

1 Corinthians 2:10-16 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

1 Corinthians 2:10 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God: hemin de apekalupsen (AAI) o theos dia tou pneumatou; to gar pneuma panta erauna, (PAI) kai ta bathe tou theou:

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.

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].

Barclay - But God revealed it through his Spirit, for the Spirit explores all things, even the deep things of God.

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 πεκλυψεν θες δι το πνεματος τ γρ πνεμα πντα ραυν , κα τ βθη 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 Lk 2:26, 10:21 Eph 3:3,5 1Pe 1:12 Rev 1:1
- **by:** Isa 48:16, 59:21 John 14:26, 16:13 1Jn 2:20,27
- **the Spirit:** 1Co 2:11, 12:8-11 Ro 8:26,27
- **the deep:** 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

SPECIAL REVELATION

FROM THE SPIRIT

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

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, NICNT)

Adam Clarke agrees writing that the words of 1Cor 2:9 "have been applied to the state of glory in a future world; but certainly they belong to the present state, and express merely the wondrous light, life, and liberty which the Gospel communicates to them 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 because I had memorized it without ever stopping to closely examine the context! The lesson is 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](#))

Expositor's Greek - The true reading, gar (**for**) (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:26), links this verse to the foregoing by way of illustration: '**For** to us (being of those that love Him) God revealed (them), through the Spirit': cf. 1 Corinthians 1:18, 1 Corinthians 8:3, 1 Corinthians 13:2, 1 John 4:7;

For (gar) - This is a **term of explanation**, which begs the question "What is Paul explaining?" (Note some manuscripts have the Greek conjunction "**de**" meaning "**but**" instead of "**gar**" translated "**for**" - Findlay comments "**De** is superficially easier; **gar** intrinsically better") Paul is explaining how he (and by application all God's saints, all of whom are indwelt by the "Revealer," the "Teacher," the Spirit) could receive and understand God's "deep secrets" ("things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard" in 1Cor 2:9) and it is only by God's Spirit, Who Alone can reveal God's words.

A T Robertson adds that the **for** "explains why this is no longer hidden, "**for** God revealed to us" the wonders of grace pictured in 1Corinthians 2:9. We do not have to wait for heaven to see them. Hence we can utter those things hidden from the eye, the ear, the heart of man."

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, 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 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). (Untranslatable

Riches from the Greek New Testament)

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)

Related Resource:

- [Revelation, Special and Natural - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)
- [Revelation and the Bible - Contemporary Evangelical Thought edited by Carl Henry](#)

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)

To us (hemin) - This pronoun is first in the Greek sentence for emphasis. Paul's point is that the Revelation was not given to intelligent, wise of this world but was given to Paul (and the other writers of the NT) by the Spirit. It is notable that Paul switches his pronouns from **we** and **us** back to **you** in 1Cor 3:1.

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)

Morris adds "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)

God revealed them - What is "**them**?" **Them** refers to the spiritual wisdom of God (Wuest adds "God the Father") which the unregenerate rulers of this world did not understand because they were natural men (1Cor 2:14).

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.

John MacArthur emphasizes that "The Holy Spirit is the divine Author of Scripture. He used many human agents, but the message is entirely His. The revelation is God's pure Word." (New Testament Commentary)

David gives us an OT parallel in Psalm 25:14 writing that "The secret (Hebrew = sod = confidential talk, secret counsel, speaks of intimacy and fellowship) of the LORD is for those who fear Him, and He will make them know (Lxx = deloo = make clear, evident, or plain by words) His covenant." This is what Jehovah did with the writers of the New Testament.

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.

Revealed (601)(**apokalupto** from **apó** = from + **kalúpto** = cover, conceal, English = apocalypse) literally means to remove the cover from. Thus the idea is to remove that which conceals something. Almost all of the

NT uses are figurative use, and relate to some aspect of spiritual truth that was heretofore hidden but now has the "lid removed" so that it can be seen (understood). In this context the question is what did was divinely **revealed**? If we examine the context, it becomes clear that **Godrevealed** the wonders of grace pictured in 1Cor 2:9.

Revealed is aorist Indicative signifying that this revelation had a definite beginning or advent, which **A T Robertson** interprets as coinciding with "the entry of the Gospel into the world."

Through the Spirit (dia tou pneumatous) 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).

Edwards - "The revelation given to Christians as an event that began a new epoch in the world's history."

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?

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](#))

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](#))

Divine Revelation - R. Watson.

I. ITS INDISPENSABLE NECESSITY TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. Because —

1. God stands alone, and is known only to Himself.
2. He is infinitely less comprehensible than men who cannot, though of the same nation, comprehend each other.

II. ITS POSSIBILITY AND SUFFICIENCY. The Spirit —

1. Is as intimately one with God as the spirit of man is one with Himself.
2. Knows all things perfectly.
3. What He knows He can reveal.

III. ITS CONTENTS AND OPERATION.

1. It contains a revelation of the Divine purpose, of Christ, of the things prepared for us in eternity.
2. He who teaches these things awakens desire, produces faith, confirms and comforts the heart in the knowledge of them. ([Divine Revelation](#))

For (for the Spirit searches all things) - Paul introduces a second **term of explanation** in this 1Cor 2:10. In context Paul is amplifying how the Spirit could reveal truth and by implication, the extent and depth of that truth ("**all things... depths of God.**"). As an aside Paul uses this literary tool (**term of explanation**) probably more than any other Biblical writer. Therefore it behooves us to

become facile in interrogating Paul's "for's." This discipline will often yield valuable insights into the passage, as the Spirit **illuminates** (sheds light on) the text.

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)

Charles Hodge explains that "**Searches**, i.e. explores, accurately and thoroughly knows. The word **does not** express the process of investigation, but rather its results, viz., profound knowledge." ([Hodge's Commentary](#))

The **Reformation Study Bible** adds that "The idea of divine searching (cf. Ps. 139:1; Ro 8:27-note) emphasizes God's omniscience, particularly His power to see what is invisible to humans (John 2:25). It does not imply that the Holy Spirit needs to seek knowledge of the Father that He otherwise lacks. The Spirit probes the depths of divine knowledge for our benefit." ([Reformation Study Bible](#))

Kenneth Wuest - The Holy Spirit Who **searches** the deep things of God, uncovered (see 1Cor 2:10 -**revealed**) this truth to the vision of these men.

MacDonald on **the Spirit searches all things** - In other words, the Spirit of God, One of the members of the Godhead, is infinite in wisdom and **understands all the truths of God** and is able to impart them to others. (Believer's Bible Commentary) (Bolding added)

Searches (2045)(**ereunao/eraunao**) means to make thorough examination using careful effort to learn something. **Ereunao** in secular Greek described a professional searcher's report. A derivative was used to describe searchers or customs officials. Phillips writes that **ereunao** means "to search as a lion or a dog does, following the scent of its prey." In the present context the verb **searches** does not imply that the Spirit did not know something, because He does know as He is God and is therefore omniscient. As **Morris** explains the idea is that "He penetrates all things."

