” the tides of sin and vice.

“We have this treasure in earthen vessels,” says Paul, “that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (2 Corinthians 4:7+). These earthen vessels are helpless and weak in themselves and in the battle of life we must stand “By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left” (2 Corinthians 6:7). In other words, we must recognize our own weakness, even glory in it, that the power of Christ may rest upon us.

Oh, that our world may feel the impact of faith — your faith and mine — that stands in the power of God! So that in whatever circumstances of testing you may live, others will see in you the miracle of standing not only in the power of God, but also in the authority of God. As you live, surrounded by every possible evil influence that would contrive to pull you down in this wicked age, you have a mission that must be fulfilled, to stand in the power of God. It is dependent upon your acceptance of the verdict of Calvary, of the bankruptcy of self and the futility of anything untouched by the power of God the Holy Spirit.

How can our mission be fulfilled, then? By the message we have to proclaim: “I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (2:2). The emphasis Paul intends is this, I think: “not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” That is his theme for Corinth, and that should be the theme of all preaching today. It must be the message of your life in your circumstances, the principle of your life if you are to stand in the power of God.

I would remind you that Paul had come to Corinth, as he says himself, in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. He had come to the European continent for the first time and his reception had not been very pleasant. He was imprisoned at Philippi, smuggled out of Thessalonica, driven out of Berea, and when he reached Athens and started to argue with them on the basis of their agnosticism, he accomplished very little. He was pressed in spirit as he came to Corinth, and God Himself had to encourage him: “Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city” (Acts 18:9–10+).

Knowing the strength of Corinthian wisdom and the character of that city, the depths of its sin and the tremendous boast of its intellect, he determined that he would not argue or debate with anybody, but present the crucified, risen Lord in the conviction that what Jesus said was absolutely true, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” (John 12:32). So the man must

get out of the picture, the personality of the preacher become obscured, and the Lord be at the center of all. “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Corinthians 4:5). The Lord gets the glory, and the result is absolutely convincing:

“My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (1 Cor 2:4).

The principle here is as true today as it was then. First there must be a life willing to efface itself, to retreat from its imagined cleverness and wisdom, from its own efforts to stand against the pressure. There rests upon such a life the anointing of the Spirit of

God, with this tremendous result that faith shall stand, not in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God.

When Paul says, "I am determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified," quite obviously he is excluding other things. What were they?

"The Jews require a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified" (1 Cor 1:22–23).

Slowly but surely today — and I say this with a deep conviction of heart — God is driving the church into a corner from which there is no escape. There are various alternatives which we have tried in place of this message — I am not speaking of the message that Christ died for our sins, but that of our death to sin in Jesus, the message of a crucified life. The poor, cheap, noisy substitutes which the church has tried in place of that message are being exposed for the paltry, futile things they really are. Along with all the so-called progress there is the most alarming spiritual decline. The church has never had better machinery, neither has the church ever been so helplessly ineffective in meeting the problems of the day.

One by one the gadgets are dropping out of our hands when we are recognizing their spiritual ineffectiveness. God is stripping from us every false hope and making us face reality. He is teaching us these days that nothing less than the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in revival can ever meet the need. God is trying to tell us that our currently popular version of Christianity — comfortable, humorous, superficially interesting, worldly-wise — is exposed for the irreverent presentation that it is of the Gospel of Christ.

When revival comes, we shall find our lives revolutionized and our values turned upside down. Do you know why revival tarries? Because God does not take our praying seriously when we behave the way we do in public. When our confidence is in gimmicks, programs, schemes, and planning, and we have not learned to seek first the Lord in the power of God the Holy Spirit, in brokenness at Calvary, we inevitably go on being defeated and losing the battle. May the Lord drive us into that corner, so that we will fall before Him and say, "Lord, I would know nothing except Christ and Him crucified."

One might equally well say, "I am determined to know everything in Christ and Him crucified." This is not excluding something, but including everything that really counts, for the message of the cross includes everything to meet the need of the human heart. Of course, it does not meet the demands of an entertainment-crazy generation that is seeking for a sign, but a preacher is commissioned to give people, not what they want, but what they need. No man has any business to be in a pulpit to entertain; he is there to present Calvary in all its fullness of hope and glory.

When Jesus Christ was asked for a sign to prove His authority, He replied by saying, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas" (Matthew 12:39). As Jonah was three days in the fish, so the Son of Man would be three days in the heart of the earth.

Dare we say the message of Calvary is not good enough today? It goes straight to the bottom of your need and mine. It brushes aside the superficial; it exposes sin for what it really is. And when a man or woman, fellow or girl, is prepared to accept the verdict of Calvary upon pride, self-sufficiency, and intellect, and to come trusting and resting entirely upon the cross, there falls upon his or her life the anointing of the Spirit of God. Their testimony then is not in their own faith and wisdom; they do not have to meet men on the basis of human philosophy, but stand in the power of God and with the anointing of the Spirit.

When you are prepared to meet Jesus at Calvary He will drive you into a tight corner. Has He put you on the spot? Has He put you into some desperate experience? You try to wriggle and squirm to get out of it, but the Lord is relentlessly holding you there until you learn that your wisdom is useless and your philosophy has no answer, and that you are helpless to stand against the current of temptation until you learn to cling to Him.

Once you are determined to know nothing in this particular situation (whatever it may be) but Christ and Him crucified, then you are also saying, "By the grace of God, in Christ and Him crucified I have everything."

"That's all very well," you may be saying to me, "but I'm afraid of putting it into practice. Suppose I let go and let God, what then?"

Then there is a mystery to be revealed.

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," says Paul. "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit" (1 Cor 2:9–10).

The preaching of the cross, the living out of this Christian life day by day, is not unintelligent: "we speak wisdom among them that are perfect [i.e., full-grown or enlightened]: yet not the wisdom of this world . . . but . . . the wisdom of God in a mystery" (1 Cor 2:6–7). The Christian is not a fool, although the world may frequently think he is. He has an enlightened mind (1 Cor 2:16), and he is speaking wisdom to those who can understand, "speaking the wisdom of God in a mystery."

What is a mystery? Is it something you cannot understand? No, in Scripture a mystery is something that once was hidden but now is revealed: "God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit" (1 Cor 2:10). When the Lord Jesus comes to dwell in your life, your eyes are opened, your ears are unstopped, and you begin to understand some of the things that God has prepared for you. What are

they? Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2–3). Hope of heaven, and the resources of heaven down here, also: "The mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:26–27).

Persecuted, harassed, distressed Christian, God has not left you to fight the battle alone. "I will not leave you comfortless [orphans]," said the Lord. ". . . The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send you in my name, he shall teach you all things. . . . Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you" (John 14:18, 26–27). Peace, hope, heaven — these are some of the things that God has prepared for them that love Him, things He has revealed unto us by the Spirit that "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

Wonderful truth — the Christian has the life of God in him! He has access to the One in whom, says the Word, "dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead" (Colossian 2:9); the One "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3), for all that is in Jesus, and He is in you. That is the mystery which the Holy Spirit reveals to the life that has confessed its bankruptcy and is shut up to the mercy of God.

In the light of what has been said, which course are you going to follow? Are you so operating in your sphere of Christian service that you may expect revival? With your confidence in Him, are you living your life, conducting your program, and thinking about your problems in such a way that you may expect the Holy Spirit to come in power at any moment? Or, secretly, is your confidence in the flesh and in the machinery of human effort? In what do you glory? Where do you place your trust?

Let us be realistic. Are you prepared to change gears? Do you recognize your bankruptcy? Are you willing to place no confidence in the flesh, to step out of the place of frustration and despair, anxiety and futility, into the place where the Holy Spirit can come with anointing and with power? Then look up to Him and say, "Now, Lord, it's up to You."

There must be no false gods, nor misplaced confidence in something or someone, no secret boast that says, "I can pull it off; I can see it through." No compromise, no unconfessed sin, no theoretical faith, no unsundered life, no critical spirit, no unbroken heart, no worldliness, no self can be allowed — nothing! For "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

**1 Corinthians 2:11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.**

Wuest - For who is there of men who knows the things of the individual person except the [human] spirit of that aforementioned individual person which is in him? In the same manner also the things of God no one has known except the Spirit of God. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Amplified - For what person perceives (knows and understands) what passes through a man's thoughts except the man's own spirit within him? Just so no one discerns (comes to know and comprehend) the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

NET 1 Corinthians 2:11 For who among men knows the things of a man except the man's spirit within him? So too, no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.

NLT 1 Corinthians 2:11 No one can know a person's thoughts except that person's own spirit, and no one can know God's thoughts except God's own Spirit.

ESV 1 Corinthians 2:11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

NIV 1 Corinthians 2:11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

GNT 1 Corinthians 2:11 τ ς γ ρ ο δ εν ν θ ρ π ω ν τ το ν θ ρ που ε μ τ πνε μα το ν θ ρ που τ ν α τ ; ο τ ω ς κ α τ τ ο θε ο ο δε ς γ ν ω κ εν ε μ τ πνε μα το θε ο .

KJV 1 Corinthians 2:11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

YLT 1 Corinthians 2:11 for who of men hath known the things of the man, except the spirit of the man that is in him? so also the things of God no one hath known, except the Spirit of God.

ASV 1 Corinthians 2:11 For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is

in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God.

CSB 1 Corinthians 2:11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man that is in him? In the same way, no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 2:11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.

NRS 1 Corinthians 2:11 For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God.

NAB 1 Corinthians 2:11 Among human beings, who knows what pertains to a person except the spirit of the person that is within? Similarly, no one knows what pertains to God except the Spirit of God.

NJB 1 Corinthians 2:11 After all, is there anyone who knows the qualities of anyone except his own spirit, within him; and in the same way, nobody knows the qualities of God except the Spirit of God.

GWN 1 Corinthians 2:11 After all, who knows everything about a person except that person's own spirit? In the same way, no one has known everything about God except God's Spirit.

- what: Pr 14:10 20:5,27 Jer 17:9
- even: 1Co 2:10 Ro 11:33,34
- [1 Corinthians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE SPIRIT, THE REVEALER OF GOD'S WISDOM

**NOTE: For the more in depth comments click [1 Corinthians 2:11](#)**

**For (gar)** - There are 5 "**for's**" or **terms of explanation** in 1Cor 2:10-16, providing ample opportunity to practice interrogating this strategic preposition. I have taught this principle to a number of believers and they have repeatedly testified that it has literally changed the way they read God's Word. Why? Because there are so many occurrences of **for** from Genesis to Revelation (over 9000! Most but not all represent terms of explanation) and the Spirit is always ready and willing to lead us into all truth as we take time to **meditate** (also see **Primer on Biblical Meditation**) on His inspired Word (Do you believe Psalm 1:2-3-see exposition)! Before you read on, what is Paul explaining?

**Expositor's** explains that "The **gar** ("**for**") here points to an illustration that will show that the spiritual wisdom and truths of God can be understood only through the Holy Spirit, just as human wisdom needs the human spirit to understand it. The conclusion is that only the Holy Spirit can reveal God's wisdom and truth to man."

**David Garland** adds that Paul is doing in this passage "is to draw a thick and heavy line between things human and divine and to place the things of God squarely outside the limits of human knowing." That line is crossed only by the divine Spirit, who works in humans "a likeness of the Lord" (2Cor. 3:18) and enables the confession "Jesus is Lord" (1Cor 12:3; Gärtner 1967-68: 221)." (Ibid)

**Who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him?** This is a truism everyone knows - only a man/woman knows their inmost thoughts. We cannot know what another man is thinking, his "self-consciousness." As an aside, this Biblical statement totally debunks so-called "**mind reading**" - it simply cannot be done by human beings! By God, yes, but not by men.

**Brian Bell** - You can learn things about me by observing me or by what people say about me; but you can't know what is going on in my mind or my spirit unless I choose to reveal it to you. Only I know what I'm thinking! (besides my wife she's pretty good at it) Likewise, only the Spirit of God knows the mind of God.

**Guzik** explains that "Paul argues from the Greek philosophic premise that like is known only by like. You can guess what your dog is thinking, but you really can't know unless he was to tell you. Even so, we could guess what God is thinking, and about His wisdom, but we would never know unless He told us." ([1 Corinthians 2 Commentary](#))

**THOUGHT** - A corollary thought is that we all potentially have secrets kept from others and known only to ourselves. This begs the question are our "secrets" sins against God, because secret sin on earth is open scandal in Heaven? Are we continually walking in the light as God Himself is in the light (1 Jn 1:6-7+)? Can we say with Paul that our conscience is clear (2 Ti 1:3+)? Do we understand the truth of Numbers 32:23+? Have we fallen into the subtle snare of letting sin deceive us (Heb 3:13+) Have we [swept our sins under the rug](#) (Pr 28:13+) or put them under the blood? (1 John 1:9+) Just asking and doing so as I look into the mirror at

myself!

**The spirit of the man** - Wuest explains that "The word **"spirit"** in the Greek refers here to the rational spirit, the power by which a human being feels, thinks, wills, and decides. Again, the word **"man"** in the phrase, **"except the spirit of man,"** is preceded by the article. The Greek article originally came from the demonstrative pronoun, and it retains much of the demonstrative's force of pointing out. Therefore, we translate, "For who is there of men who knows the things of the (individual) man except the spirit of (that) man which is in him." Only the individual knows what is in his heart of hearts. To his fellow-man he is inscrutable. Just so, Paul says, logic will lead us to the conclusion that if a man is inscrutable to his fellow-man, so God must be inscrutable to man. And just as only the individual person knows what is in his own heart, so only God knows what is in His own heart. Therefore, if man finds it impossible through scientific investigation and human reason to discover the inner secrets of his fellow-man, it is clear that he cannot find out the mind of God by the same methods. The only way in which a person can come to know the inner heart-life of another person is to have that person uncover the secrets of his inner life to him. It likewise follows that the only way in which a person can know the mind of God is to have God uncover His thoughts to man. Thus Paul has demonstrated to these Greeks the absolute need of a revelation from God if we are to know what is in His heart. The first step therefore, in the transmission of truth from the heart of God to the heart of the believer is revelation, the act of God the Holy Spirit uncovering the things in the heart of God to the Bible writers, thus imparting the truth of Scripture to them." ([Wuest Word Studies - Erdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#))

**Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.**- Paul is using a **term of comparison (even so)** so even as we cannot know another person's thoughts, we certainly cannot know God's thoughts, for only the Spirit of God can know God's thoughts, the wisdom of God. As an aside, this verse clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit is not an "it" but is a being Who is able to think, so clearly the Holy Spirit is a Person, in fact the third Person of the Trinity. Sadly, the Spirit has become to so many believers today the one several writers have referred to as "The Forgotten God" (see devotional below). (I also recommend reading Francis Chan's book [Forgotten God- Reversing Our Tragic Neglect of the Holy Spirit](#)). See also my page on the Holy Spirit, in which I attempt to show the Biblical "template" for the Spirit in every believer's life - specifically explaining that Jesus gave us the pattern of dependence on the power of the Spirit during His ministry and we are to be imitators of this pattern today (1Cor 11:1, 1Pe 2:21, 1Jn 2:6). And frankly there is no "Plan B" for living the "Christ-life," the "Victorious Christian Life," the "Abundant Life!" (**See more in depth explanation = The Holy Spirit**).

**No one** - Absolute negation = Absolutely no one!

**Knows (1097)(ginosko)** means he has come to know by personal experience and the perfect tense signifies he "has come to know and still knows." (Robertson)

**Jack Arnold** - Only God the Holy Spirit knows the inner workings of God; therefore, the Holy Spirit alone can teach the perfect workings of the Father. What is Paul driving at? There is this great Being of God in our universe a fantastic Being of infinite wisdom, power and holiness. Yet, how can we know Him? We cannot unless God discloses Himself to us personally. By natural investigation man will never find his way to the heart of God.

**Gilbrant** - "The point of comparison is that He can know that which no one except God could know. Only the Holy Spirit can recognize, understand, and reveal the heart and mind of God." (CBL Commentary-1 Corinthians)

**Charles Hodge** - This verse is designed to illustrate two points: First, as no one knows the thoughts of a man but the man himself, so no one knows the thoughts of God, but God Himself. Therefore no one but a divine person is competent to make a revelation of the thoughts and purposes of God. Second, as every man does know his own thoughts, so the Spirit of God knows the thoughts of God. His knowledge of what is in God is analogous to that which we have of the contents of our own consciousness. The analogies of Scripture, however, are **not to be pressed beyond the point** which they are intended to illustrate. The point to be illustrated here is, the knowledge of the Spirit. He knows what is in God, as we know what is in ourselves. **It is not to be inferred from this that the Spirit of God bears in other points the same relation to God, that our spirits do to us.** ([1 Corinthians 2 - Hodge's Commentary](#))

**Ray Pritchard** - The Holy Spirit can reveal the truth of God to us because he knows the mind of God infallibly. That's verse 11. Paul argues by analogy from the lesser to the greater. Even among people who know each other very well, communication is difficult at best. For instance, when my wife and I have a conversation, there is always the challenge of communicating to each other what we really mean. On my side of the equation, you have what I am thinking, what I meant to say, what I said, and what I thought I said. On her side, there is what she hears, what she thought she heard, what she wanted to hear, and what she wishes she had heard. When she speaks, the process works in reverse. So with just two people, you might have a dozen different messages and intentions flying back and forth. No wonder communication is difficult. I know what I'm thinking but it's often hard to put my thoughts into words. You only know what you hear me say. My "spirit" knows what I intend even though my words may fall short of my intentions. Now take that truth over to the divine realm. The Holy Spirit knows the mind of God because the Holy Spirit is God. He searches out the "deep

things” of God. Nothing is hidden from him. Because he knows the mind of God, he can communicate the truth about God to us. Nothing is lost in translation.

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**The Forgotten God**- Marvin Williams - When we quote The Apostles’ Creed, we say, “I believe in the Holy Spirit.” Author J. B. Phillips said, “Every time we say [this] we mean that we believe that [the Spirit] is a living God able and willing to enter human personality and change it.”

Sometimes we forget that the Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force. The Bible describes Him as God. He possesses the attributes of God: He is present everywhere (Ps. 139:7-8), He knows all things (1 Cor. 2:10-11), and He has infinite power (Lk 1:35). He also does things that only God can do: create (Ge 1:2) and give life (Ro 8:2). He is equal in every way with the other Persons of the Trinity—the Father and the Son.

The Holy Spirit is a Person who engages in personal ways with us. He grieves when we sin (Eph. 4:30). He teaches us (1Cor. 2:13), prays for us (Rom. 8:26), guides us (John 16:13), gives us spiritual gifts (1Cor. 12:11), and assures us of salvation (Rom. 8:16).

The Holy Spirit indwells us if we have received forgiveness of sin through Jesus. He desires to transform us so that we become more and more like Jesus. Let’s cooperate with the Spirit by reading God’s Word and relying on His power to obey what we learn.

[\(Our Daily Bread\)](#)

God’s guidance and help that we need day to day

Is given to all who believe;

The Spirit has sealed us—He’s God’s guarantee

Of power that we can receive.

—Branon

**The Christian who neglects the Holy Spirit  
is like a lamp that’s not plugged in.**

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### **Are You A Parakeet?**

Read: 1 Corinthians 2:6-16

No one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. —1 Corinthians 2:11

On several occasions I visited a retired pastor who had a pet parakeet named Gibby Gibson. It would say, “Gibby Gibson is the prettiest bird in all the world.” Or it would repeat, “Dr. Gibson is a preacher—a Baptist preacher.” But, of course, the bird didn’t understand one word it was saying.

Herein lies a lesson. Too many Christians go through the habitual motions of worship and Bible reading without the slightest idea of the meaning of what they are doing. They seem to think there is some secret charm or mystical benefit in just going through it.

The issue is not how much of the Bible you read, but how well you read it. I have heard many people boast about how many times they have read through the Bible, but their conversation revealed a tragic ignorance of the Word of God. Better to read one verse prayerfully, seeking the guidance of your “Paraclete” (translated as “Comforter” or “Helper” in John 14:16), the Holy Spirit, than to rattle off a whole book from memory like a parakeet. The important question is, “Do you understand what you are reading?” (Acts 8:30).

When you read the Bible, ask the Holy Spirit, your “Paraclete,” to guide you. Don’t be a parakeet.

Ever-present, truest Friend,

Ever near Thine aid to lend;

Guide us as we search the Word,

Make it both our shield and sword.

—Anon.

It’s better to live one verse of the Bible than to recite an entire chapter.

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### **Alan Redpath - WHICH CLASS ARE YOU TRAVELING? 1 CORINTHIANS 2:11–3:6**

There is a unique factor in the Christian gospel which makes all talk about comparative religions utterly beside the point, in my opinion. The life of the Founder of our faith inhabits the personality of every person who trusts Him for salvation; every child of God

has living within him God the Holy [Spirit] — not an influence, but the Third Person of the Trinity.

“If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his,” said Paul in Romans 8:9. And in 1 Corinthians 6:19, “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?” Therefore every Christian — no matter how weak and feeble, how poor and helpless, perhaps with a sense of utter inability and frustration — whatever his own personal feeling may be, is indwelt by the Third Person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit has come into our lives so that we might develop character; the “fruit of the Spirit” in Galatians 5:22 is character-fruit, the reproduction of the character of Jesus Christ.

We ought to hang our heads in shame as we ask ourselves, “Why is it that so little of His life is produced in us and so much of ourselves still remains?” The answer to that question is in the verses we are to study here.

Paul introduces us to two different kinds of Christian life. He says in 3:1, “I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.” Please notice the word “brethren”; he is writing to those who are born again of the Spirit of God and who are within the Christian church. Here are two different classes of people, both of them Christian, both of them born of the Spirit of God, but one of them is designated “carnal,” and the other, “spiritual.”

I would remind you that Paul describes yet another kind of person in 2:14, the “natural man.” Of him Paul says that he “receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him.” This, of course, is the unbeliever, perhaps the charming pagan, the intellectual agnostic, or the nice religious sort of well-educated person, but still the “natural man.” Because he is “natural,” he does not understand the things of the Spirit of God, having never been born into the family of God.

Now the tragedy is that many who profess to be Christians react so often on the level of the “natural man.” You have heard Christian people say something like this: “You know, Mrs. X said something utterly untrue about me — it was only natural that I should be angry.” “Only natural” — exactly! And unfortunately there are those born of the Spirit of God who, in terms of daily life and reactions, are still living in the natural realm. Though latent within every child of God is the possibility of reproducing the character of Jesus Christ, the fact is that this is not always accomplished. Why? Because too many Christians continue to live on the carnal level.

In the first place, a carnal Christian is living a life of perpetual conflict and repeated defeat: “For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (3:3). The fellowship of the Corinthian church was split by envy, strife, and divisions — Paul calls it “carnality.” But what a group of Christians are in their fellowship is simply the reflection of what they are individually. Therefore, here is a statement of the condition of a Christian life that is lived on a carnal plane.

Remember the language of Paul back in Romans? “What I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I” (Romans 7:15), and later on in the same chapter: “. . . when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members” (Romans 7:21–23).

That whole chapter is a portrait of the carnal Christian. Within him there is a constant conflict, a moment by moment battle between two natures, the one spiritual and the other carnal. He is forgiven, he is born again, he is living as a child of God within the fellowship of the Christian church, but he is desperately unhappy. Occasionally the Spirit of God gets the victory, but the perpetual habit of his life is downward, away from God into sin and failure. Although indwelt by the Holy Spirit, he is mastered by the flesh.

Does that describe you today? Is your experience perpetual conflict and repeated defeat? You may be rejoicing in the forgiveness of sins, but you find no power over the principle of sin in your life. Therefore you are often torn by envy, strife, and division; there is no song of joy on your lips, no spring in your step, no light in your eyes, no radiance on your face. The carnal Christian has left the world he used to live in and entered into a new experience, a new area of fellowship, but he cannot enjoy it because he is defeated: constantly fighting and constantly going down.

Another mark of the carnal Christian is that he is living a life of protracted infancy and retarded growth. Paul calls these Corinthians “babes in Christ,” saying, “I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able” (3:1–2).

It is a very wonderful experience when a baby comes into a home, but it is a tragedy if the child does not grow. What are the characteristics of a baby? In the first place, he is absolutely dependent upon other people. He cannot walk; he has to be helped up. He cannot feed himself; another has to feed him. And he is only happy, really, when he is the center of interest.

So it is with the carnal Christian. He is always leaning on other people, always seeking this preacher and that leader for spiritual counsel. He cannot walk by himself; he always has to be propped up. You get him going for a little while and you think, “Praise the Lord, he has got through at last!” But before long he is down again, because he is dependent upon human friends and Christian fellowship to see him through.

He cannot feed himself, either. His minister is a kind of spiritual milk bottle that feeds him on Sunday, but that is all he gets. He has not learned to feed himself upon the Word of God, and therefore he does not grow spiritually. Of course, if he is the center of interest, then he is happy, but he is very sensitive and touchy, quickly angry if he is criticized. He constantly displays the marks of protracted infancy and retarded growth.

A third mark of the carnal Christian is that he is living a life of fruitlessness and worldliness. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away" says the Lord in John 15:2, "and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

I am not speaking of outward success, but the genuine New Testament fruit in terms of character and Christlikeness. The carnal Christian is one who spends too much time with his television and neglects his Bible. He is more interested in novels than in the Word of God. You do not find him very often at a church prayer meeting; nor is he in the heart of the fellowship of the church. He is not reliable; he will sometimes work at a job in the church, but will very easily quit and someone has to take his place at the last minute. Quite obviously his heart is still mostly in the world, and there is an atmosphere of worldliness about him. The carnal Christian is a child of God, born again and on his way to heaven, but he is traveling third class.

Do you find yourself looking into a mirror? This is not my description, but that of the Word of God. The carnal Christian may believe what he ought to believe, may even have been trained in doctrine; he may know his Bible in some measure, theoretically, at least. But his life is constant conflict and defeat, infancy and retarded growth, fruitlessness and worldliness. It is possible to live all your life like that: the Holy Spirit within you grieved, quenched, and powerless to do anything through you because you live on a carnal level.

Then what are the marks of a spiritual Christian? What does Paul say about him? "He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man" (2:15). In other words, you cannot explain him. I would suggest, in the first place, that he is living a life of perpetual conflict but repeated victory. Did I say conflict? Yes, I did; there is no place in the Christian life free from inner conflict, not until we get to heaven.

But there is a sense in which the conflict of a spiritual Christian is fought on a higher plane than that of the carnal Christian. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but . . . against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12). The spiritual Christian — the man who is going on with God and who is determined to be as pure and godly as a man saved by grace can be — that man is the focal point of the attacks of the devil. He knows never a moment's release from the heat of the battle. But in the midst of the conflict, the spiritual Christian knows a deep and absolute peace in his heart, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). Throughout the constant temptation and battle, he is trusting, resting, and conquering in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is not that such a man does not commit sin, but that he does not practice the habit of sin. It is not that he does not slip, but rather that it is always possible for him not to do so. He is sometimes very conscious of failure, but the trend of his life is not downward, but upward; the habit of his life is victory and not defeat. The spiritual Christian can say with Paul, "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:37), and "Thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ" (2 Corinthians 2:14).

Another mark of the spiritual Christian is a life of progressive growth and radiant Christlikeness. It would be wrong for me to suggest that the Christian who is living on a spiritual plane is the kind of person who goes about saying, "Well, now I have arrived." This man knows that he can glory in nothing save in the cross of Jesus Christ our Lord. But as you watch, as you observe him day by day, you see evidences of growth in holiness and purity, in temperance and grace, in meekness and gentleness — likeness to the Lord Jesus. There is the fruit of the Spirit instead of the working of the flesh.

In the midst of the testings of life, deep down in his heart there is peace; he is drawing upon infinite resources that are sufficient to strengthen and keep him, to enable him to walk with God. Day by day, as he reacts to troubles, misunderstanding, and heartaches, his actions all glorify the Lord Jesus.

A third mark of the spiritual Christian in the Word of God is that he is bringing forth permanent fruit. "I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain," said the Lord Jesus in John 15:16. There is something about the spiritual Christian that is constantly revealing faithfulness. There is character that is being formed; it is not simply what he says, but that back of what he says there is a life that is real. Just as the carnal Christian reveals worldliness, so the spiritual Christian reveals a life of separation to the Word of God and devotion to the Master.

Are you a believer, knowing you have received forgiveness of sins? Then in which class are you traveling along the road to heaven? Are you a carnal or a spiritual Christian? Is it perpetual conflict and repeated defeat in your life or is it perpetual conflict and repeated victory? Is it protracted infancy and retarded growth, or is it development in Christlikeness of life and character? Is it a life of pathetic fruitlessness, or is it a life filled with permanent fruit for the glory of God?

If this mirror of God's Word reveals that you are traveling "third class," then how do you move into "first class"? How can you move into the life that is spiritual?

May I give you a simple threefold statement of principle by which, if you are prepared to follow it, you may begin to live your life on another level; you may move from carnality and defeat into spiritual victory and power? This is not something that happens as the years go by, something into which you grow automatically. This crisis is as real and definite as was the moment of your conversion, when you passed out from “condemnation” into “no condemnation,” out from guilt into forgiveness, out of alienation from God into adoption as His child.

In the first place, it is the crisis of cleansing: “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son [keeps on cleansing] us from all sin. . . . If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:7, 9).