Expositor's Bible Commentary (1976 Edition) adds that "The **present tense** of the verb (eraunaō, "searches") indicates the continual and effective ministry of the Spirit in His all-pervading infallible guidance of the writers of Scripture (2Peter 1:21-**note**, where "moved" is also present tense = continually moved) and in his effective work in the lives of believers (Eph1:17-19-**note**; Eph 3:16-19-**note**) (Zondervan Publishing)

Jesus used **ereunao** to chastise the Jews declaring "You **search (ereunao)** the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me and you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life. (Jn 5:39-40) Therein we see the dramatic difference between human searches and divine searches, for the former remains in spiritual darkness, while only the latter gives spiritual light. As Findlay says "The Spirit is the organ of understanding between man and God."

Nicodemus was criticized by the Jewish religious leaders for partially defending the ministry of Jesus, prompting them to challenge him to "**Search**, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee." (Jn 7:52).

We see **ereunao** used in Romans, Paul recording that "He (God the Father, in His omniscience, is entirely acquainted with these desires, even though they cannot be uttered) Who **searches** (emphasizing the detail with which He searches) the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God." (Ro 8:27) Here Paul is saying that God the Father searches the hearts of His saints and understands the intent or bent of our unuttered prayers, unuttered because we do not know the particular things we should pray for in connection with a certain circumstance. But the Father knows the mind of the Holy Spirit, Who is praying for us and in our stead, praying according to the plan of God for our lives. This is a comforting truth, is it not!

In Rev 2:23-**note** the risen Christ, God the Son, also **searches** (carefully examines and evaluates) the minds and hearts" so as to "give to each one of you according to (their) deeds."

Carl Henry on use of **ereunao** in 1Cor 2:10 - The mention of the Spirit who **searches** (ereunai) recalls Francis Thompson's "The Hound of Heaven" (Homer uses **ereunaō** of animals "sniffing out" their quarry, and Aristotle of men searching homes and possessions). No human "search and arrest" effort matches the investigative thoroughness of the Spirit's testing of human desires and determinations. The Spirit who penetrates God's innermost being is the selfsame Spirit who searches the heart of man (Ro 8:27-note; cf. Pr 20:27). Gerhard Delling observes that Plato and Philo use **ereunaō** of academic, scientific, philological and philosophical investigations ("Ereunaō," 2:656). The believer is under mandate to search the Spirit-given Scriptures, for they are the locus of divine revelation (John 5:39). The perspicacity (Acuteness of discernment or understanding) of Scripture is sound doctrine. The Bible was—and is still—addressed to the multitudes, to masses of the poor, uneducated and even enslaved. The emphasis on the Holy Spirit as the sovereign Interpreter of Scripture is not intended to deny this, or to compensate for any alleged opaqueness of

Scripture. ([God, Revelation, and Authority Volume 4](#))

The Spirit as a Teacher - C. H. Spurgeon - On entering a cavern you inquire for a guide who comes with his lighted flambeau (flaming torch). 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. He teaches us by **suggestion, direction, and illumination.** (always using the Word as the main "Light") ([1 Corinthians 2:10 Sermons](#))

The Things of God Revealed by the Spirit - T. Chalmers - When a telescope is directed towards some distant landscape, it enables us to see what we could not otherwise have seen; but it does not enable us to see anything which has not a real existence in the prospect before us. It does not present to the eye illusive imagery, neither is that a fanciful and factitious scene which it throws open to our contemplation. The natural eye saw nothing but blue land stretching along the distant horizon. By the aid of the glass there bursts upon it a charming variety of fields and woods, and spires and villages. Yet who would say that the glass added one feature to this assemblage? It discovers nothing to us which is not there; nor, out of that portion of the book of nature which we are employed in contemplating, does it bring into view a single character which is not really and previously inscribed upon it. And so of the Spirit. He does not add a single truth or a single character to the book of revelation. He enables the spiritual man to see; but the spectacle which He lays open is uniform and immutable. ([1 Corinthians 2:10 Sermons](#)) (See also [The Holy Spirit as the Revealer](#))

The Office of the Holy Spirit - The Rev. E. Hopkins, in showing the importance of knowledge to the Christian, told as an illustration what had happened to a friend of his in Yorkshire, who, though practically a poor man, owned an estate in that county. One day a geologist told him there was in his estate an abundance of iron ore. Believing this to be true he felt at once that he was no longer poor but rich. Even so it is the office of the Holy Spirit to reveal to us the boundless riches that are treasured up in Christ. ([1 Corinthians 2:10 Sermons](#))

ESV Study Bible - God's Spirit bridges the chasm between the deep things of God and the human heart, graciously enabling (**Ed Comment: Notice it says "enabling" NOT helping! We don't just need a little "push!" We need His supernatural enablement from start to finish! He initiates, giving us the desire, and He works within us, giving us the Power! Php 2:13NLT. Praise His Holy Name!**) human beings to understand the message of the Cross, which would otherwise be incomprehensible.

Searches all things - Not "some" but "all" emphasizing the Spirit's **omniscience**.

Even the depths of God - 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](#))

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.

The Deep Things of God (Newman Smyth, D. D.) - We walk in a daily wonder, ourselves the strangest of mysteries. Our knowledge is only the glimmer of light upon the surface of the ocean of existence. Beneath are the deep things of God. We need not go far to stand on the shore of the deep things of God. Our science has not gone to the root yet of a single blade of grass. (See more exposition - [1 Corinthians 2:10](#))

The Deep Things of God Are

1. Unfathomable in their nature.
2. Comprehended only by the Spirit of God.
3. Partially revealed to us. ([J. Lyth, D. D.](#))

1 COR 2:10 J.C. Philpot, Ears from Harvested Sheaves.

The Spirit of God which dwelleth in a man, making his body His temple, searcheth the deep things of God; for there is in these deep things a most heavenly treasure, which is to be searched into that it may be found. What depths do we sometimes see in a single text of Scripture as opened to the understanding, or applied to the heart; what a depth in the blood of Christ: how it "cleanseth from all sin," and if from all sin, it must cleanse away millions of millions of the foulest sins of the foulest sinners. What a depth in His bleeding, dying love that could stoop so low to lift us so high! What a depth in His pity and compassion to extend itself to such guilty, vile transgressors as we are! What depth in the eternal counsels and unspeakable wisdom of God to contrive such a plan as was accomplished and brought to light in the incarnation and death of His dear Son, that thus mercy and justice might meet together without jar or discord, every attribute of God be fully honoured, and yet that those who deserved hell should be lifted up into the enjoyment of heaven. What depths, too, there are in our own heart, not merely of sin but of grace, for true religion has its depths which the Spirit searches and brings to view. Thus if we have any faith, it lies very deep, for it is hidden in the heart and sometimes so hidden as to be almost, if not altogether, out of sight. The Spirit then searches for it, and brings it out and up. So if we have any love, it strikes its root into the inmost recesses of our affections, and therefore needs to be searched into; or any hope, it lies like the anchor at the bottom of the sea. It therefore has to be searched into that it may be made manifest that it is sure and steadfast and enters within the veil. Cross References: 1 Jn 1:7

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.**

J H Jowett - OUR finest human instruments fail to obtain for us "the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

Art fails! "Eye hath not seen." The merely artistic vision is blind to the hidden glories of grace. Philosophy fails! "Neither hath ear heard." We may listen to the philosopher as he spins his subtle theories and weaves his systematic webs, but the meshes he has woven are not fine enough to catch "the deep things of God." Poetry fails! "Neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive." Poetic imagination may stretch her wings, and soar, but she fails to enter the guest-chamber of the Lord, and take an inventory of

"the things prepared." All these gracious ministries fail to reach life's glorious and purposed end.

"But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." When art, and poetry, and philosophy all pitiably fail, the Spirit unveils to us the bewildering feast. And so the unlearned has the same ultimate advantage as the learned, and the cottager has equal privilege with the monarch. The greatest things are not the perquisites of culture, but the endowments of humility and holy faith. The poor man has access to the "many mansions," and finds a place at the King's feast.

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" (1Thess. 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).

Vance 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)

1 Corinthians 2:10 God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit. - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

Eyes of my soul, ye have no need to wait until the veil of the flesh that screens off the beatific vision has been rent in twain by the mighty hands of the Angel of Death, ere ye behold the land that floweth with milk and honey!

Ears of my heart, ye need not remain dull and listless till the peal of the archangel's trumpet thrill you, and summon you to the music of the harpers harping on their harps or the chime of the glassy sea.

Heart of mine, be expectant! Awake! Lo, there shall come into thee, penetrating, pervading, filling thy every recess, all those blessed things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. They shall enter thee, as a retinue of knights might enter a beleaguered castle to make it strong against any possible combination of the foe.

Only I must love God. Through Isaiah I am taught that I must wait for Him (Isaiah 64:4); here I learn that I must love. For love is quick to know. He that loveth knoweth God. It was the apostle whom Jesus loved that beheld Him on the margin of the lake. It is to the warm, tender atmosphere of loving hearts that the unchecked, unrieved Spirit unfolds his secrets. Let me, therefore, bathe myself in the gracious atmosphere of my Savior's presence, never going outside its genial glow, never falling behind his going forth, until I am entrusted, through the Spirit, with the deep things of God.

"God only knows the love of God;
Oh that it now were shed abroad
In this poor stony heart!
For love I sigh, for love I pine,
This only portion, Lord, be mine—
Be mine this better part!"

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:

Greek - tis gar oiden (RAI = Perfect Active Indicative) anthropon ta tou anthropou ei me to pneuma tou anthropou en auto? Houtos kai ta tou teou oudeis egnoken (RAI) ei me to pneuma tou theou.

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.

Barclay - For what man knows the things of the man unless the spirit of the man which is in him? So no one ever knew the things of God except the Spirit of God.

NIV - 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.

NLT - No one can know what anyone else is really thinking except that person alone, and no one can know God's thoughts except God's own Spirit.

Wuest Expanded Paraphrase - For who is there of men who knows the things of the (individual) man, unless it be the spirit of (that) man which is in him. Even so also the things of God no one knows, but the Spirit of God

(knows the things of God).

Young's Literal - 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.

- **what:** Pr 14:10, 20:5,27 Jer 17:9
- **even:** 1Co 2:10, Ro 11:33,34
- **Reciprocal:**, Matthew 12:25 - Jesus John 3:8 - wind 1 Thessalonians 5:21 - Prove

LIKE IS KNOWN ONLY BY LIKE

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](#))

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 - 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.

Pr 20:27 says "The spirit (that part God created with moral, intellectual and spiritual capacities) of man is the lamp of the LORD (the idea is the human spirit is like a lamp - in essence describing the function of the conscience, enabling people to know and do right and wrong), searching (eraunao) all the innermost parts of his being."

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." (Untranslatable Riches from the Greek New Testament)

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)

Except the spirit of the man which is in him - While we can know our thoughts, thoughts no one else knows, unfortunately sometimes our thoughts are fallacious or deceptive, but that is never the case with the thoughts of God. One should not take Paul's comparison too far, for although the spirit of a man is in him, Paul is not teaching that the Holy Spirit is "in God" in the same way!

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](#))

John Piper explains Paul's comparison - He uses an analogy: among men a person's thoughts and concerns are only known to the spirit of that person. And only if he wills can another person become privy to what those thoughts and concerns are. If he desires he can reveal his thoughts. So it is with God: no one knows His mind except His own Spirit. But God has willed to impart His wisdom by His Spirit.

After the incredible revelation of truths of the Gospel in Romans 1-11, Paul explained "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! **How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!** For **WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR?**" (Ro 11:33-34-note)

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.**

Are You A Parakeet? - M. R. De Haan - 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. ([Our Daily Bread](#))

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.**

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:

Greek: hemeis de ou to pneuma tou kosmou elabomen (AAI) alla to pneuma to ek tou theou, hina eidomen (RAS) ta hupo tou theou charisthenta (APP) hemin:

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.

Barclay - It is not the spirit of the world that we have received, but the Spirit which comes from God, so that we may know the things given to us by the grace of God.

NLT - And God has actually given us his Spirit (not the world's spirit) so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us.

Wuest Expanded Paraphrase - 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,

- **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 John 16:14,15 Ro 8:32 1Jn 2:20,27, 5:20 Rev 22:6
- **Reciprocal:** Numbers 11:17 - I will take Ezra 10:11 - and from the Jeremiah 3:15 - which shall Micah 3:8 - I am Zechariah 4:5 - No John 3:5 - and of John 3:27 - A man 1 Corinthians 2:14 - the things Colossians 1:27 - whom Colossians 2:2 - understanding 1 John 4:6 - We are 1 John 4:13 - General, Revelation 21:6 - freely Revelation 22:17 - freely

THE THINGS OF GOD

We - Note that the **we** is emphatic (first in the Greek sentence for emphasis) which **Leon Morris** says "contrasts Christians with 'wise' heathen. Whatever be the case with others, we are led by God's Spirit. (1 Corinthians: Tyndale)

Now we have received... the Spirit - While a number of commentaries interpret the **we's** and the **us** in 1Cor 2:12-13 as referring to all believers, others such as **John MacArthur** and **John Piper** interpret these pronouns as a reference to Paul (and other NT writers).

MacArthur explains that "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. The promise of John 14:26 ("But the Helper, the Holy Spirit ... will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you") is for the benefit of all believers, but (**Ed**: Special revelation) was given only to the apostles. Paul and the other writers of Scripture did not record their own ideas and interpretations. They recorded what God gave them and only what He gave them."

Received (2983)(*lambano*) means to take, to receive in whatever manner.

Not (ou) signifies absolute (not relative) negation!

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."

Vincent says it "means the principle of evil which animates the unregenerate world; not the personal spirit of evil or Satan."

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."

In the preceding context Paul had been addressing the **wisdom of the world**, which is "contaminated" by the godless "**spirit of the world**" and contrasting it with the **hidden wisdom** of God- "

And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive (capacity to convince or win over) words of **wisdom**, but in demonstration (manifestation, proof) of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the **wisdom of men**, but on the power of God. Yet we do speak **wisdom** among those who are mature; a **wisdom**, however, not of **this age** (referring to the present sinful age, the world system now dominated by Satan and out of which believers have been delivered = Gal 1:4), nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak **God's wisdom** in a mystery, the **hidden wisdom** (cp 1Cor 2:14), which God predestined before the ages to our glory (cp Eph 3:9); the **wisdom** which none of the rulers of this age has understood (1Cor 2:14); for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; (1Cor 2:4-8+)

First Corinthians abounds with "real life" examples of **the spirit of the world** - petty divisions in 1Cor 3:1-4, immorality (1Cor 5:1ff), lawsuits between believers (1Cor 6:1ff), idolatry (1Cor 8:1-8), etc.