The trouble with the carnal Christian is that he is unclean. God demands that we face this fact; things that are allowed to continue in our lives which are contrary to the nature of the Spirit of God: worldliness, faithlessness, lack of growth are marks of uncleanness.

He is “the Spirit of truth” (John 14:17). When a Christian continues acting a lie or professing to be something he is not, God demands that such sin be dealt with.

He is “the Spirit of faith” (2 Corinthians 4:13). The Christian who is not trusting in God to deliver him from the root principle of sin goes on being a carnal Christian. God demands complete trust and commitment.

He is “the Spirit of grace” (Hebrews 10:29). Do you allow bitterness in your life? Are you harboring resentment against another child of God? Then you are continuing that which is not of Christ, but of the enemy.

He is “the Spirit of holiness” (Romans 1:4). Do you allow in your life that which is unholy? “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?” (6:19). What sort of traffic has been going on in the temple of your life?

He is “the Spirit of glory” (1 Peter 4:14). Are you allowing worldly affections and desires to go on, unchecked? Are you living for His glory, or are these things, the hangover of unconverted days, still part and parcel of your life? It will take a crisis to deal with them. You cannot deal with them one by one; they are far too many: by the time you deal with one little sin here, one big sin there, another one breaks out somewhere else.

Perhaps the Spirit of God has been speaking to you about these things. Confess them to Him and trust Him for cleansing, for when the Holy Spirit convicts of uncleanness, then the blood of Jesus is applied.

The next condition of moving into “first class” is surrender, the surrender of your body: “I beseech you, therefore, brethren . . . that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice” (Romans 12:1). If you would move by a definite crisis experience out of the wilderness into the land of blessing, there must be confession that leads to cleansing, surrender that brings power upon the life, faith that secures the anointing of the Spirit of God.

Surrender says, “I present my body.” Faith says, “Christ now lives in me.” Surrender says, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?” Faith says, “I can do all things through Christ, which strengthens me.” Surrender crowns Christ as Lord of my life. Faith appropriates Jesus to be my Life. Therefore surrender is one step, but faith and appropriation is the other.

I ask you again, in which class are you traveling to heaven? The Lord can enable you to take the step of faith that appropriates Jesus Christ to be your life and lifts you from the class of carnality to that of spirituality, in which it is no more you, but Christ in you, the hope of glory.

**1 Corinthians 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,**

Wuest - But as for us, not the spirit of the world system did we receive but the Spirit who is of God in order that we might come to know the things which by God have been in grace bestowed upon us, ([Erdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Amplified - Now we have not received the spirit [that belongs to] the world, but the [Holy] Spirit Who is from God, [given to us] that we might realize and comprehend and appreciate the gifts [of divine favor and blessing so freely and lavishly] bestowed on us by God.

NET 1 Corinthians 2:12 Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things that are freely given to us by God.

NLT 1 Corinthians 2:12 And we have received God's Spirit (not the world's spirit), so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us.

ESV 1 Corinthians 2:12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

NIV 1 Corinthians 2:12 We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.

GNT 1 Corinthians 2:12 με ς δ ο τ πνε μα το κ σμου λ βομεν λ λ τ πνε μα τ κ το θεο , να ε δ μεν τ π το θεο χαρισθ ντα μ ν·

KJV 1 Corinthians 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

YLT 1 Corinthians 2:12 And we the spirit of the world did not receive, but the Spirit that is of God, that we may know the things conferred by God on us,

ASV 1 Corinthians 2:12 But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God.

CSB 1 Corinthians 2:12 Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who comes from God, so that we may understand what has been freely given to us by God.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

NRS 1 Corinthians 2:12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.

NAB 1 Corinthians 2:12 We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the things freely given us by God.

NJB 1 Corinthians 2:12 Now, the Spirit we have received is not the spirit of the world but God's own Spirit, so that we may understand the lavish gifts God has given us.

GWN 1 Corinthians 2:12 Now, we didn't receive the spirit that belongs to the world. Instead, we received the Spirit who comes from God so that we could know the things which God has freely given us.

- not: 1Co 2:6 Ro 8:1,5,6 2Co 4:4 Eph 2:2 Jas 4:5 1Jn 4:4,5 5:19 Rev 12:9
- but: Ro 8:15,16
- that: 1Co 3:22 Joh 16:14,15 Ro 8:32 1Jn 2:20,27 5:20 Rev 22:6
- [1 Corinthians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **NOTE: For more in depth comments click [1 Corinthians 2:12](#)**

**John MacArthur** outlines the last section of chapter 2 as follows...

- 1 Cor 2:10-11 True Wisdom is Divinely Revealed by Revelation
- 1 Cor 2:12-13 True Wisdom is Divinely Revealed by Inspiration
- 1 Cor 2:14-16 True Wisdom is Divinely Revealed by Illumination

**Now we** - Note that the **we** is emphatic (first in the Greek sentence for emphasis).

**have received, not the spirit of the world (kosmos)** - Paul describes two spirits that are diametrically opposed to one another. The **spirit of the word speaks** of the outlook of the world and describes what motivates the world and makes it what it is.

**Not the spirit of the world** - The **spirit of the world** has been interpreted several ways as worldly wisdom (Pratt), worldly reasoning (Hodge), demonic spirits (e.g., Paul describes "the **spirit** that is now working in the sons of disobedience" in Eph 2:2+ the least likely interpretation). While clearly the way the lost world thinks is influenced by Satan and his emissaries, the immediate context would seem to be favor the idea of worldly wisdom. **Wuest** paraphrases it as "the spirit of the world system." ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Leon Morris** adds that "Throughout this passage Paul is opposing a **wisdom**' that is not satanic but human. It seems that we should accept some such meaning as 'the spirit of human wisdom', 'the temper of this world' (Lenski, 'It is what makes the world

"world"). Believers have not received the **spirit of worldly wisdom.**"

**Richard Pratt** comments that "No mere earthly wisdom brought the Corinthians to the gospel of Christ. (I & II Corinthians, Holman New Testament Commentary)

**David Garland** adds that those who have **received** the Holy Spirit "are the opposite of persons directed by **the spirit of the world** (Eph. 2:2). It is that rebellious temper, analogous to the wisdom of the world (1Cor 1:20; 2:6; 3:19) and compelled by "another spirit" (2Cor. 11:4), that resists God's Spirit and makes one incapable of recognizing the revelation of God except as foolishness. But Paul's main point is that what derives from this world cannot bridge the gap to apprehend God. (Ibid)

**Henry Alford on the spirit of the world** - Not merely, the mind and sentiments of unregenerate mankind, but the spirit (personally and objectively taken) of the world,—the spirit which is now working in the sons of disobedience, Eph. 2:2, where it is strictly personal. ([1 Corinthians 2 - Greek Testament Critical Exegetical Commentary](#))

**Marvin Vincent on not the spirit of the world** - The phrase means the principle of evil which animates the unregenerate world (**Ed**: See discussion of world or kosmos below); not the personal spirit of evil or Satan, since Paul does not use pneuma (spirit) elsewhere in the personal sense of an evil spirit. ([1 Corinthians 2 - Vincent's Word Studies](#))

**Charles Hodge** writes that "When Paul says he had not received that **spirit**, he means that human reason was not the source of the knowledge which he communicated." ([1 Corinthians 2 - Hodge's Commentary](#))

**The spirit of the world** could also be what is known in popular parlance as **Zeitgeist**, that entrenched, resolute anti-God philosophy which permeates the entire world system. John aptly describes the **spirit of the world** writing "all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the **world.**" (1Jn 2:16+, cp James 4:4+)

**The spirit of the world** is that spirit that appeals to man's fallen nature. And because believers still possess the fallen nature (**sarx**), they must continually be alert to the subtle, seductive nature of the godless world system especially the erudite philosophy of the world! In my experience, the best way to battle against the spirit of the world is to surrender to the Spirit of Christ, trusting wholly in His power to protect us from "spiritual attacks."

**but the Spirit Who is from God** Not **spirit** (pneuma) with a little "s," but with a capital "S," the Holy Spirit of God. Like every believer, the apostles received the Spirit when they were born again, for "if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him (God)." (Ro 8:9-note) Jesus described the giving of the Spirit in vivid terms declaring "He who believes in Me, as the Scriptures said, from his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him **were to receive**; for the Spirit was not yet **given**, because Jesus was not yet glorified." (Jn 7:38-39+, Jn 6:63)

**Guzik** comments that "Since every believer has **received... the Spirit Who is from God**, every believer has the access to this spiritual wisdom. This does not mean every believer has equal spiritual wisdom. And it does not mean we will understand all spiritual mysteries. It does mean every believer can understand the basics of the Christian message, which is unattainable (and undesirable) by human wisdom. ([1 Corinthians 2 Commentary](#))

**Hodge** - The Spirit which is of God, is the Holy Spirit as proceeding from him and sent by him as the instructor of men. To receive the Spirit is to be the subject of his influence. It, therefore, depends upon the context and on the nature of the influences spoken of, who are intended by those who receive the Spirit. Here the whole connection shows that the apostle is speaking of revelation and inspiration; and therefore must mean we apostles, (or Paul himself,) and not we Christians. That, i.e. in order that, we might know the things freely given to us of God, i.e. the things graciously revealed by God. This clause does not refer to inward spiritual blessings now enjoyed by believers, nor to the future blessedness of the saints, except so far as these are included in the general subject of Paul's preaching. The connection is with 1 Corinthians 2:10. 'What human reason could not discover, God hath revealed to us apostles, in order that we might know what he has thus graciously communicated.' The subject is the wisdom of God, the gospel, as distinguished from the wisdom of the world. This is clear both from what precedes and from what follows. ([1 Corinthians 2 - Hodge's Commentary](#))

**So that we may know the things freely given to us by God**- As stated some favor WE/US as a reference to the apostles and thus this would be equivalent of inspiration. Others feel this freely given refers to all believers. I tend to favor the latter.

**Know** ([1492](#))(**eido**) is distinguished from **ginosko** (which is translated "understand" in 1Cor 2:14) because **ginosko** generally refers to knowledge obtained by experience or "experiential knowledge". **Eido** refers more to knowledge that is not so much that which is known by experience as by intuitive insight. In context, this spiritual understanding can only be given by the Holy Spirit. The point is that when the Holy Spirit opens the spiritual eyes of one's heart, they will be able to perceive and to know the great truths intuitively beyond a shadow of a doubt.

**The things freely given to us by God** - The word "**things**" occurs 5x in 5v in the NAS (1Cor 2:10, 12, 13, 14, 15). Remember that some favor Paul is here speaking of himself and the other apostles. Others (Arnold, Pritchard) see this "**US**" as referring to the saints in general.

If one assumes that the **we/us** is a reference Paul and the apostles (NOT EVERYONE AGREES WITH THIS INTERPRETATION) then what he is describing in essence is **inspiration**, which is the accurate transmission and recording of God's revealed truth.

**Tony Evans** observes that "In **revelation**, God discloses His truth. Through **inspiration**, He sees that it is recorded for us. And by the **illumination** of His Spirit, He enables us to understand and apply it." While the truth of this passage can be applied to illumination the Spirit supplies when we open the Book (especially when we pray Ps 119:18 - See [The Bible and Illumination](#)), in the present context it speaks of the original word given by the Spirit to the writers of Scripture.

**Ray Pritchard** - The Holy Spirit enables us to understand the message of the gospel. That's verse 12. Note the phrase, "what God has freely given us." That refers to all that Jesus Christ accomplished in his life, death, and resurrection from the dead. Because of the Holy Spirit, we can understand the true meaning of the cross. Apart from the Spirit, the message of the cross will be lost to us. That's why some people can come to church, hear the gospel over and over again, and the truth washes over them like water off a duck's back. They never "get it" even though they hear the message many times. A lost person may know the facts of the gospel—e.g., that Jesus Christ died and rose again. But it is the Holy Spirit who enables us to know why Jesus had to die, how our sins sent him to the cross, and what his death means to us personally. Apart from the Spirit, I may know the facts of the gospel, but I will never grasp their meaning for my life. What is the true difference between those who believe and those who don't? According to this passage, the difference is God. The Holy Spirit came to us and revealed the truth to us, and if he had not come to us, we never would have found the truth on our own. To say that is not to deny the reality of the human will and the necessity of believing in Christ. It does not downplay the choice we all must make to "seek the Lord while he may be found." We don't have to choose between human initiative and God's grace in salvation. Our text simply tells us that the first move belongs to God.

**Alford on the things freely given** - The treasures of wisdom and of felicity which are the free gifts of the gospel dispensation, "the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." (1Cor 2:9+)

**Freely given** (5483)(**charizomai** from **charis** = grace, undeserved merit or favor) means to give as a favor, to give gratuitously, generously, graciously and in kindness. To bestow as a gift of grace or out of grace, giving to those who don't deserve the gift. It is the same verb used elsewhere of forgiveness (Lk 7:42, 2Cor 2:7, 10, 13, Eph 4:32, Col 2:13, 3:13). God's revelation of truth and light was undeserved but was graciously bestowed on Paul the apostle, who in turn transmitted the truth to us in the Word. As John said "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven." (Jn 3:27) Paul himself testified "God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Col 1:27)

Jesus Himself testified to the gratuitous nature of His gifts declaring "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. **I will give** to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life **without cost**." (Rev 21:6-note)

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**Spurgeon's Morning and Evening** devotional applies the principle of 1Cor 2:12 - Dear reader, have you received the spirit which is of God, wrought by the Holy Ghost in your soul? The necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart may be clearly seen from this fact, that all which has been done by God the Father, and by God the Son, must be ineffectual to us, unless the Spirit shall reveal these things to our souls. What effect does the doctrine of election have upon any man until the Spirit of God enters into him? Election is a dead letter in my consciousness until the Spirit of God calls me out of darkness into marvelous light. Then through my calling, I see my election, and knowing myself to be called of God, I know myself to have been chosen in the eternal purpose. A covenant was made with the Lord Jesus Christ, by his Father; but what avails that covenant to us until the Holy Spirit brings us its blessings, and opens our hearts to receive them? There hang the blessings on the nail—Christ Jesus; but being short of stature, we cannot reach them; the Spirit of God takes them down and hands them to us, and thus they become actually ours. Covenant blessings in themselves are like the manna in the skies, far out of mortal reach, but the Spirit of God opens the windows of heaven and scatters the living bread around the camp of the spiritual Israel. Christ's finished work is like wine stored in the wine-vat; through unbelief we can neither draw nor drink. The Holy Spirit dips our vessel into this precious wine, and then we drink; but without the Spirit we are as truly dead in sin as though the Father never had elected, and though the Son had never bought us with his blood. The Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary to our well-being. Let us walk lovingly towards him and tremble at the thought of grieving him.