World (2889) (**kosmos** related to the verb **kosmeo** = to order or adorn) refers to an ordered system. As used in this context, **kosmos** defines the **world** not as a neutral influence but as an "evil force", the inveterate, incorrigible, intractable, intransigent, irrevocable enemy of God and of every person who follows Jesus (e.g., Jn 15:18-19, 17:14). This begs the question "Why would any believer ever desire to befriend or be friends with such a 'ferocious' foe?" (cp James 4:4-note, 1Jn 2:15-17-note) **Kosmos** describes the system of godless values, priorities, and reasoning that unbelievers hold, all of which selectively exclude God. Let us make no mistake about it, the **spirit of the world** is neither neutral nor weak, but indefatigably creates an atmosphere (if you will) of powerful, anti-God attitudes and motivations which control the thinking and the actions of every unregenerate man, woman and child on planet earth.

Trench summarizes the definition of **kosmos**, the anti-God world system, as "All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitutes a most real and effective power, being the moral, or immoral atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale."

THE SPIRIT FROM GOD

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)

Paul speaks of the Spirit

This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you **receive the Spirit** by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? (Gal 3:2+)

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 (in order that) (**hina**) is a **term of purpose** (see discussion of **terms of purpose or result**), which in context is expressing the purpose of the gift of the Spirit - "**we may know**." Know the Spirit, know spiritual truth. No spirit, no spiritual knowledge! It is that simple.

A T Robertson on to **know the things freely given** - (Know is) Second perfect subjunctive (**eido**) with **hina** to express purpose. Here is a distinct claim of the Holy Spirit for understanding (Illumination) of the revelation received. It is not a senseless rhapsody or secret mystery, but God expects us to understand "the things that are freely given." First aorist passive neuter plural articular participle of **charizomai** = to bestow. God gave the revelation through the Holy Spirit and He gives us the illumination of the Holy Spirit to understand the mind of the Spirit. The tragic failures of men to understand clearly God's revealed will (in His Word) is but a commentary on the weakness and limitation of the human intellect even when enlightened by the Holy Spirit (**Ed**: Or in a believer who reads the Word like any other boo, relying on his intellectual prowess and failing to rely on the illumination that comes ONLY from the Spirit!)

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 see this "US" as referring to the saints in general.

If this is a reference Paul and the apostles what Paul 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.

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](#))

David Jeremiah - THE SPIRIT'S INSTRUCTION

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.

Years ago, I remember hearing Campus Crusade founder Bill Bright teaching on the Holy Spirit. In his message, he told about a man to whom he'd been witnessing. One of this man's problems with the Christian faith was that he'd tried again and again to read the Bible but couldn't make any sense of it.

Then the man received Jesus Christ and came back to visit Dr. Bright a week later. He had an amazing story to tell. During that week's time, he said, it was as though somebody had rewritten his Bible. Suddenly the Scripture came alive to him. Understanding broke into his thoughts like quick lightning strikes.

How had it happened? The Teacher had taken up residence within him. What had once been obscure and confusing now pulsed with meaning, encouragement, and hope.

Paul wrote, "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." That means that Christians, who have the Spirit of God living within them, have an inward interpreter who helps them to understand what the Bible means. (Sanctuary)

Henry Blackaby - Free Gifts

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. 1 Corinthians 2:12

Part of the fun of receiving gifts is wondering what's inside the package, and part of the fun in giving gifts is knowing what's inside! At Christmastime, do you enjoy thinking of just the right thing for those who are close to you? Do you like to picture the look on each person's face as he or she receives a token of your love? God enjoys giving gifts too. In fact, each Christian has a storehouse brimming with good things that God wants to give us. Along with eternal life, the first gift we receive when we become a Christian is God's Holy Spirit. If it were not for the presence of God's Spirit within us, we would never even know about or experience the many blessings God wants to give us. The Spirit knows the invaluable difference that God's gifts will make in our lives, and he prompts us to seek out God's best, rather than relying on our own resources. It is not God's intention that we struggle in our own power or settle for less than his best for us. He has treasures that will meet every need we have if we will just ask. He wants to give us courage to

calm our fears, peace to erase our anger, joy in place of sadness, forgiveness to remove our bitterness, and much more. Are you now enjoying the good gifts your Father has for you? Are you living in your own strength, unaware that God has a much better plan? Listen to the Holy Spirit within you. He will make you aware of all the blessings God has available for you. Find out what's inside the package. (Experience)

1 COR 2:12 J.C. Philpot, Ears from Harvested Sheaves.

What thick clouds of darkness spread themselves at times over our souls; all things out of sight; our signs and tokens buried, as it were, in mist. It is like a sea fog, that comes out of the bosom of the vastly deep, and hides all objects from view. The ships are on the sea, notwithstanding, but this deep fog prevents their being seen. So with our souls at times, all is misty, cloudy, and no signs can be seen of the work of God upon our hearts. And yet we "know" them, by receiving the Spirit of God, for it is the only way whereby they can be known. We can only see light in God's light; only believe by God's faith; only love by God's love; therefore can only know the things freely given to us of God by the revelation of the Spirit. What we know savingly, experimentally, feelingly, we know only by divine teaching. How dark our mind often is; how low we sink at times; it is only the Son of God that can enable us to rise; only by the revelation of His Spirit can we believe that we are His. We know He is God when He shines forth, as we know the sun when it blazes forth in the summer sky. We know Him by the teaching of the Spirit, but cannot see Him till our eyes are divinely opened. The sun may shine in all its glory—does that communicate light to the eyes of the blind? or warm the corpse lying in the coffin? The blind see not; the dead hear not; the living, the living alone see and know the Son of God.

John MacArthur - USING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God." 1 Cor 2:12

To be effective, spiritual gifts must be used in the power of the Holy Spirit, not in the power of the flesh.

One of the constant battles all believers face is to avoid ministering their spiritual gifts in the power of the flesh. Even those of us who are called to be preachers (prophets) need to subject our spirits to other mature believers (1 Cor. 14:32). As a pastor, I am not spiritual just because I stand behind a pulpit and preach. Paul instructs us, "Let two or three prophets speak, and let others pass judgment" (1 Cor. 14:29). Those who teach God's Word are not infallible; therefore, they must allow other qualified believers to verify the truth of what they proclaim. Whenever Christians rely on their own strength, wisdom, and desire to minister, whatever they accomplish is a mockery and a waste. But whenever they minister by the Spirit's power, the result is pleasing to God and has lasting value ("gold, silver, precious stones.... If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward," 1 Cor. 3:12, 14). Essentially, all a believer needs to pray is, "Spirit of God, use me," and divine energy will activate and flow through his or her ministry to fellow believers and unbelievers. You can use your spiritual gift effectively by faithfully following three basic steps: Pray—continually confess and turn from your sins (1 John 1:9) and ask God to use you in the Holy Spirit's power. Yield yourself—always determine to live according to God's will, not the world's (Rom. 6:16; 12:1–2). Be filled with the Spirit—let the Spirit control all of your thoughts, decisions, words, and actions. Commit everything to Him, and He will minister through you.

Suggestions for Prayer: Confess any and all times lately that you have counted on your human ability rather than on the Spirit's power to minister to others. ✦ Pray that this week God would give you a clear opportunity to exercise your spiritual gift for His glory.