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### **Oswald Chambers - Experience or revelation**

We have received ... the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 1 Cor. 2:12.

Reality is Redemption, not my experience of Redemption; but Redemption has no meaning for me until it speaks the language of my conscious life. When I am born again, the Spirit of God takes me right out of myself and my experiences, and identifies me with Jesus Christ. If I am left with my experiences, my experiences have not been produced by Redemption. The proof that they are produced by Redemption is that I am led out of myself all the time; I no longer pay any attention to my experiences as the ground of Reality, but only to the Reality which produced the experiences. My experiences are not worth anything unless they keep me at the Source, Jesus Christ.

If you try to dam up the Holy Spirit in you to produce subjective experiences, you will find that He will burst all bounds and take you back again to the historic Christ. Never nourish an experience which has not God as its Source, and faith in God as its result. If you do, your experience is anti-Christian, no matter what visions you may have had. Is Jesus Christ Lord of your experiences, or do you try to lord it over Him? Is any experience dearer to you than your Lord? He must be Lord over you, and you must not pay attention to any experience over which He is not Lord. There comes a time when God will make you impatient with your own experience—'I do not care what I experience; I am sure of Him.'

Be ruthless with yourself if you are given to talking about the experiences you have had. Faith that is sure of itself is not faith; faith that is sure of God is the only faith there is. (My Utmost for His Highest)

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**Oswald Chambers** applies the principle of 1Cor 2:12 - Experience or revelation - Reality is Redemption, not my experience of Redemption; but Redemption has no meaning for me until it speaks the language of my conscious life. When I am born again, the Spirit of God takes me right out of myself and my experiences, and identifies me with Jesus Christ. If I am left with my experiences, my experiences have not been produced by Redemption. The proof that they are produced by Redemption is that I am led out of myself all the time; I no longer pay any attention to my experiences as the ground of Reality, but only to the Reality which produced the experiences. My experiences are not worth anything unless they keep me at the Source, Jesus Christ. If you try to dam up the Holy Spirit in you to produce subjective experiences, you will find that He will burst all bounds and take you back again to the historic Christ. Never nourish an experience which has not God as its Source, and faith in God as its result. If you do, your experience is anti-Christian, no matter what visions you may have had. Is Jesus Christ Lord of your experiences, or do you try to lord it over Him? Is any experience dearer to you than your Lord? He must be Lord over you, and you must not pay attention to any experience over which He is not Lord. There comes a time when God will make you impatient with your own experience—'I do not care what I experience; I am sure of Him.' Be ruthless with yourself if you are given to talking about the experiences you have had. Faith that is sure of itself is not faith; faith that is sure of God is the only faith there is. (My Utmost for His Highest)

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**High-Tech Communication** - Joe Stowell - When it comes to communication, our world is becoming increasingly high-tech. The popularity of things like Twitter and Facebook might cause some to think the Bible is too old-school. The tech-savvy people of our world might feel deterred because there are no sounds and no nifty graphics in the Bible. But the truth is, there's more high-tech power in God's Word than in any cutting-edge communication tool our world will ever know.

It's not uncommon for a pastor to be told, "When you said that in your message, it was just what I needed." Somehow during the sermon, God spoke to the person's heart with a message tailor-made for him or her. If you've ever read the Bible and sensed God speaking directly to you, you know what I'm talking about. God has hard-wired you with His Spirit, who illumines your mind to understand His Word.

Imagine getting a "text message" directly from the Creator of the universe telling you exactly what you need at exactly the right time. No matter how high-tech this world gets, you'll never experience a more powerful mode of communication!

Rejoice in the reality that "we have received ... the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God" (1 Cor. 2:12). ([Our Daily Bread](#))

Give me the insight, Lord,  
As I hear Your Word today,  
So I will truly understand  
Your message and Your way.  
—Monroe

**The Bible may be old,  
but its truths are always new.**

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**Blurred Vision** - Herbert Vander Lugt (Read: Exodus 32:1-20) We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God. —1 Corinthians 2:12 - Although I'm closer to 80 than 70, I still want to think of myself as "a modern man." So I keep up

with the news, read current books, and use up-to-date sources when I research a subject. But more important, I want to be thoroughly biblical and Christian in all my thoughts and actions. Because of this, some people who don't like my convictions see me as being narrow-minded.

One temptation we face as believers is to adapt our views to our culture so that we will not be seen as out of touch with the modern world. When we give in to this tendency, however, we find ourselves compromising what we know is right. We find ways to justify immoral behavior that society finds acceptable. We may say that we still believe in the Bible, but we reinterpret its clear meaning on moral and spiritual issues and try to make it say what we want it to say.

Exodus 32 describes how the Israelites allowed their sinful desires to blur their spiritual vision. They wanted to be like their pagan neighbors, so they made an idol and had a sensual worship service. This angered both Moses and the Lord, and resulted in severe judgment.

If we don't take God's Word seriously, our spiritual vision becomes blurred and we will disobey Him. ([Our Daily Bread](#))

If I would win the plaudits of the world,  
Then I must lose the presence of my Lord;  
I cannot please the godless by my works  
And still enjoy the blessings of His Word.  
—Smith

**Don't let the world  
squeeze you into its mold.**

**1 Corinthians 2:13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.**

**Note that several versions interpret the Greek differently than the NAS**

Wuest - which things also we put into words, not in words taught by human philosophy but in words taught by the Spirit, fitly joining together Spirit-revealed truths with **Spirit-taught words**. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Amplified - And we are setting these truths forth in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the [Holy] Spirit, combining and interpreting spiritual truths with **spiritual language** [to those who possess the Holy Spirit].

**Barclay** - The things we speak we do not speak in words taught by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to **spiritual people**.

NET 1 Corinthians 2:13 And we speak about these things, not with words taught us by human wisdom, but with those taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual things to **spiritual people**.

NLT 1 Corinthians 2:13 When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come from human wisdom. Instead, we speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain **spiritual truths**.

ESV 1 Corinthians 2:13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to **those who are spiritual**.

NIV 1 Corinthians 2:13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in **spiritual words**.

GNT 1 Corinthians 2:13 κα λαλο μεν ο κ ν διδακτο ς νθρωπ νης σοφ ας λ γοις λλ ν διδακτο ς πνε ματος, πνευματικο ς πνευματικ συγκρ νοντες.

KJV 1 Corinthians 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things **with spiritual**.

YLT 1 Corinthians 2:13 which things also we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Holy Spirit, with spiritual things spiritual things comparing,

ASV 1 Corinthians 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which

the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with **spiritual words**.

CSB 1 Corinthians 2:13 We also speak these things, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual things to **spiritual people**.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 2:13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with **spiritual**.

NRS 1 Corinthians 2:13 And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are **spiritual**.

NAB 1 Corinthians 2:13 And we speak about them not with words taught by human wisdom, but with words taught by the Spirit, describing spiritual realities in **spiritual terms**.

NJB 1 Corinthians 2:13 And these are what we speak of, not in the terms learnt from human philosophy, but in terms learnt from the Spirit, fitting spiritual language to **spiritual things**.

GWN 1 Corinthians 2:13 We don't speak about these things using teachings that are based on intellectual arguments like people do. Instead, we use the Spirit's teachings. We explain **spiritual things** to those who have the Spirit.

- **not**: 1Co 2:4 1:17 2Pe 1:16
- **but**: 1Co 12:1-3 14:2 Lu 12:12 Ac 2:4 1Pe 1:12
- **spiritual things**: 1Co 2:14 9:11 10:3-5 Eph 5:19 Col 3:16
- **Reciprocal**:, Ecclesiastes 8:1 - as the Isaiah 11:3 - and he shall not Jeremiah 3:15 - which shall Micah 3:8 - I am Mark 13:11 - but John 14:26 - Holy Ghost Acts 26:24 - Paul Romans 1:14 - both to 1 Corinthians 1:26 - that 1 Corinthians 2:6 - not 2 Corinthians 1:12 - not 2 Corinthians 11:6 - rude 2 Peter 3:15 - according 1 John 2:27 - but
- [1 Corinthians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **NOTE: For in depth comments click [1 Corinthians 2:13](#)**

**Which things which things we also speak** - This refers to the '**things freely given to us by God**' (1Cor 2:12). Again there is a difference of opinion regarding who the WE refers to - Paul and the apostles or believers in general. If the former than Paul is in effect describing the inspiration of Scripture.

**Robertson on things we also speak** - This onomatopoeic verb **laleō** (from lala), to utter sounds. In the papyri the word calls more attention to the form of utterance while legō refers more to the substance. But laleō in the NT as here is used of the highest and holiest speech. Undoubtedly Paul employs the word purposely for the utterance of the **revelation** which he has understood. That is to say, there is **revelation** (1 Corinthians 2:10), **illumination** (1 Corinthians 2:12 - **Ed note**: Others see illumination more clearly taught in 1Cor 2:14-16), and **inspiration** (1 Corinthians 2:13). Paul claims therefore the help of the Holy Spirit for the reception of the revelation, for the understanding of it, for the expression of it. Paul claimed this authority for his preaching (1Th 4:2) and for his epistles (2Th 3:14).

**MacDonald** commenting on **which things we also speak** - Having described the process of revelation by which the writers of Sacred Scripture received truth from God, Paul now goes on to describe the process of inspiration, by which that truth was communicated to us. **1Cor 2:13 is one of the strongest passages in the word of God on the subject of verbal inspiration.**The Apostle Paul clearly states that in conveying these truths to us, the apostles did not use words of their own choosing or words dictated by man's wisdom. Rather, they used the very words which the Holy Spirit taught them to use. And so we believe that the actual words of Scripture, as found in the original autographs, were the very words of God (and that the Bible in its present form is entirely trustworthy). A howl of objection arises at this point since to some people what we have said implies mechanical dictation, as if God did not allow the writers to use their own style. Yet we know that Paul's writing style is quite different from Luke's, for example. How, then, can we reconcile verbal inspiration with the obvious individual style of the writers? In some way which we do not understand, God gave the very words of Scripture, and yet He clothed those words with the individual style of the writers, letting their human personality be part of His perfect word. (Believer's Bible Commentary) (Bolding added)

**Wuest** adds - This brings us to the doctrine of verbal inspiration which Paul states in verse thirteen. After the Bible writers had been given the truth by means of the act of the Holy Spirit in uncovering it to them, the apostle says that they were not left to themselves to make a record of it. It is one thing to know a certain fact. It is quite another to find the exact words which will give someone else an adequate understanding of that fact. And right here is where the need of verbal inspiration comes in. [Erdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#)

**Related Resources:**

- [Inspiration of the Bible - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)
- [Inspiration of Scripture - Holman Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy \(with Exposition\)](#)
- [The Witness of Scripture to its Inspiration - Alan M. Stibbs](#)

**not in words taught by human wisdom** - Arnold sees the WE here as "we apostles." First, Paul makes a negative statement, stating that the words which the Bible writers used were not dictated by their (the writers of Scripture) human reason or wisdom.

**Spurgeon** - As spiritual men receive the faith by a spiritual work, so they endeavor to spread it by spiritual means only. They reject the pride of learning and the pomp of oratory, and rely upon the Spirit and the truth.

**Words** (3056) see above on [logos](#)

**but in those taught by the Spirit**, - Paul uses a strong contrast, **but** (alla), to show the clear contrast between words of men and the Word of God, in effect contrasting the negative with the positive.

**John Piper** paraphrases Paul's flow of thought - God gave us the Holy Spirit to **reveal** to us apostles things no one ever imagined (Ed: Special Revelation) and now in turn as God's **inspired** and authoritative spokesmen **we** speak in words taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to spiritual people. So the way we come to know the wisdom of God is that God revealed it to the apostles by the Spirit and they taught it to others who were prepared to receive it by that same Spirit. In our day the teaching of the apostles and the wisdom of God is thus given to us through their writings in the New Testament. ([The Wisdom We Speak](#)) (Bolding added)

**Henry Morris** - Paul thus claims that his teachings are not really his, but God's, for their very words are taught by the Holy Spirit. This is a clear claim to divine verbal inspiration of Paul's own epistles.

**Wuest** - He (Paul) says that the words which the Bible writers used were **taught** them by the Holy Spirit. That is, as they wrote the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit Who had revealed the truth to them, now chooses the correct word out of the writer's vocabulary, whose content of meaning will give to the believer the exact truth God desires him to have. This however does not imply mechanical dictation nor the effacement of the writer's own personality. The Holy Spirit took the writers as He found them and used them **infallibly**. Luke's Greek is the purest and most beautiful. He was a native Greek. Paul's Greek is far more involved and difficult than John's, for Paul had a university training, while John's knowledge of Greek was that of the average man of the first century who knew Greek as his second language but never had any formal training in it... However, whether it is the pure Greek of Luke, the difficult Greek of Paul, or the simple Greek of John, it is all correct as to grammar and syntax. The Holy Spirit observed the rules of Greek grammar as they existed in the Koine Greek of that time. And the wonder of it all is seen in the fact that John brings to his readers just as precious, just as deep truth, in his simple Greek, as Paul does in his intricate constructions and involved sentences. God the Holy Spirit is above language. Thus we have in the original Hebrew and Greek texts of the Bible manuscripts, the very words that God taught the writers to use as they recorded the truth which they had received by revelation. This is what is meant by verbal inspiration. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

**combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words** - The interpretation of this passage has been debated by scholars. **Mare** explains that there are "at least four different interpretations, depending on how the participle sunkrinontes is translated: (1) "bring together" or "give," (2) "compare," or (3) "explain" or "interpret," and depending also on how the gender of the adjectives is taken. Pneumatikois can be either masculine or neuter dative plural; pneumatika can in this context be only neuter accusative plural. The phrase can mean (1) "giving spiritual truth a spiritual form," (2) "comparing spiritual truths with spiritual truths," (3) "interpreting spiritual truths to spiritual men," and (4) "explaining or expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words." Though any of the four interpretations can be argued, view 4 best fits the context of the verse in which Paul has said that he speaks in spiritual words (i.e., words taught by the Spirit, Who gives to Paul spiritual truths in spiritual words)—words filled with concrete but spiritual meaning. (Expositor's Bible Commentary)

**ESV Study Bible** - Although the adjective "**spiritual**" (Gk. pneumatikos) could refer to things or words rather than to people (see esv footnote), Paul seems to be turning now to the subject of spiritual people (see 1Co 2:15; 3:1). As Paul has just made clear, only the Spirit can render the message of the cross truly comprehensible to someone, so every Christian is a "**spiritual**" (led and empowered by the Holy Spirit) person; see also Ro 8:9; 2 Cor. 3:6, 8, 16-18; Eph 1:13. Unbelievers, on the other hand, do not have the spiritual capacity to understand the things of God (1Co 2:14). ([ESV Study Bible](#))

**Hodge** - In communicating the knowledge thus derived from the Spirit, the apostle used words taught by the Spirit

**David Guzik** - Christians combine spiritual things with spiritual words; they use words and concepts taught only by the Holy Spirit. Or, Paul may be speaking of the way only a spiritual man can receive spiritual things. "The passage therefore should be thus translated: Explaining spiritual things to spiritual persons." (Clarke) ([1 Corinthians 2 Commentary](#))

**Tony Evans** - When the Spirit takes “**spiritual words**,” the Word of God, and combines them with “**spiritual thoughts**,” a mind and a heart in tune with God, the result is divine illumination. When you combine a spiritually receptive mind with the Word, you have dynamite on your hands. That’s because “**he who is spiritual appraises all things**” (1Cor 2:15) since he has “**the mind of Christ**” (1Cor 2:16). This is the key to illumination. Having the mind of Christ is having your spiritual antenna pointed in the direction of the Holy Spirit’s signal. When you are properly attuned, you will understand more things and make more sense out of life than you ever thought possible. (What matters most: four absolute necessities in following Christ)

**Arnold** - As an Apostle, Paul is claiming a Spirit-led utterance when he preached. When he declared the message of Christ and Him crucified, the words were taught him by the Holy Spirit. Paul was claiming inspiration for the things he preached. If the Holy Spirit could inspire Paul’s words in preaching, He most certainly could inspire the things he wrote. The Bible claims divine inspiration.