For Further Study: Read 1 Samuel 15:1–23. In what way did King Saul use his own insight rather than follow God's command? ✦ What can be the consequence of such disobedience (vv. 22–23; see also 1 Sam. 13:8–14)? (Strength for Today)

Charles Stanley - FAITH VERSUS REASON

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 2:12 KEY VERSE: 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.

The wisdom of God was to make the way of salvation easy and simple. True to His Word, He has confounded the wise. Many "intellectuals" consider the Cross foolishness, but they should consider God's wisdom for a moment. If you were God, separated from the people you created because of their sin, what would be the easiest method by which you could restore them to your eternal forgiveness and fellowship?

Would it be a hard and fast list of certain physical or intellectual requirements? Wouldn't that cheapen the salvation and build no lasting covenant or meaningful relationship?

No, the simplest way was for God to send His own Son in the form of a sinless Man to serve as a sacrifice for sin. The best and simplest plan would call for man's salvation to therefore be attained in one word. Just one word. Faith.

Is it not immeasurable wisdom that forges a salvation plan so simple that even a five-year-old can grasp it? But the wisdom of the true God befuddles the wisdom of the world. He sacrificed His Son as a free gift to all who would believe in Him.

"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" (1 Corinthians 2:12). Lord, the message of the gospel is so clear and so puzzling to the human mind. I embrace it in its simplicity and pray for Your wisdom that I might increase in faith. (Pathways to His Presence)

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.

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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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)

C H Spurgeon's Introduction to his sermon (click for full sermon) [Grace for Grace - 1 Corinthians 2:12](#)

THE course of our fallen race has been a succession of failures. Whenever there has been an apparent rise, it has been followed by a real fall. Into ever-increasing darkness the human mind seems resolved to plunge itself in its struggles after a false light. When men have been fools, they have danced in a delirium of sin; when they have been sober, they have given themselves up to a phantom wisdom of their own, which has revealed their folly more than ever. It is a sad story, the story of mankind! Read it in the light of God's Word, and it will bring tears from your very heart.

The only hope for man was that God should interpose; and he has interposed, as though he began a new creation, or wrought a resurrection out of the kingdom of death. God has come into human history, and here the bright lights begin. Where God is at work in grace, abounding sin is conquered, hope begins, and good becomes perceptible. This better state is always markedly the effect of a break in the natural course of things, a supernatural product which would never have been seen in this poor world had it been let alone. See yonder avalanche rushing down the steep mountain-side; such is humanity left to itself. Lo, God in Christ Jesus throws himself in the way; he so interposes as to be crushed beneath the descending rocks. But, beloved, he rises from the dreadful burial; he stops the avalanche in its terrible career; he hurls back the tremendous mass, and changes the whole aspect of history. In this divine interposition, of which the Bible gives us the best record, to which, I trust, our experience has added a happy appendix, we behold and adore the almighty grace of God.

In the interposition of omnipotent grace, we note that the Lord so works as to preserve his own glory. He takes care that no flesh shall glory in his presence. He might have used the power of the great, but he has not; he might have instructed man by man's own wisdom, but he has not; he might have declared his gospel with the excellency of human speech, but he has not. He has taken for his tools, not the armour of a king, but the sling of a shepherd; and he has placed his treasure of truth, not in the golden vase of talent, but in the earthen vessels of lowly minds. He has not made men speak for him under the spell of genius, but as they have been moved by his Holy Spirit. The Lord of hosts will save men, but he will not give men a yard of space for boasting; he will grant them a salvation, which shall humble them in the dust and lead them to know that he is God, and beside him there is none else. "The Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth." God's gracious interposition reveals his sovereignty, his wisdom, his power, his love, his grace; but it reveals nothing in men which can admit a boastful thought.

The Lord our God has worked in a way parallel with his central interposition, which is seen at the cross, where Jesus unveiled Jehovah's way of revealing power in weakness. It is in such a connection that Paul says, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." He knew that there was nothing else to know. The plan of the cross is to conquer death by death, to remove sin by the endurance of the penalty, to work mightily by suffering terribly, to glorify himself by shame. The gibbet whereon Christ died was the abyss of reproach and the climax of suffering; but it was also the focus of God's interposing grace. He there glorified himself in connection, not with honour and power, but with shame and death. The great self-sacrifice of God is the great victory of grace. Beloved, it is most sweet to think that all the ways of God to men are in harmony with this way of the cross, and that the cross is the pattern of the Lord's constant method of accomplishing his designs of grace rather by weakness than by strength, by suffering rather than by the splendour of his majesty.

Let me also add, that this way which God has taken, by which he saves men and glorifies himself, is entirely suitable to the condition of those whom he saves. If salvation had been by human excellence I could never have been saved. If the plan of salvation had required that in which a man might rightly glory, how could it have come to sinners without strength or goodness? Such a gospel would have been no gospel to us, for it would have been far out of our reach. God's plans are workable plans, suitable to the weakness of our fallen race. In Christ he comes to the wounded man where he is, and does not ask him, in his fainting condition, to come a certain part of the way. Grace does not begin half-way down the alphabet, but it is the Alpha of our hope.

It is my delightful task, though in much weakness, to set forth the exceeding freeness of the grace of God, and thus to set before you an open door, that you who have never entered may boldly do so; and that you who have already entered may sit within, and sing to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made you "accepted in the Beloved." My text speaks of the gifts of God freely given to us, and of the way by which we may receive them, and come to know their excellence and value: in all these three things it shows us that everything is of grace—it is given of grace, it is received through grace, it is understood by grace. "Grace reigns," and grace alone.

This morning I shall speak, first, of the things which are freely given to us of God; secondly, of the power to receive them, which is also given, since it is spoken of as "received"; and, thirdly, of the knowledge of them, which is also given through the Spirit. When we have set forth these three things we shall have ranged through a wide domain of sovereign grace.

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.**

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

Greek - a kai laloumen (PAI) ouk en didaktis anthropines sophias logois all' en didaktis

pneumatōs, pneumatikōis pneumatika sugkrinontes. (PAP)

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**.

CSB 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**.

ESV And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to **those who are spiritual**.

NET - 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**. [Or "combining spiritual things with spiritual words" (i.e., words the Spirit gives, as just described).]

NLT - When we tell you this, we do not use words of human wisdom. We speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain **spiritual truths**.

Wuest Expanded Paraphrase - 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**.

- **not**: 1Co 2:4, 1:17 2Pe 1:16
- **but**: 1Co 12:1-3, 14:2 Lk 12:12 Ac 2:4 1Pe 1:12
- **spiritual thoughts**: 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

VERBAL PLENARY INSPIRATION

Wayne Grudem defines **plenary inspiration**: The idea that all the words of Scripture are God's words (**plenary** meaning "full") and **inspiration**: A term referring to the fact that the words of Scripture are spoken by God. Because of the weak sense of this word in ordinary usage, this text prefers the term "God-breathed" to indicate that the words of Scripture are spoken by God." (Systematic theology: an introduction to biblical doctrine)

Which things - This refers to the "**things freely given to us by God**" (1Cor 2:12), regarding which **Alford** comments "we not only know them by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, but also speak them."

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** (1Corinthians 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. (Ibid)

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 - 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.

Wisdom (4678)(**sophia**) describes the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of action, based on knowledge and understanding, ultimately found only in God's Wisdom. The best wisdom of the best men is flawed because we are fallen men, sinful creatures. Clearly **wisdom** is a key word in this first section of First Corinthians (14 of the 51 uses [~28%] are in the first 2 chapters = 1Cor 1:17, 19, 20, 21 = twice, 1Cor 1:22, 24, 30; 1Cor 2:1, 4, 5, 6 = twice, 1Cor 2:13) Earlier Paul made a parallel negative statement declaring that when he preached the Gospel, it was "not in **cleverness** (**sophia**) of speech" (1Cor 1:17), adding that "God made foolish the **wisdom** of the world." (1Cor 1:20, cp "wisdom of men" 1Cor 2:5) and "the world through its **wisdom** did not come to know God" (1Cor 1:21). Paul did not even trust his own personal wisdom (1Cor 2:1, 4). In contrast to worldly wisdom Paul explains that God's **wisdom** was personified in the Person of Christ (1Cor 1:24, 30).

But in those (words) 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.

Taught (1318)(**didaktos** from **didasko** = to teach) refers to persons instructed (Jn 6:45) or words that are imparted or communicated (1Cor 2:13). One could translate 1Cor 2:13 this way - "in words **imparted** by human wisdom... in that which is **imparted** by the Spirit."

The only other use of **didaktos** is by Jesus (quoting Isaiah 54:13) declared "It is written in the prophets, 'AND THEY SHALL ALL BE **TAUGHT** OF GOD.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me." (John 6:45)

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. (Ibid)

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)

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)

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." (Ibid)

Apostolic Inspiration (J. Lyth)

I. NOT THE INSPIRATION OF THIS WORLD.

1. Learning.
2. Reason.
3. Genius.

II. BUT THE INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

1. Divinely communicated.

2. Divinely acting upon their minds.

3. And thus enabling them to know the things freely given them of God. ([1 Corinthians 2 Sermons](#))

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:

Greek -psuchikos de anthropos ou dechetai (PMI/PPI) ta tou pneumatos tou theou, moria gar auto estin, (PAI) kai ou dunatai (PMI/PPI) gnonai, (AAN) hoti pneumatikos anakrinetai; (PPI):

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.

Barclay - A man who has no life but physical life cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God. To him they are foolishness and he cannot understand them, because it takes the Spirit to discern them.

NLT - But people who aren't Christians can't understand these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them because only those who have the Spirit can understand what the Spirit means.

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.

- **the natural man** - 1Co 15:44,46 Jas 3:15 Jude 1:19
- **receiveth**: Mt 13:11-17, 16:23 John 3:3-6, 8:43, 10:26,27, 12:37 Ro 8:5-8
- **the things**: 1Co 2:12 John 14:26, 15:26, 16:8-15
- **they**: 1Co 1:18,23 John 8:51,52, 10:20 Acts 17:18,32, 18:15, 25:19, 26:24,25
- **neither**: Pr 14:6 John 5:44, 6:44,45, Ac 16:14, 2Co 4:4-6, 1Jn 2:20,27, 5:20 Jude 1:19)
- **Reciprocal**:, Genesis 31:28 - foolishly 2 Samuel 6:16 - despised 2 Samuel 14:17 - to discern 1 Kings 3:9 - discern 1 Kings 22:13 - Behold now 2 Kings 5:11 - Behold 1 Chronicles 15:29 - she despised 2 Chronicles 18:12 - Behold Psalms 25:14 - secret Psalms 92:6 - A brutish Proverbs 8:9 - General, Proverbs 24:7 - too Proverbs 28:5 - General, Ecclesiastes 8:5 - a wise Isaiah 8:16 - among Amos 7:12 - eat Matthew 6:23 - If Matthew 11:6 - whosoever Luke 7:23 - General, Luke 7:35 - General, John 1:5 - General, John 3:4 - How John 4:11 - thou hast John 4:15 - give John 6:52 - How John 7:36 - Ye shall John 8:37 - because John 10:6 - they understood not John 14:17 - whom Acts 17:20 - strange Romans 8:7 - neither 1 Corinthians 2:13 - spiritual things 1 Corinthians 3:1 - as unto carnal 1 Corinthians 4:10 - are fools 2 Corinthians 5:14 - because Colossians 3:3 - hid 1 Thessalonians 5:21 - Prove Hebrews 5:14 - to discern Revelation 2:17 - saving Revelation 14:3 - no

THE TRAGIC STATE OF THE NATURAL MAN

But - Whenever you encounter this **term of contrast**, pause to ponder and ask what is being contrasted? The contrast is between the lost and the saved, respectively referred to as the **natural man** versus the spiritual man. We are all born natural men in Adam (Ro 5:12+), but when we believe the "**word of the Cross**" (1Co 1:18+), we are transferred from our position "in Adam" to our eternal position "in Christ" (by grace through faith). As Peter says we "**become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust** (a description of the natural man's life)." (2Peter 1:4+)

A natural man - This person is lost, unsaved, unregenerate, devoid of the Spirit of God, one who has only physical life. 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.

Adrian Rogers describes the **natural man** this way - Now, if you're a **natural man** and never have been born again—and a **natural man** is a man who's only had one birth. He was born into the natural world and he is bound by the material world. He's only had one birth and he can never ever know the things of the spirit of God until he has a second birth.

As **Dr DeHaan** on **the natural man** - "Regeneration... is a supernatural act of God whereby a spiritual creation takes place, and we behold things which are utterly unknown and must remain completely unknown even to the most cultured, sophisticated, educated of those of Adam's race who have never experienced the new birth. And now we come to see the striking contrast in our Scripture. The **natural man**, the unregenerate man, sees none of these glories of this Book and of salvation and of God's plan of redemption. He lives in an entirely different world, the world of sense and of sight, touch and sound. The tangible world is the habitat of the **natural man** in his unregenerate state, and he is, therefore, totally ignorant of the spiritual realm which transcends all of these things." (1 Corinthians Commentary)

NET Note on **natural man** (psuchikos... anthropos) - "an unspiritual person, one who merely functions bodily, without being touched by the Spirit of God."

Natural (5591)(**psuchikos** from **psuche** = soul) is literally "soulish" with affinity to natural sinful propensities, the person in whom the **sarx**, the flesh, is more the ruling principle. **Psuche** is the nonphysical element which makes one alive, conscious of the environment, and is to be distinguished from pneuma or spirit, which is a distinctive of man as the element of communication with God. **Friberg** summarizes **psuchikos** as speaking of life in the natural world and what pertains to it; **(1)** as governed by sensual appetites and lived apart from the Spirit of God natural, unspiritual, worldly (1Cor 2.14; Jude 1:19); **(2)** as being a characteristic of the earthly body physical, natural (1Cor 15.44); neuter as a substantive - what is physical (1Cor 15.46). Jude 1:19 calls the teachers of error **worldly** (lit. 'psychic') people, who do not have the Spirit. (Analytical Lexicon)

Wuest - The word "**natural**" is the translation of a Greek word which Paul uses to describe to the Corinthian Greeks the unregenerate man at his best, the man whom Greek philosophy commended, the man actuated by the higher thoughts and aims of the natural life. The word used here is not the Greek word which speaks of the sensual man. It is the word coined by Aristotle to distinguish the pleasures of the soul, such as ambition and the desire for knowledge, from those of the body. The natural man here spoken of is the educated man at the height of his intellectual powers, but devoid of the Spirit of God. The word translated "receiveth" does not imply an active appropriation, but a certain attitude of passive acceptance when favorable, and of rejection if unfavorable. This man, whose powers of apprehension are limited to the exercise of his reason, does not admit these spiritual things into his heart. The reason for this rejection is that they are foolishness to him. (Ibid)