**Kenneth Wuest** has an in depth discussion of this passage - Then Paul in the words “**comparing spiritual things with spiritual**,” explains this process of choosing the right word in each case. We will look carefully at the Greek word translated “comparing,” for it throws a flood of light on Paul’s teaching of verbal inspiration. The word is a compound of the verb meaning “to judge,” and a preposition meaning “with,” thus “to judge with.” It speaks of the action of judging something with something else. For instance, a milliner wishes to trim a red hat with ribbon of the same color. She takes the hat over to the spools of ribbon and “judges” the various shades of red ribbon “with,” the hat. She compares the hat with ribbon after ribbon in an attempt to find one which will exactly match the color of the hat. She rejects one after another until she finally finds one ribbon that exactly matches the hat. And that is exactly what the word means, “to join fitly together, to combine, to compound.” That is just the procedure which the Bible writers went through in writing their books. As led by the Holy Spirit, they searched their vocabularies for the exact word which would adequately express the truth they wished to record. By the process of comparing the word with the truth they wished to write down, they rejected all those words which the Holy Spirit showed them would not correctly express the thought, and finally chose the word to which the Holy Spirit had led them, and upon which the Holy Spirit had put His stamp of approval. Thus the Holy Spirit allowed the writers the free play of their personalities, vocabulary, and training, while at the same time guiding them to make an infallible record of truth infallibly revealed. The words “spiritual things with spiritual,” are from two adjectives in the Greek. The first word translated “spiritual” is in the accusative case, the direct object of the verb “comparing,” and in the neuter gender. It refers to the spiritual truths already given the writers by revelation. The second use of the word “spiritual” is in the instrumental case, the instrumental of association. As to gender this word could be either masculine or neuter, for these two genders have the same form in the genitive through the dative cases. The English reader will please excuse these technicalities. We must look at the context to decide which gender is meant. The two things in the context which are compared and then combined, are the truth revealed and the words which would correctly convey this truth. The words “spiritual things” refers to this truth. Therefore the word “spiritual” in its second use in verse thirteen refers to the words. The gender is therefore masculine since the word “words” in this verse is masculine. Vincent translates this phrase, “combining spiritual things with spiritual words.” Expositor’s Greek Testament translates it, “wedding kindred speech to thought.” Alford renders it, “putting together spiritual words to spiritual things.” ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Ray Pritchard** - The Holy Spirit teaches us what to say when we witness to others. That’s verse 13. When Paul says, “This is what we speak,” he is probably referring not just to himself or the other apostles, but to all Christians. We do not follow the world’s wisdom in the way we proclaim the gospel. That is, we reject manipulation, dishonesty, flattery, intimidation, and all other worldly methods. Instead we plainly speak the truth of the gospel to anyone who will listen. Our goal is clarity, charity, honesty and humility. The Holy Spirit helps us as we depend on him. He enables us to speak spiritual truth in spiritual words.

What should we learn from this passage? Here are four implications for us to consider:

- 1) There is no room for boasting. Why boast in what we’ve done? Our only “contribution” to our salvation was the sin that made salvation necessary. We are not saved by our works—it is Christ who saves us by faith. If we boast in anything, let’s boast in the Lord. Don’t take any credit for your salvation. Give it all to Jesus.
- 2) There is no need for anger. At this point I’m thinking about those occasions when we witness to someone and they reject not only our witness—but they seem to reject us as well. Perhaps they ridicule us or patronize us or do something that makes us want to smack them in the face. I recommend that you not do that. Few people come to Christ after being smacked in the face. If we get angry when we witness, it means that we don’t understand how God works to bring people to faith. Our anger testifies to our lack of faith in God. Far better to walk away without getting into an argument. It is better yet to pray as we walk away—for ourselves and for the other person, that God will reveal himself to them through the Holy Spirit.
- 3) Our greatest weapon is prayer. This follows from all that I have said so far. If we believe that salvation is a supernatural miracle wrought by the Holy Spirit in the heart of the unbeliever, then before we witness, and while we witness, and after we witness, our greatest act of kindness will be to pray for those who do not know

the Lord. Prayer frees us from anger because it brings God into the equation. When we pray, we recognize that unless God works in the heart, our words will be ineffective.

4) This truth should lead to profound gratitude. Once we understand that everything depends on God and not on us, we will bow in wonder before the Lord, praising him for giving us eyes to see and ears to hear and a heart to believe and obey.

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These things we also speak, in words which the Holy Spirit teaches (1 Corinthians 2:13).

Aphasia is a loss of the ability to speak, a condition that results when the message from the brain cannot get to the tongue because of an injury or illness.

A similar spiritual malady affects many Christians. They know Jesus Christ, but they never speak of Him. They are familiar with God's plan of salvation, but they never tell it to others. They do not demonstrate the impelling force of the early Christians who said, "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). This faulty connection between knowledge and testimony must be corrected. Often fear causes the breakdown, or sometimes sin blocks our freedom to speak about Christ. Only as believers rely on the power of the Holy Spirit and forsake their sin can they consistently share Christ with others.

Just before His ascension, the risen Christ assured His disciples of power to transmit His message to the world (Acts 1:8). That power is the indwelling presence of His Holy Spirit. Every believer has this source. But if we quench or grieve the Holy Spirit, our witness in words will be either ineffective or nonexistent.

We must keep the message of the gospel flowing to those around us who need to hear it. We can't let spiritual aphasia silence our witness.—Paul R VanGorder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

If we have God's Word in our minds,  
He can put the right words in our mouths.

**1 Corinthians 2:14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.**

Wuest - But the unregenerate man of the highest intellectual attainments does not grant access to the things of the Spirit of God, for to him they are folly, and he is not able to come to know them because they are investigated in a spiritual realm. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Amplified - But the natural, nonspiritual man does not accept or welcome or admit into his heart the gifts and teachings and revelations of the Spirit of God, for they are folly (meaningless nonsense) to him; and he is incapable of knowing them [of progressively recognizing, understanding, and becoming better acquainted with them] because they are spiritually discerned and estimated and appreciated.

NET 1 Corinthians 2:14 The unbeliever does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him. And he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

NLT 1 Corinthians 2:14 But people who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means.

ESV 1 Corinthians 2:14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

NIV 1 Corinthians 2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

GNT 1 Corinthians 2:14 ψυχικ ς δ νθρωπος ο δ χεται τ το πνε ματος το θεο , μω ρ α γ ρ α τ σιν κα ο δ νεται γν ναι, τι πνευματικ ς νακρ νεται·

KJV 1 Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

YLT 1 Corinthians 2:14 and the natural man doth not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for to him they are foolishness, and he is not able to know them, because spiritually they are discerned;

ASV 1 Corinthians 2:14 Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged.

CSB 1 Corinthians 2:14 But the unbeliever does not welcome what comes from God's Spirit, because it is foolishness to him; he is not able to understand it since it is evaluated spiritually.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

NRS 1 Corinthians 2:14 Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

NAB 1 Corinthians 2:14 Now the natural person does not accept what pertains to the Spirit of God, for to him it is foolishness, and he cannot understand it, because it is judged spiritually.

NJB 1 Corinthians 2:14 The natural person has no room for the gifts of God's Spirit; to him they are folly; he cannot recognise them, because their value can be assessed only in the Spirit.

GWN 1 Corinthians 2:14 A person who isn't spiritual doesn't accept the teachings of God's Spirit. He thinks they're nonsense. He can't understand them because a person must be spiritual to evaluate them.

- **the natural man:** 1Co 15:44,46 Jas 3:15 Jude 1:19 \*Gr:
- **accept:** Mt 13:11-17 16:23 Joh 3:3-6 8:43 10:26,27 12:37 Ro 8:5-8
- **the things:** 1Co 2:12 Joh 14:26 15:26 16:8-15
- **they:** 1Co 1:18,23 Joh 8:51,52 10:20 Ac 17:18,32 18:15 25:19 26:24,25
- **cannot:** Pr 14:6 Joh 5:44 6:44,45 Ac 16:14 2Co 4:4-6 1Jn 2:20,27 5:20 Jude 1:19
- [1 Corinthians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**NOTE: For more in depth comments especially on Greek words click [1 Corinthians 2:14](#)**

## THE PATHETIC PLIGHT OF THE NATURAL MAN

**Jack Arnold** - Have you ever been in a witnessing situation and said to yourself, "Why doesn't this person understand the truth? It is so obvious he needs Christ. Why doesn't he get it?" Or have you ever turned on your TV to a news broadcast and heard about murder, violence, divorce, abortion, homosexuality, adultery, premarital sex and a hundred other crimes or vices and out of frustration you said, "What's wrong with this world? Don't they see these things are destroying our society? Don't they understand the first thing about morality?" First Corinthians 2:14-16 tells us why the world does not understand and why we Christians get frustrated with the world and its wisdom. The wisdom of God and the wisdom of the world are on two different wavelengths, two different channels, two different foundations and the two shall never meet.

**From 1 Cor 1:18-2:13 Paul has contrasted the false wisdom of the world with the true wisdom of God** The false wisdom is the human thinking of the world which is opposed in every detail to the Cross of Christ and spiritual realities as found in the Bible. **True wisdom is the spiritual wisdom of the scripture. The true wisdom is referred to in this context as "the message of the cross" or "the power of God" or "the wisdom of God" or "God's secret wisdom" or "what God has prepared for those who love him" or "the deep things of God" or "the thoughts of God" or "what God has freely given us."** This is a specific body of truth, God's wisdom, hidden to the world and available for every Christian but understandable only to those who are pressing on into spiritual maturity in the things of Christ. This wisdom of God is a mystery; it involves the deep things of God and it takes a mature Christian to understand and appreciate it. (ED: Not everyone agrees with this last interpretation for some like John MacArthur interpret the word "mature" as a reference to all believers.) ([1 Corinthians 2:14-16 Understanding The Truth](#))

**Hodge** - Though the knowledge communicated was divine, and although communicated in appropriate language, it was not received by the natural man, because the things of the Spirit can be discerned only by the spiritual.

**But a natural** (psuchikos) **man** - A **natural man** is an unsaved person, one who is unregenerate, devoid of the Spirit of God and who has only physical life, being spiritually dead (Eph 2:1+). In this passage Paul states that the only way a **natural man** can **accept** and understand the supernatural Word is via a supernatural Source, the Spirit of God Who is received when a natural man is born again (Ro 8:9+).

**Brian Bell** - The natural man can enjoy reading the majesty of the Old King James language of scripture; admire & feel the charm of the stories; even have a feeling of religiosity as he reads it. But he can't "know" the scriptures!

**Stevenson** on **natural man** - The phrase in the Greek is the "soulish man." He is the unbeliever. He is the man who is still in his

sins. He is the man who holds within his heart the spirit of the world. He has the world's outlook. He has the world's concept of wisdom and of power and of might and of nobility.

**Arnold on the Natural Man** - This literally says, "The soulish man, and some translations say, "The natural man." It is the Greek word *psychikos* from which we get the English word "soul." A soulish man is a man as he is born, as he is by nature. Every person born into this world, without exception, is a soulish man or woman. A soulish man is a person dominated, influenced and energized by the soul which is the lower part of man's being. The soul has the power to choose, to will, to make decisions. The soul also has the power to feel, having the emotional capacity to have moods, urges and desires, and the capacity for emotion affects how one chooses. The natural philosophy is to say, "If it feels good, do it!" The person makes a choice on mood, desire, feeling or impulse so that his volition is controlled by emotions he feels within himself. The soul also has the power to reason so that conclusions are reached on the basis of pure logic and cold facts, and a man's rational power affects his ability to choose. The soul is that capacity which puts man on an animal level, a civilized brute, to choose, to think and to feel. Therefore, a soulish man is dominated, influenced and energized by the human soul. He lives entirely on the materialistic level. There is no spiritual capacity in him. His horizons are bound by materialistic considerations and spiritual realities are beyond his horizons...The soulish man is one who has never risen above that which he naturally is. There is no evil connotation about being soulish, but it does imply the absence of spiritual discernment. The soulish man, therefore, is an unsaved man without the Holy Spirit. "These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural (soulish) instincts and do not have the Spirit" (Jude 19). The Bible says any person without the Holy Spirit is unsaved. "And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ" (Rom. 8:9b). The soulish man is an unregenerate, unsaved, unbeliever who is dominated by natural, worldly, sensual reasoning. His goals in life are centered on personal success, wealth, power, pleasure or anything else that builds his ego; People who live life like this are people of the world; This is natural and instinctive to them ([1 Corinthians 2:14-16 Understanding The Truth](#))

**William Barclay on natural man** - This kind of individual "lives as if there was nothing beyond the physical life and there were no needs other than material needs." Such a person "thinks that nothing is more important than the satisfaction of the sex urge" and thus "cannot understand the meaning of "chastity." One "who ranks the amassing of material things as the supreme end of life cannot understand generosity," and one "who has never a thought beyond this world cannot understand the things of God."

**Barnett on natural man** - Spiritually speaking the 'psychikos man' is like the **tone deaf** unable to hear the beauty of the music of Mozart, or is like the **color blind** unable to appreciate the artistry of Monet

**Adrian Rogers** describes the **natural man** - He does not have the equipment. You cannot smell music. Your nose may be working very well, but it cannot smell music. It is the spirit and not the soul that receives spiritual knowledge. With your soul you may know about God, but you cannot know God. One may know all about bread and starve to death. Knowledge is learned, but wisdom is given. Knowledge comes by looking around, but wisdom comes by looking up. Knowledge comes by study, but wisdom comes by revelation (and illumination). Knowledge comes to the soul, but wisdom comes to the spirit.

**Roy Zuck** on the **natural man** - Only the saved (spiritual man) are able to welcome God's truth. When Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 2:14 that "the man without the Spirit ("psychikos" = soulish, unsaved man)" does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God," he did not mean that an unsaved person is totally incapable of comprehending any of the grammatical data of the Bible. (ED: SEE [INCREDIBLE ILLUSTRATION BELOW](#)) ... The verse does not mean that an unsaved person, who is devoid of the Holy Spirit, cannot understand mentally what the Bible is saying...He rejects the message, refusing to appropriate it and act on it. ([The Role of the Holy Spirit in Hermeneutics](#))

**H A Ironside** on the **natural man** - That is the physical (soulish) man. He may be outwardly a very good man, a very gracious man, a very courteous man, a very kind man, as long as he can have his own way. He lives for himself and finds a certain satisfaction even in doing good. He learns as he goes through life that honesty is the best policy, that he is happier if he is honest, and therefore **many an unregenerate man is a model of integrity.** He gets a degree of happiness out of meeting the needs of other people; he may be a very kind man, and there is a glow of warmth in his heart when he hands something to a needy person and that person responds, "God bless you, sir, you don't know how much good you are doing." There may be all that and yet no thought of living for God, no thought of glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ. Some natural men descend into things groveling and debasing, their appetites lead them into licentiousness and inebriety, but other natural men take what has been called the **clean side of the broad way, the higher way of the natural man**, but it still is the way that leads to destruction (Mt 7:13-14+). As you walk down that road way you find all classes and conditions of people, some openly immoral, some vicious, some abominably unclean, others eminently respectable, looked upon with admiration by their fellows; some of them very religious and finding a certain amount of satisfaction as they wind their way to the great cathedral or little chapel, as the case may be; as they sit in a Christian, Jewish or some other service, and as the meeting goes on they find satisfaction in feeling that they are doing the right thing. They are affected by the service; they love the music; if the preacher happens to be eloquent and appealing, they enjoy listening to him, and sometimes even though he is not eloquent, if he is earnest they like to listen to him ([1 Corinthians 2 Commentary](#)).

## Related Resource:

- [What does Paul mean when he writes of the natural man? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Does not accept the things of the Spirit of God**- [Wuest](#) paraphrases it "the unregenerate man of the highest intellectual attainments does not grant access to the things of the Spirit of God." So when the **natural man** encounters spiritual truth (hears it or reads it), they do not **accept** (dechomai) or welcome it. Note that **THE THINGS** would go back to 1 Cor 2:9+ "**THE THINGS** which eye has not seen" a fitting description of every man's spiritual blindness unless the Spirit opens one's eyes! And as discussed in context **THE THINGS** of most importance are **Christ and Him crucified** (THE GOSPEL), for it is only the welcome reception of this truth which opens the doors of one's heart and mind (cf Lydia Acts 16:14+) the truth of God, including all the wondrous treasures our Father has recorded His spiritual children in the Bible and about which the Spirit now teaches us.

**THOUGHT** - Practically this means when we share the Gospel, the reaction may be that the individual does not **accept** it or welcome it. They might simply scoff or they may become angry. We cannot let this deter us from speaking the Gospel. If they refuse, then we can know that at least we have sown supernatural seed. Now the ball is in God's court so to speak. We are just to be messengers of His Good News, but only the Spirit can take that Word and circumcise the heart of a natural man. And we may never know the final result of our sharing the Gospel until we get to heaven.

**Jack Arnold on does not accept** - The soulish, natural, unsaved man does not receive or welcome **the things of the Spirit of God**. What **things**? God's wisdom, the gospel, the body of spiritual truth as contained in the Word of God. He rejects and refuses the whole realm of the secret and hidden wisdom of God. His natural, soulish, animalistic, materialistic nature spurns the truth. The natural man may not even know of these truths about God and His plans and purposes of this world, and if he does know them, he could care less about God, supernaturalism and spiritual realities. Because the natural man wants nothing to do with God, he misunderstands much about life since the universe centers around God not man. What's the point? The unsaved, soulish person DOES NOT and CANNOT accept, receive or welcome divine truth! ([1 Corinthians 2:14-16 Understanding The Truth](#))

**For they are foolishness to him** - Spiritual truth is absurd, fallacious folly, and utter nonsense to the natural man, especially the truth about a carpenter crucified and rising from the dead! Paul had earlier stated "the word of the cross (THE GOSPEL) is **foolishness** to those who are perishing." (1 Cor 1:18a+). Again in 1 Cor 1:23 Paul writes "we preach Christ crucified (THE GOSPEL), to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles **foolishness**." Paul again alludes to the Gospel writing that "**the foolishness of God is wiser than men**" (1 Cor 1:25). Of course God is not foolish, but to the spiritually blind and deaf **natural** man the Cross appears absolutely foolish and is why he **does not accept** it.

**John Piper on foolishness to him** - The things of the Spirit are foolishness to the natural man not because he can't see their meaning but because he sees it and regards what he sees as a waste of time. The problem in 1 Cor 2:14 is not a lack of clear speech nor a lack of intellectual power to interpret. The problem is that when the word of the cross is clear and the intellect of the natural man has interpreted it adequately he regards it as foolishness. . . the problem is the moral inability to assign the right value to it.

**Arnold on they are foolishness to him**. The unsaved person sees spiritual things as distasteful, insipid, absurd, stupid and moronic. Why? Because the natural is all he understands. He cannot rise above his humanistic thinking. For him, it is nonsense to value spiritual things above material things. He is unable to understand the gospel and he is unable to think like a Christian thinks, and he never will until God supernaturally works in his life to bring him into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The subjects of sin, judgment, hell, forgiveness, eternal life, heaven and all spiritual truths are repugnant to the unsaved man and always will be until he bows his stubborn will and receives Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. ([1 Corinthians 2:14-16 Understanding The Truth](#))

**And he cannot understand** (ginosko) **them** - Literally the **natural man** is absolutely not able to **understand**. He has no inherent ability to **understand** the Gospel. It is as if the Gospel is being broadcast on the "FM Band" and the only spiritual band he receives is the "AM Band." Paul is not saying that a **natural** (unsaved) man cannot read the Bible and in some sense cognitively apprehend it. Of course he can. What Paul is simply saying is that the natural man has absolutely no intrinsic ability to know or understand or grasp the Word of God in an experiential sense because he lacks the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit.

**THOUGHT** - I think for example of Psalm 19:8 where David writes "The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart." Believers can read the word and experience Spirit given joy in their heart, but natural man simply cannot have this same experience! As an aside, how thankful we should be that God's Spirit taking God's Word can produce joy in our innermost being! (cp 1Th 1:6, Gal 5:22-23, Ro 14:17, Ro 15:13, Acts 13:52) We are the most blessed of all people!

**Because** (term of explanation) **they** (the things of the Spirit of God) **are spiritually appraised** (anakrino) - [Wuest](#) - "because they

are investigated in a spiritual realm." Explains the inability of the natural man to receive the Gospel.

**MacArthur**- The natural man cannot know or understand the things of the Spirit of God because they can only be spiritually appraised. Spiritual is in opposition to natural, and thus refers to the inner capacity of the redeemed to grasp God's truth. God's Word is spiritually evaluated, spiritually discerned, spiritually understood—and the natural man is spiritually dead. The psalmist understood the need for God's illumination of His Word. He prayed, "Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Thy law" (Ps. 119:18). He did not need the Lord's help to read His Word, but he knew he needed His help to understand it.

Martin Luther said, "The Bible cannot be understood simply by study or talent; you must count only on the influence of the Holy Spirit."

John Calvin wrote: "The testimony of the Spirit is superior to reason. For ... these words will not obtain full credit in the hearts of men until they are sealed by the inward testimony of the Spirit."

Someone else has suggested that the best man can do on his own is to "gnaw the bark of Scripture without getting to the wood."

God must open the eyes of our understanding before we can truly know and rightly interpret His truth. His truth is available only to those with a regenerate spirit and in whom His Spirit dwells, for only the Spirit can illumine Scripture. Just as the physically blind cannot see the sun, the spiritually blind cannot see the Son. Both lack proper illumination. Martin Luther said, "Man is like a pillar of salt, like Lot's wife—he is like a log or a stone, he is like a lifeless statue which uses neither eyes nor mouth, neither senses nor heart—unless he is enlightened, converted and regenerated by the Holy Spirit." (MNTC-1 Cor)

**A T Robertson on appraised** - The word means a sifting process to get at the truth by investigation as of a judge. In Acts 17:11 the Bereans scrutinized the Scriptures. These psuchikoi men are incapable of rendering a decision for they are unable to recognize the facts. They judge by the psuchē (mere animal nature) rather than by the pneuma (the renewed spirit).

**Arnold** - God's wisdom can only be discerned, appraised, judged, scrutinized, examined and evaluated by those who are spiritually awakened. Those who do not have the Holy Spirit cannot examine and discern spiritual truth. The unsaved man does not have the Holy Spirit; therefore he has no capacity for spiritual truth. The soulish man is like a deaf person judging music - he has no capacity to do so. The word "discerned" (**appraised**) is a legal term used by a lawyer in a preliminary trial before going to the Grand Jury. The thought is that even a preliminary investigation of scripture by the unsaved man demands a work of the Holy Spirit. The saved man sees the same things in the Bible that the unsaved man sees, but the unsaved man does not understand them. He may be able to rejoice a little in the Bible before he is saved, but only because he is in the period prior to his salvation when the Holy Spirit is convicting and teaching him. For this reason, it is difficult to expect one to believe who is exposed to the gospel for the first time. It is like gestation. No child is born without a pregnancy. So also in spiritual things there is a period of preparatory grace or setting apart before the new birth actually takes place. The soulish, natural, unsaved man cannot grasp the gospel or appreciate spiritual truth. He cannot view marriage or sex or divorce or abortion or euthanasia or homosexuality or murder or crime as does the Christian because he does not have the Holy Spirit enabling him to understand God's body of truth, divine revelation, the Bible. It is logical and reasonable for the unsaved man to involve himself in premarital sex if it is pleasurable and does not hurt anyone. It is logical and reasonable for an unsaved person to commit adultery if a marriage is not working out. It is logical and reasonable for the soulish man to abandon his marriage through divorce if it doesn't go his way. It is logical and reasonable for the natural man to accept homosexuality as a legitimate alternative lifestyle, it is logical and reasonable to put older people to death when they are no longer able to function in society. It is logical and reasonable to abort a fetus because no one really knows when life begins and a woman has the total right over her own body. It is this kind of natural reasoning which produces a Nazi philosophy of racism which commits six million Jews to the gas chamber or enslaves millions of people because they are black in skin color. Why these atrocities? They come because the unsaved man has no capacity to understand the secret and hidden wisdom of God. Just because the world does not understand these things does not affect the Christians responsibility to teach the truth about these subjects and to legislate this truth if possible because God's moral law and wisdom are unchangeable. There are electrical waves passing through this room. You cannot see, hear or feel them, but they are there. Bring a TV, plug it in, and these waves are made real by a picture and by sound. With a converter, these electrical waves are discerned. So it is with the unsaved man. There is a real spiritual world all about him, but he does not know it exists. He needs a converter and that converter is the Holy Spirit. When he gets the proper equipment, he will pick up the vibrations of the real spiritual world. ([1 Corinthians 2:14-16 Understanding The Truth](#))

**Spiritually appraised** - As Jesus explained to the teacher of the Jews (so he had some element of knowledge, but not spiritual knowledge) "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again **he cannot see** the kingdom of God." (John 3:3+) Spiritual (Biblical) truth can only be seen with spiritual eyes, eyes that have been illumined by the Spirit of God. This truth explains why so many wise, cultured and educated men and women can see the great spiritual truths of the Scripture.

**THOUGHT (PRACTICAL APPLICATION FOR SPIRITUAL MEN AND WOMEN)** - Studying theology is therefore a spiritual activity in which we need the help of the Holy Spirit. No matter how intelligent, if the

student does not continue to pray for God to give him or her an understanding mind and a believing and humble heart, and the student does not maintain a personal walk with the Lord, then the teachings of Scripture will be misunderstood and disbelieved, doctrinal error will result, and the mind and heart of the student will not be changed for the better but for the worse. Students of systematic theology should resolve at the beginning to keep their lives free from any disobedience to God or any known sin that would disrupt their relationship with him. They should resolve to maintain with great regularity their own personal devotional lives. They should continually pray for wisdom and understanding of Scripture. Since it is the Holy Spirit who gives us the ability rightly to understand Scripture, we need to realize that the proper thing to do, particularly when we are unable to understand some passage or some doctrine of Scripture, is to pray for God's help. Often what we need is not more data but more insight into the data we already have available. This insight is given only by the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 1:17–19+). ([Wayne Grudem - Systematic theology - scroll down to page 19](#))

As noted above **natural man** can read the Bible or even memorize the Bible and yet still fail to understand the Bible!

**ILLUSTRATION** - The story is told of a seminary professor visiting the Holy Lands who met a man claiming to have memorized the entire OT in Hebrew! The astonished professor asked for a demonstration and so beginning in Psalm One, for two hours, the man effortlessly and flawlessly recited the Psalms from memory as the professor sat in stunned silence. When the demonstration was over, the professor was shocked to discover this man did not even believe in God but was an atheist! Intellectually he could go through the Scriptures, but without the Spirit's illumination the Scriptures never once went through him! Richard Lenski commented that "For all spiritual things, our thinking abilities, however keen and sharp, are not sufficient. The Lord must control, guide, enlighten our understanding (of the Scriptures)." Many books can inform, but only a Spirit illuminated Bible can transform!

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**Vance Havner** says that "The wise Christian wastes no time trying to explain God's program to unregenerate men (ED: HE IS NOT SAYING WE ARE NOT TO SPEAK THE GOSPEL TO THEM IF THEY ARE WILLING TO LISTEN.); it would be casting pearls before swine. He might as well try to describe a sunset to a blind man or discuss nuclear physics with a monument in the city park. The **natural man** cannot receive such things. One might as well try to catch sunbeams with a fishhook as to lay hold of God's revelation unassisted by the Holy Spirit. Unless one is born of the Spirit and taught by Him, all this is utterly foreign to him. Being a Ph. D. does not help, for in this realm it could mean 'Phenomenal Dud!'