Jude described men who had crept into the assembly seeking to turn the grace of God into licentiousness (Jude 1:4+) as "the ones who cause divisions, **worldly-minded** (psuchikos), devoid of the Spirit." (Jude 1:19+) And so the **natural man** does not have the Holy Spirit. Paul amplifies this in Romans writing "you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him." (Ro 8:9+) And so the **natural man** does not belong to God, is not part of God's family, which explains why he cannot understand the "family language" so to speak. In 1Cor 2:12+ Paul describes himself as a spiritual man who is the antithesis of the **natural man**, for the spiritual man has not received "the spirit of the world, but the Spirit Who is from God." In that same passage Paul presented another distinction between the spiritual and **natural man**, namely that the spiritual man (Paul speaking of himself) can "know the things freely given" by God, but the natural man cannot know (or understand) them (1Cor 2:14).

Barclay - Even then it is not every man who can understand these things. Paul speaks about interpreting spiritual things to spiritual people. He distinguishes two kinds of men. (a) There are those who are **pneumatikos**. **Pneuma** is the word for Spirit; and the man who is pneumatikos is the man who is sensitive to the Spirit and whose life is guided by the Spirit. (b) There is the man who is **psuchikos**. **Psuche** in Greek is often translated soul; but that is not its real meaning. It is the principle of physical life. Everything which is alive has **psuche**; a dog, a cat, any animal has psuche, but it has not got pneuma. **Psuche** is that physical life which a man shares with every living thing; but **pneuma** is that which makes a man different from the rest of creation and kin to God. So in 1Cor 2:14 Paul speaks of the man who is **psuchikos**. He is the man who lives as if there was nothing beyond physical life and there were no needs other than material needs, whose values are all physical and material. A man like that cannot understand spiritual things. (His interests and aims do not go beyond physical life). ([1 Corinthians - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

Barclay on **natural man** - He is the man who lives as if there was nothing beyond physical life and there were no needs other than material needs, whose values are all physical and material. A man like that cannot understand spiritual things.

Chuck Smith on **natural man** - That is the way you were born, the nature you inherited from Adam. The theologians have a term, "The Adamic nature". It refers to what they term the unregenerate man. This is every man who has not be born again. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "You must be born again, that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." Paul in

another place refers to the natural man as the old man. (Ro 6:6) "knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin" Paul described the characteristics of the natural man in Eph 2:2-3 and Eph 4:17-19. ([Chuck Smith "The Natural Man, The Spiritual Man"](#))

Accept (1209)(**dechomai** = middle voice of a primary verb) means to accept with a deliberate and ready reception that which is offered, receiving it kindly. For example, dechomai conveys the idea of welcoming one as a teacher, a friend, or a guest into one's house. Dechomai pictures the accepting of something or someone with an open arm, mind, and heart, even going beyond normally expected gracious hospitality (e.g., Acts 21:17). The term was often used of welcoming honored guests and meeting their needs with special attention and kindness. The natural man does not "put out the welcome mat" (so to speak-as in Col 4:10, Heb 11:31) for the Word of God (similar to those described in 2Th 2:10-12)! It is notable that **dechomai** is often associated with positive **receptivity to the Word of God** - see Acts 7:38+, Acts 8:14+, Acts 17:11+, Eph 6:17+, 1Th 1:6, 1Th 2:13, James 1:21. We see the opposite response by the "supernatural" men (believers) in Thessalonica for "when (they) received (**paralambano**) the word of God which (they) heard from (Paul, Silas and Timothy - 1Th 1:1), (they **accepted** (dechomai) it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs (**energeo** in present tense = continually) its work (**Notice the "intrinsic power of the Word!**) in you who believe." (1Th 2:13+).

The things of the Spirit of God - What are these "things?" Paul explains that they are **things** which are **foolishness** to the natural man. Earlier Paul had said "the word of the Cross is foolishness" (1Cor 1:18), going on to describe that these "**things**" as "**the foolishness of the message preached... Christ crucified... to the Gentiles foolishness.**" (1Cor 1:21, 24)

Warren Wiersbe makes a related comment that "The way a Christian treats his Bible shows how he regards Jesus Christ. He is the living Word (John 1:1, 14), and the Bible is the written Word; but in essence they are the same. Both are bread (Mt. 4:4; John 6:48), light (Ps. 119:105; John 8:12), and truth (John 14:6; 17:17)." (Bible Exposition Commentary)

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 - Only the saved are able to welcome God's truth. When Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 2:14 that "the man without the Spirit ("psuchikos" = 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. Rather, Paul meant that a non-Christian does not welcome its truth! The Greek word translated "accept" (dechomai) means "welcome." If "receive" were intended, a different Greek word (lambano) would have been used. The verse does not mean that an unsaved person, who is devoid of the Holy Spirit, cannot understand mentally what the Bible is saying; instead it means that he does not welcome its message of redemption to his own heart. [Daniel F. Fuller, "Do We Need the Holy Spirit to Understand the Bible"? Eternity, January 1959, p. 22.] He rejects the message, refusing to appropriate it and act on it. By contrast, people in Berea "received (dechoma) the message with great eagerness" (Acts 17:11), and the Thessalonians "received (dechomai) the Word... with the joy of the Holy Spirit" (1Th 1:6). The statement in 1 Corinthians 2:14 that the things of the Spirit of God are "**foolishness**" to an unbeliever would indicate that he has some understanding of what the Bible says. Otherwise, if nothing were communicated to him, how could he judge such a communication to be foolish? He could not call something **foolishness** unless he had some cognitive awareness of it. ([The Role of the Holy Spirit in Hermeneutics](#))

A T Robertson - (For believers) the initiative comes from God whose Holy Spirit makes it possible for us to **accept the things of the Spirit of God**. They are no longer "**foolishness**" to us as was once the case (1Cor 1:23). Today one notes certain of the intelligentsia who sneer at Christ and Christianity in their own blinded ignorance.

Foolishness (3472)(**moros** from **moros** = foolish) is a noun which is that which is folly, foolish, intellectually weak or irrational. It means lacking good judgment.

Webster's Dictionary definition of **folly** - lack of good sense or normal prudence and foresight; A weak or absurd act not highly criminal; an act which is inconsistent with the dictates of reason, or with the ordinary rules of prudence. In this sense it may be used in the singular, but is generally in the plural. Hence we speak of the follies of youth.

TDNT - A. The Group in Classical Greek. **moros** and cognates denote deficiency, e.g., physical sloth, but more especially mental dullness. We find such varied uses as for insipid foods, animals that are sluggish in winter, or people suffering from fatigue. With a human reference the main use is psychological. What is meant is a

weakness of understanding or judgment, sometimes through stupidity, sometimes through confusion, but always demanding censure. Along with a more rationalistic view, the Greeks suggest at times that folly of this nature is a fate.

It is notable that all 5 uses occur in 1 Corinthians...

(1Cor 1:18) For the word of the cross (~ the Gospel) is **foolishness** to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

(1Cor 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.

(1Cor 1:23) but we preach Christ crucified (~ the Gospel), to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles **foolishness**,

(1Cor 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.