**Vance Havner** - You might as well try to describe a sunset to a blind man, play music for a deaf man, talk to a dead man, as to discuss the deep things of God with an unconverted sinner. "... the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ..." (1 Cor. 2:14). We might as well try to catch sunbeams with a fishhook or talk nuclear physics with a monument in a city park. The most erudite Ph.D. cannot take it in any better than a hillbilly; it is casting pearls before swine. As far as spiritual realities are concerned, a man who has not been born again is blind and can't see, deaf and can't hear, dead and can't feel. (Van Havner Notebook - Quotations)

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**Vance Havner - Discerning the Truth** - We cannot believe that all these confederates of Ahab mean to be quislings. The most charitable thing we can say is that they have no vision and cannot see through the fog. They lack discernment, and discernment is just about the scarcest commodity in the church today. Yet the Scriptures give it high priority. To begin with, we read: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14).

This simply means that the sons of Adam, no matter how high their intellectual and moral qualifications, cannot comprehend spiritual truth. One might as well describe a sunset to a blind man or music to a deaf man as to talk about the deep things of God to a man who has never been born again. What the man needs is sight, and spiritual sight comes only through the miracle of the new birth.

It is so difficult for us pompous Americans, so proud of our learning, to believe that the most common day laborer may apprehend divine truth while the literati may utterly miss it. The latter may be brilliant at discerning good poetry or chemical solutions; he may be able to solve problems in big business or locate bugs in engineering—but such ability is of absolutely no value in comprehending the things of God.

We cannot understand the Scriptures or gospel truth in any form without spiritual discernment. A keen mind and theological training are useful tools when they are sanctified but the Holy Spirit is our teacher and He who inspired the Bible is the best interpreter of it. How many times have we heard a humble preacher with a limited library preach nuggets of truth and gospel gems while some scholar missed the truth completely? Now if the little preacher had the scholar's library and the scholar had the little preacher's discernment, we'd really be in business! Blessed is the preacher who has both!

Discernment is as important in hearing the truth as in preaching it. How we hear means as much as what we hear. Some dear souls listen for years to sound preaching and then, when a new preacher comes along preaching error, they listen with equal satisfaction. So long as the minister makes nice references to Jesus, these listeners know no difference. They have no discernment. There is a preparation for the sermon as well as a preparation of the sermon. We are told to lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness and receive with meekness the implanted word which is able to save our souls. Everybody expects the preacher to be ready to preach but who thinks of the congregation's responsibility to be ready to listen? (Playing Marbles with Diamonds-And Other Messages for America-Sermons)

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**New York Sun** - Not only have excellent photographs of the heavenly bodies been obtained, and an absolutely accurate picture of the skies obtained for permanent examination, but it has been found that the camera reveals stars invisible even with the aid of the most powerful telescope in existence. This is due to the fact that the camera is able by continued exposure to obtain an image of an object which may be so faint that a shorter exposure would give no image. This, of course, is a power the eye does not possess. It is equivalent to being able to see plainly by long gazing what cannot be seen at all by a brief inspection. A notable instance of this power is seen in photographs of the Pleiades, the group of stars mentioned in Job 36:31. Here a nebula is shown in the photograph which the eye cannot perceive in the sky, but which undoubtedly exists. Astronomers believe in the revelations of the camera, though they are not confirmed by actual observation. Their example may be commended to men who reject the inspired revelation of the Bible, and refuse to exercise faith when they are asked to accept spiritual truth not perceptible to the senses.

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#### **Redemption creates the need it satisfies 1 Cor. 2:14.**

The Gospel of God creates a sense of need of the Gospel. Paul says—"If our gospel be hid, it is hid"—to those who are blackguards? No, "to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." The majority of people have their morality well within their own grasp, they have no sense of need of the gospel. It is God Who creates the need of which no human being is conscious until He manifests Himself. Jesus said—"Ask, and it shall be given unto you," but God cannot give until a man asks. It is not that He withholds, but that is the way He has constituted things on the basis of Redemption. By means of our asking, God gets processes into work whereby He creates the thing that is not in existence until we do ask. The inner reality of Redemption is that it creates all the time. As the Redemption creates the life of God in us, so it creates the things belonging to that life. Nothing can satisfy the need but that which created the need. This is the meaning of Redemption—it creates and it satisfies.

"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." We preach our own experiences and people are interested, but no sense of need is awakened. If Jesus Christ is lifted up, the Spirit of God will create a conscious need of Him. Behind the preaching of the Gospel is the creative Redemption of God at work in the souls of men. It is never personal testimony that saves men. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." (Oswald Chambers)

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**Tone Deaf - Robert Morgan** - The truth of 1 Corinthians 2:14 has sometimes been illustrated by a story about two British statesmen, William Wilberforce, leader in the movement for the abolition of slavery, and William Pitt, the Prime Minister. Both were brilliant men, both politicians, and they were very great friends. But Wilberforce was a Christian while Pitt, though a church-goer, was not truly converted. This bothered Wilberforce, and at length he persuaded Pitt to go with him to hear popular evangelist Richard Cecil, who was preaching in London. Wilberforce was thrilled, and that evening Cecil was at his best. The great preacher flung out the Gospel with eloquent power, his message crystal clear, his voice reaching every corner of the hall. Wilberforce, lifted to the heavens, could hardly contain himself; but he wondered how his friend Pitt was responding. He soon found out. As they left the building, Pitt turned and said, "**You know, Wilberforce, I have not the slightest idea what that man has been talking about!**" William Wilberforce realized afresh that the **natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him.** The message that **bore** him to the skies, had only **bored** his unsaved friend. It was meaningless to him, for Pitt was "tone deaf" to the spiritual. Richard Cecil had might as well preached to a dead man (Ed: Spiritually he was a dead man - Eph 2:1). Only the Spirit of God can open a person's heart to God's truth (cp Acts 16:14, Lk 24:31, 45). Perhaps that's why Paul asked the Lord to give his readers "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe." (Ephesians 1:17-19).

## 1 Corinthians 2:15 But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one.

Wuest - But the spiritual man investigates indeed all things, but he himself is not being probed by anyone. ([Erdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Amplified - But the spiritual man tries all things [he examines, investigates, inquires into, questions, and discerns all things], yet is himself to be put on trial and judged by no one [he can read the meaning of everything, but no one can properly discern or appraise or get an insight into him].

NET 1 Corinthians 2:15 The one who is spiritual discerns all things, yet he himself is understood by no one.

NLT 1 Corinthians 2:15 Those who are spiritual can evaluate all things, but they themselves cannot be evaluated by others.

ESV 1 Corinthians 2:15 The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one.

NIV 1 Corinthians 2:15 The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment:

GNT 1 Corinthians 2:15 ὁ πνευματικὸς νῶκρ νει [τ] π ντα, α τ ς δ π ο δ εν ς νῶκρ νεται.

KJV 1 Corinthians 2:15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

YLT 1 Corinthians 2:15 and he who is spiritual, doth discern indeed all things, and he himself is by no one discerned;

ASV 1 Corinthians 2:15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man.

CSB 1 Corinthians 2:15 The spiritual person, however, can evaluate everything, yet he himself cannot be evaluated by anyone.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 2:15 But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.

NRS 1 Corinthians 2:15 Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny.

NAB 1 Corinthians 2:15 The spiritual person, however, can judge everything but is not subject to judgment by anyone.

NJB 1 Corinthians 2:15 The spiritual person, on the other hand, can assess the value of everything, and that person's value cannot be assessed by anybody else.

GWN 1 Corinthians 2:15 Spiritual people evaluate everything but are subject to no one's evaluation.

- **he that:** 1Co 3:1 14:37 Ga 6:1 Col 1:9
- **appraises all things,** 2Sa 14:17 1Ki 3:9-11 Ps 25:14 Pr 28:5 Ec 8:5 Joh 7:17 Eph 4:13,14 Php 1:10 \*Gr: 1Th 5:21 Heb 5:14 1Jn 4:1
- **yet:** 1Co 4:5 2Sa 12:16-23 Ac 15:1-5 16:3 Ga 2:3-5
- [1 Corinthians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**NOTE: For in depth comments click [1 Corinthian 2:15](#)**

### THE SPIRITUAL MAN UNDERSTANDS GOD'S TRUTH

**But** - This is another striking term of contrast. The natural man with the "supernatural" man.

**He who is spiritual appraises all things** - The only one who can even be "spiritual" in terms of God's economy is the man or woman regenerated by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5-6+) So in simple terms a **spiritual** person is a believer and has the spiritual [accoutrements](#) (Indwelling Spirit, a renewed mind [cf Eph 4:23+, Col 3:10-11+, Ro 12:2+], the Mind of Christ) can judge or properly discern **all things** in context especially spiritual truths because he has the indwelling Spirit of Truth Who illuminates the Scripture.

**MacArthur** - The believer has a resident Truth Teacher to enlighten him about all the things of God about which he needs to know. "As for you," John wrote, "the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him" (1 John

2:27+). The Holy Spirit takes God's Word, the Word which He has revealed and inspired, and illuminates it for those in whom He dwells. Unlike God's revelation and inspiration, which were given to the biblical writers, His illumination is for all Christians. We all can rightly appraise the Word when we rely on the Giver of the Word.

**Pritchard** - The term "**spiritual**" does not refer to a special class of Christians. Sometimes we hear certain believers called "spiritual" as if they were "super-Christians." That's definitely not what Paul means here. To be "**spiritual**" means to have the Holy Spirit in your life. If you are a Christian at all, the Holy Spirit indwells your body. So the "**spiritual**" equals "the saved" or "the believer" or "the born again."....Those who are **spiritual** understand God's truth because the Spirit lives in them. That's the implication of the phrase—"**the spiritual man makes judgments about all things.**" (NIV) The verb "**makes judgments**" translates a word (anakrino) that means to **appraise** something. In the art world, there are certain people who are full time art appraisers. They can look at a painting and say, "That's a forgery. It's worthless." Or "That's worth \$5,000 at auction." Or "That's a Rembrandt. It will fetch at least \$7 million.".....Paul says that because we have the Holy Spirit, **we can properly appraise the real value of things.**

**Yet he himself is appraised by no one** -**Stevenson** explains that "The world looks at the spiritual man and cannot correctly discern why he is different. To all outward indications, he appears to be the same. He looks the same. His facial characteristics are the same. He has the same intellect. He has the same natural ability. It takes another spiritual man to understand a spiritual man. Just as it is impossible for the world to understand the message of the cross, so also it is impossible for the world to understand the people of the cross."

**John Piper** - The Spirit enables us to appraise things with their true value, but when natural men appraise us they will always go wrong. Why? 1 Cor 2:16: Because apart from the Spirit no one thinks or appraises like the Lord, but we who possess the Spirit have the **mind of Christ**. We have begun to view and assess things the way Christ does. Therefore we do not reject but receive the things of the Spirit even when they mean death to self; because now we know what is really valuable.

**Pritchard** - Second, unbelievers are in no position to judge believers because they do not know what we know. That's the second phrase of verse 15—"He himself is not subject to any man's judgment." When the mighty philosophers of Athens called Paul a "seedpicker" (Acts 17:18 uses the word "babbling"), meaning something like "country bumpkin," he ignored them and preached the gospel on Mars Hill anyway. In his mind, he said, "You aren't qualified to pass judgment on me so I won't pay any attention to what you say." Later when Felix heard Paul preach about the resurrection of Christ, he said, "Paul, your great learning has driven you insane." To which Paul replied, "I am not insane. What I am saying is true and reasonable" (Acts 26:24-25). He went ahead and pressed the truth home to King Agrippa. He would not let an unbeliever who doesn't understand stop him from preaching the gospel.

Think of it this way. We can understand unbelievers; they can't understand us. We understand them because we were once just like them. They can't understand us because they have never seen the light. A man who was blind and now sees can truly say, "I know what it's like to be blind," but the man who has always been blind can never say, "I know what it's like to see." That is why we must treat unbelievers with kindness, patience, with a winsome spirit and a gracious heart while we wait for God to open their eyes.

The saved know why the lost do what they do.

The lost have no clue about why the saved do what they do.

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Switzerland is known for its scenic mountains and beautiful waterfalls. A visitor to that picturesque country observed:

"Some guidebooks name the time when rainbows may be seen on many of the waterfalls in Switzerland. One day, when I was at Lauterbrunnen, I went to the famous Staubbach Falls and watched and waited. Others did the same, and we all went away quite disappointed. The next day one of my friends said he would show us how to find the rainbow. So I went again and saw a lovely one, and stood almost in the center of it. Then I found that not only were sunshine and spray necessary to produce a rainbow, but also that it could be seen and enjoyed only at a certain point."

The same is true in the spiritual realm. A person who knows Jesus as Savior is "in Christ," and from that vantage point he can see Jesus as He really is. The Holy Spirit lives in believers and enables them to appreciate and understand the treasures of the Bible. But those who have not received Christ as their Savior remain blind to eternal truths (1 Cor. 2:14). They can see the waterfall—but not the rainbow —R W DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

WITHOUT THE LIGHT OF GOD'S SPIRIT, WE'LL BE IN THE DARK ABOUT GOD'S WORD.

**1 Corinthians 2:16 For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ.**

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Wuest - For who has come to know experientially the Lord's mind, he who will instruct Him? But as for us, Christ's mind we have. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Amplified - For who has known or understood the mind (the counsels and purposes) of the Lord so as to guide and instruct Him and give Him knowledge? But we have the mind of Christ (the Messiah) and do hold the thoughts (feelings and purposes) of His heart.

NET 1 Corinthians 2:16 For who has known the mind of the Lord, so as to advise him? But we have the mind of Christ.

NLT 1 Corinthians 2:16 For, "Who can know the LORD's thoughts? Who knows enough to teach him?" But we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ.

ESV 1 Corinthians 2:16 "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

NIV 1 Corinthians 2:16 "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

GNT 1 Corinthians 2:16 τ ς γ ρ γνω νο ν κυρ ου, ς συμβιβ σει α τ ν; με ς δ νο ν Χριστο χομεν.

KJV 1 Corinthians 2:16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

YLT 1 Corinthians 2:16 for who did know the mind of the Lord that he shall instruct Him? and we -- we have the mind of Christ.

ASV 1 Corinthians 2:16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

CSB 1 Corinthians 2:16 For who has known the Lord's mind, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 2:16 For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

NRS 1 Corinthians 2:16 "For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

NAB 1 Corinthians 2:16 For "who has known the mind of the Lord, so as to counsel him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

NJB 1 Corinthians 2:16 For: who has ever known the mind of the Lord? Who has ever been his adviser? But we are those who have the mind of Christ.

GWN 1 Corinthians 2:16 "Who has known the mind of the Lord so that he can teach him?" However, we have the mind of Christ.

- who: Job 15:8 22:2 40:2 Isa 40:13,14 Jer 23:18 Ro 11:34
- may: Gr. shall
- But: Joh 15:15 16:13-16 17:6-8 Ge 1:12 Eph 3:3,4
- [1 Corinthians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**NOTE: For in depth comments click [1 Corinthians 2:16](#)**

**For** - Explains why the lost world cannot accurately appraise your belief in Christ crucified, etc.

**Spurgeon** - The whole of mankind may correctly be divided into natural and spiritual, and these are as distinct as the dead and the living. The natural man has no spirit, and cannot therefore discern spiritual things. In the new birth a spirit is implanted in us, and thus we gain spiritual faculties, we live in a spiritual atmosphere, and are capable of spiritual joys. Have we received this higher life? Have we the mind of Christ? Lord, work it in us, for Jesus' sake!

**WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM?** - Paul is quoting from the Septuagint of Isaiah 40:13 (see Technical note below)

**TECHNICAL NOTE:** Here is the Septuagint - τ ς γνω νο ν κυρ ου **κα τ ς α το σ μβουλος γ νετο ς συμβιβ**

α τ ν (Isa 40:13) and here is the corresponding Greek NT text of 1 Cor 2:16 - τ ς γ ρ γ ν ω ν ο ν κ υ ρ ο υ , ς σ υ μ β ι β σ ε ι α τ ν ; με ς δ ο ν ο ν Χ ρ ι σ τ ο χ ο μ ε ν . The words in **bold** are found in both the original Septuagint passage and the NT Greek passage. Paul under inspiration choose to leave out **κα τ ς α τ ο σ μ β ο υ λ ο ς γ ν ε τ ο** . which is translated "who has become his counselor."

### **But we have the mind of Christ -**

**Brian Bell** writes "French scientists have succeeded in causing chickens to sound like quail. Researchers took tissue from the part of the Japanese quail brain thought to control the bird's call, and they implanted it in the brains of 5 chicken embryos. The experiment worked. Researchers say the hatched chicks sounded like quail. Here's a far greater miracle: God has "implanted" the mind of Christ in those who have accepted His Son as their Savior.. Vs.12 tells us that the Spirit of God has taken up residence in us. In some mysterious way we now have a capacity for divine wisdom that no scholarly degree or natural experience could ever provide.. Having the mind of Christ enables us to see life increasingly from God's perspective.. This doesn't mean that we can think on God's level and instruct Him (v.16). But it does mean that we have a new capacity to think and talk and act more and more like Christ Himself. God wants his children to be "in the know" not "in the dark." The believer has the mind of Christ! Phil.2:5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. 1 Pet.4:1 since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also w/the same mind. This means that the Spirit, through the Word, helps the believer think as Jesus thinks. True faith stands on the rock of Revelation not on the sands of human philosophy! (Alan Redpath, The Royal Route to Heaven.)

**Stevenson** on believers possessing the **mind of Christ** Christ thinks God's thoughts. He understands God's wisdom. He is thoroughly acquainted with the wisdom of the cross. And we have the mind of Christ. Do you see the point? If no one can judge God and His truths and if we have the mind of Christ, then no one can judge us. Except God. And except for others who also have the mind of Christ. This is important for you to know. You need to know this because, as you live the life of Christ before an unsaved world, you are going to come under the judgment of the world. The world is going to look at you and criticize your beliefs and your manner of life. If you are living for Christ, then the world is going to label you a fanatic. But the world has no basis from which to judge you. The world can no more judge you than it can judge God. You stand strong in this truth. You have the mind of Christ.

**Pritchard** - This question explains that we understand the things of God because we have been given the mind of Christ. That's why even in the worst moments, believers can make sense of the puzzle of life. It's not that we have all the answers or that tragedy never befalls us or that we have an easy road. But because we know the Lord, we understand the "big picture" of life, and even when the pieces don't fit, we know there is a pattern to things that otherwise would make no sense. This gives us hope in the darkest moments and gives us faith to believe when we would otherwise give up. This explains the fundamental difference between believers and unbelievers. **Spiritual vision is always greater than intellectual brilliance.** Why don't unbelievers understand? They can't. They don't have the Spirit. They need the "translator" of the Holy Spirit. Without that divine "translator" the gospel is just foolishness to them. That's why they roll their eyes when you talk about Jesus. You might as well be talking Navajo to them. That's why they laugh and make fun. That explains why you feel left out when they get together. You've got something they don't have. You've got the Holy Spirit. They don't. That makes all the difference in the world.

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**Ray Pritchard on the Mind of Christ**- When we come to Christ, we have the "**mind of Christ**" (1 Corinthians 2:16). That's an awesome thought—that we who know Jesus as Lord and Savior have the "mind of Christ" within us. In this context it means that we have the ability to estimate the true value of things. In the art world, there are certain people who are fulltime appraisers. They can look at a painting and say, "That's a forgery. It's worthless." Or "That's worth \$5,000 at auction." Or "That's a Rembrandt. It will fetch at least \$7 million." Appraisers are well paid because they have the ability to spot the real value of a painting. I don't have that ability. I can look at a painting for hours and never know that it is a forgery. It's exciting when you learn the true value of something you own. That's why the PBS program "Antiques Roadshow" has become so popular. Every episode features someone who bought a lamp or an old trunk at a flea market for \$40 only to discover that it's really worth \$7,000. We watch the show and then we go rummage through our garage, hoping to find that valuable piece of junk we almost threw away last week. We watch because we want to know the true value of what we own.....You aren't born with the ability to know the difference between a Rembrandt and a fake. It takes years of study and a long apprenticeship, and you have to prove yourself along the way. But if you are gifted and determined, if you are willing to pay the price, you can be "transformed" into an appraiser. It doesn't happen overnight, but it can happen over time. The same is true in the spiritual life. We have the "**mind of Christ,**" which means we have the ability from God to estimate the true value of things. As we reject the ways of the world ("don't let the world squeeze you into its mold"), we learn over time to see things as God sees them. This isn't instant or automatic, but since it is God's desire, having a transformed mind is within the reach of every believer.....

Let me close with the reminder that we have the "mind of Christ" and yet Philipians 2:5 says, "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus." We are to have what we already have, which is not a contradiction, but rather a call to continuing transformation so that we will little by little move from the caterpillars we are to the butterflies God wants us to be.

- It will not happen by accident.
- It does not happen overnight.
- It cannot happen without the Holy Spirit.
- It happens when we make a personal commitment.
- It happens with the godly encouragement of other Christians.
- It happens as we become what God made us to be.
- It happens as we behold the glory of Jesus Christ.

“This is how the mind is renewed—by steadfastly gazing at the glories of Christ for what they really are” (John Piper). So we must pursue the Lord, to know him better and better. Then and only thing will be you be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Pray like this: “Lord, open the eyes of my heart so that I will know you better. Renew my mind so that I will estimate the true value of everything in the light of eternity.”

**THOUGHT:** How is the best way to think the thoughts of Christ? Silly question right? It is obvious that they answer is to obey Paul's command in Colossians 3:16 ([present imperative](#) = calling for this to be our habitual practice!) - **Let** the word of Christ richly **dwell** within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God." (See [Colossians 3:16 Commentary](#)) Jesus said to the devil who hates the Word of Christ and will do anything he can to impede our intake of it - "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON **EVERY** WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'" (Mt 4:4)

One of the best ways for the mind of Christ to dominate the mind of flesh is to start the morning with God's Word (this may just be one verse but let that one verse sink into your heart and mind), memorize God's Word that you read that morning (put it on an index card and carry it in your pocket, pulling it out to review on the elevator, in the standstill traffic jam, in the long line at the grocery store, etc) and meditate on the Word of Christ ("chew it", "ruminate" on it, play it over and over in your mind, asking the Spirit to make it understandable and practical). Here are a few articles to give your time in the Word of Christ a "kick start!"...

- [How to Memorize-William Evans](#)
- [Memorizing His Word](#)
- [Memory Verses by Topic](#)
- [Quiet Musing \(Meditate, Meditation\)](#)
- [Quiet Time: 7 Minutes With God](#)
- [2 Timothy 3:16-17 Commentary](#)
- [The Power of God's Word](#)
- [The Word of God - Quotations and Illustrations](#)
- [A Primer On Biblical Meditation](#)
- [A Treatise Concerning Meditation](#)
- [Application: Meditate on the Bible](#)
- [Joshua 1:8 Commentary](#)

**DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:** - from Paul Apple [1 Corinthians Commentary](#)

- 1) How does this passage encourage us in our witnessing?
- 2) What are some of the things that God has prepared for those who love Him?
- 3) What is our responsibility in this process of illumination?
- 4) How do we answer those who claim they need no teachers or time spent in study of the Word because the Holy Spirit can just speak spiritual truth to them directly?

**Ray Stedman - Quote for Reflection -**

Now here is this great Being of God in our universe, this fantastic Being of infinite wisdom and mighty power. How can we know anything about him? Paul's answer is that we cannot, except he discloses himself to us. You cannot find out God by searching. Man by wisdom does not know God. Man by investigation of all the natural forces of life will never find his way to the heart of God. Only God himself must disclose himself, must open himself to us. That he has done by means of the Spirit of God -- the Spirit has come to teach us about God. The Lord Jesus himself appeared as a man in order that we might have a visible demonstration of what God is like. The simplest answer to the question, "What is God like?" is to say he is like Jesus, under all circumstances. But it is the work of the Spirit to show us what Jesus is like. Jesus said, "He will take of the things of mine and show them unto you," {cf, John

16:14KJV}. You can read the record of the Gospels, and read the historical record of Jesus, but the living Lord does not stand out from the pages merely by reading them. It is as the Spirit illuminates those pages and makes them vivid and real that you find yourself confronted with the living, breathing Christ himself. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. . .

As you know, one of the major arguments of our day is over the question of the inerrancy of scripture. People are asking afresh today, "Is everything in the Bible true? Does the Bible speak with authority in every realm of life? Is it true in what it says about scientific, geographic, and astronomic matters, etc? Or is it true only when it tells you how to get to heaven?" I think that question is answered by Paul's statement here. He says that when the apostles began to speak and to write the Scriptures, they did so by words taught by the Holy Spirit. I do not think he meant by that that the Spirit of God dictated the Bible to them. Oftentimes evangelicals are accused of believing in a dictation theory, but that is not what Paul is saying here. What he is really talking about is a process by which the Spirit of God awakened the minds of the apostles to understand truth, and they chose their own words to express it so that every apostle's personality comes through in the words that he uses. And yet, in a strange and wonderful way, those words which the apostles chose are words that God himself approved. Therefore, they come from him, not in a direct, but in an indirect sense.

Paul says to Timothy, "All scripture is breathed out from God," {cf, 2 Tim 3:16}. If that is true, then it comes from a God who cannot lie, a God who makes no mistakes, a God who sees the end from the beginning, so every word in Scripture is true. As the apostles wrote these things down, therefore, we can trust what they had to say. . .

There is the process. It begins with the indwelling of the apostles, then the illuminating of the apostles' minds, the preaching of the apostles in words chosen by the Spirit, the indwelling of every believer by belief in the word that the apostles preached, and the illuminating of the mind of each believer to understand truth as it fits his or her life directly. ([1 Corinthians 2:10-16 God's Teacher](#))

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### **John Piper: What is this wisdom. We have seen two definitions. Now we need to put them together.**

1. In past weeks we have seen the definition given in 1 Cor 1:23-24, "Over against the wisdom of the world that serves to stir up boasting, he says, "We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, the power of God and the wisdom of God." So what is the wisdom of God? Christ crucified, and the preaching of Christ crucified.

2. The other definition of God's wisdom is given in 1 Cor 2:7-9. Verse 7: God decreed this wisdom for our glorification. And verse 9 says that it is something no eyes has seen nor ear heard nor man ever dreamed of, namely, what God has prepared for those who love him. Son in both verses 7 and 9 the wisdom of God is the revelation of what is in store for believers in the age to come -- something unimaginably great!

Now how do these two aspects of God's wisdom fit together -- the preaching of Christ crucified and the hope of unimaginable glory? Verse 8 gives the clue: "None of the rulers of this age understood this (wisdom of God); for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

Here the two things are brought together: the crucifixion and the Lord of glory. What the rulers of this age could not and cannot see is that the path to glory is through the cross. This is the wisdom of God that is foolishness to men -- the inheriting of an unimaginably glorious future in the presence of God, obtained by pride-abandoning faith in a scorned, weak, foolish-looking, crucified Jewish teacher who was the very Lord of glory.

The reason (1 Cor 2:7) Paul calls this wisdom of God a "secret and hidden" wisdom is that the relationship between the age of glory and the humiliating execution of the Messiah was not fully revealed until the days when Christ and his apostles began to unfold it. But now it is being revealed by the guidance of the Holy Spirit to the apostles, and they are imparting it (1 Cor 2:13) to others -- to us. . .

Not only is the wisdom of God a gift because it comes through revelation (that's the point of 1 Cor 2:9-13a); it is also a gift because the ability to recognize it as wisdom and receive it is a work of the Holy Spirit.

Paul ends 1 Cor 2:13 by saying that he interprets spiritual truths (which I take to mean "the wisdom of God," the revelation he has received from the Holy Spirit -- which is why it is called spiritual) -- he interprets spiritual truths to "those who possess the Spirit," or literally, "spiritual people". It's the same words used at the beginning of verse 15, "the spiritual (man)."

In other words the last part of 1 Cor 2:13 seems to say that the only people who are willing and able to receive what Paul has to teach are spiritual people, that is people who have the Holy Spirit. . .

When it says at the end of 1 Cor 2:14 that the things of the Spirit of God are spiritually discerned it means that what a natural man needs is the work of the Holy Spirit in his heart to liberate him from his irrational pride and free him to own up to the wisdom and

power of the cross of Christ. Without the Spirit, we are so rebellious against the cross and against the Lord of glory that we will not recognize the truth and beauty of a crucified Christ.

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**Whom Do We Sound Like?** - Mart De Haan - We have the mind of Christ. —1 Corinthians 2:16 - French scientists have succeeded in causing chickens to sound like quail. Researchers took tissue from the part of the Japanese quail brain thought to control the bird's call, and they implanted it in the brains of five chicken embryos. The experiment worked. Researchers say the hatched chicks sounded like quail.

Here's a far greater miracle: God has "implanted" the mind of Christ in those who have accepted His Son as their Savior. First Corinthians 2:12 tells us that the Spirit of God has taken up residence in us. In some mysterious way we now have a capacity for divine wisdom that no scholarly degree or natural experience could ever provide. Having the mind of Christ enables us to see life increasingly from God's perspective.

This doesn't mean that we can think on God's level and instruct Him (v.16). But it does mean that we have a new capacity to think and talk and act more and more like Christ Himself.

O Lord, forgive us for not using the good mind You have given us. Please help us to spend more time in Your Word absorbing Your thoughts so that we can think, talk, and live more and more like You. ([Our Daily Bread](#))

May the mind of Christ my Savior  
Live in me from day to day;  
By His love and power controlling  
All I do and say.  
—Wilkinson

**To think and talk like Christ,  
you must walk with Christ.**