(1Cor 3:19) For the wisdom of this world is **foolishness** before God. For it is written, "He is THE ONE WHO CATCHES THE WISE IN THEIR CRAFTINESS";

There are two uses of **moria** in the apocrypha - "Better is the man who hides his **folly** than the man who hides his wisdom." (Sirach 20:30, 41:15 RSV)

Vance Havner - The wise Christian wastes no time trying to explain God's program to unregenerate men; 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!'

Illustration of foolishness - Several years ago, there was a massive volcanic explosion in the state of Washington when Mount St. Helens erupted. Sheriff Bill Closner said, "People were in the danger areas around the mountain because they refused to obey roadblocks. The bottom line is that nobody would listen." As a result, there were needless deaths and injuries. Even though danger was physically imminent, people still refused to obey the regulations. Sin or disobedience always has consequences. If people refused to listen in the midst of dangerous circumstances like the Mount St. Helens eruption, we should not be so shocked at the depravity and stubbornness of men in spiritual matters. (Illustrations for Biblical Preaching: Over 1500 sermon illustrations arranged by topic and indexed exhaustively, Green, Michael P)

A T Robertson on he cannot understand them - He is not able to get a (an experiential) knowledge (ingressive second aorist active infinitive of ginosko). His helpless condition calls for pity in place of impatience on our part, though such a one usually poses as a paragon of wisdom and commiserates the deluded followers of Christ.

Can (not = absolute negation!) (1410)(**dunamai**) conveys the basic meaning of that which has the inherent ability to do something or accomplish some end. Thus **dunamai** means to be able to, to be capable of, to be strong enough to do or to have power to do something. It is usually translated able (50x), can (61x and cannot 58x) or could. **BDAG** says that **dunamai** means "to possess capability (whether because of personal or external factors) for experiencing or doing something."

Cannot understand - More literally "**cannot know (ginosko)**" -- Paul's point is not the unregenerate or unsaved man cannot read the Word and in some sense cognitively apprehend it, but that he cannot know the Word in an experiential sense. I think for example of Psalm 19:8 where David writes "The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart." Believers can experience joy in their heart, that a natural man simply does not know! **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, 15:13, Acts 13:52) **We are the most blessed of all people!**

Roy Zuck adds that "An unbeliever does not know God's truth experientially. He may grasp portions of it mentally, but he does not discern it spiritually nor experience it personally. Virkler summarizes this point well when he writes: 'Thus unbelievers do not know the full meaning of scriptural teaching, not because that meaning is unavailable to them in the words of the text, but because they refuse to act on and appropriate spiritual truths for their own lives. Furthermore, the psychological results of such refusal make them less and less able (and willing) to comprehend these truths.'" [Henry A. Virkler, Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation] ([The Role of the Holy Spirit in Hermeneutics](#))

Understand (1097)(**ginosko**) means to acquire information through some modality, as through sense

perception (hearing). However ginosko involves experiential knowledge, not merely the accumulation of known facts. Ginosko is one of the major verbs of the Bible and because of its numerous uses, it is not surprising that Greek lexicographers ascribe a number of nuances of meaning including to get to know, come to understand, to ascertain, to have intimate relations with another, etc. The various meanings are outlined, discussed and illustrated in the notes that follow. Keep in mind that the basic meaning of ginosko is to know by experience.

The **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!

Barnett - The people of this present time, unaided by God's word and Spirit, simply do not 'see' the coming glory of God **Ed**: Or the **present glory** of the Gospel - 2Cor 4:4, 1Ti 1:11). 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 . (Focus on the Bible: 1 Corinthians)

Spiritually (pneumatikos) **appraised** (anakrino) in this context means by the assistance of the Holy Spirit. **Kenneth Wuest** explains that "The investigation of, inquiry into, scrutinizing, and sifting of (anakrino) Scripture truth is done in the energy of the Holy Spirit Who illuminates the sacred page of Scripture to the believer. It is "**he who is spiritual appraises all things.**" (1Cor 2:15)... The Spirit, controlled Christian investigates, inquires into, and scrutinizes the Bible and comes to an appreciation and understanding of its contents. (Ibid)

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).

Appraised (350)(**anakrino** from **aná** = again + **kríno** = sift, judge, distinguish, separate out so as to investigate) (present tense = continually) means to sift up and down, to examine accurately or carefully (re-examine), to make careful and exact research as in legal processes. In a judicial or legal sense anakrino means to question in order to pass a judicial sentence (cf Lk 23:14, Acts 4:9, 12:19,24:8, 28:18, 1Cor 4:3, 4)

Vincent has the following note on **anakrino** = Originally implying a through examination; **ana**, up, from bottom to top. Technically, of a legal examination. The fundamental idea of **anakrino** is examination, scrutiny, following up (ana) a series of objects or particulars in order to distinguish (krino). This is its almost universal meaning in classical Greek. At Athens it was used technically in two senses: to examine magistrates with a view to proving their qualifications; and to examine persons concerned in a suit, so as to prepare the matter for trial, as a grand jury. The meaning judged is, at best, inferential, and the Revised Version inserts examined in the margin, Bishop Lightfoot says: "anakrinein is neither to judge nor to discern; but to examine, investigate, inquire into, question, as it is rightly translated, 1 Cor. 9:3; 10:25, 27. The apostle condemns all these impatient human praejudicia which anticipate the final judgment, reserving his case for the great tribunal, where at length all the evidence will be forthcoming and a satisfactory verdict can be given. Meanwhile the process of gathering evidence has begun; an anakrino investigation is indeed being held, not, however, by these self-appointed magistrates, but by one who alone has the authority to institute the inquiry, and the ability to sift the facts" ("On a Fresh Revision of the New Testament").

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.

Wayne Grudem - 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). ([Systematic theology](#))

David Guzik - Too many Christians still think like natural men, refusing to spiritually discern things. When our only concern is for "what works" or the "bottom line," we are not spiritually discerning, and we are thinking like the natural man, even though we might be saved. ([1 Corinthians 2 Commentary](#))

Chuck Smith explains the characteristics of the **natural man** - You try to talk to him about spiritual things and you may as well be talking to a Barbie Doll.. There is absolutely no comprehension. Sometimes they will listen patiently if they are cultured, and others will just get angry and scream at you. Why can he not understand? They are spiritually discerned. So he lacks the faculties by which they are known and understood, (i.e. the spiritual nature). You might say with equal logic, the blind man cannot appreciate the beauty of a sunset. The deaf man cannot know the glories of the symphony. They lack the faculties by which these things are known. ([Chuck Smith Sermon Notes](#))

Vance Havner - The **natural man** can never be educated into apprehension of divine truth. In fact, the more wisdom of this world he accumulates, the more confirmed he is in error and the more moronic the Gospel appears. There is no hope in the supposition that a postgraduate course in secular knowledge will make it easier to see the things of the Spirit of God. It will only compound pride of intellect and harden resistance to the truth. Never forget that the wisdom of God is foolishness to men, which makes its believers fools in the eyes of men. Old Adam cannot be educated into a Christian. (All the Days)

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)

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

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).

Spurgeon- Natural or Spiritual - The apostle knows of only two classes of men — natural and spiritual. Under "natural," he includes all who are not partakers of the Spirit of God, no matter how excellent they may be. On the other hand, all into whom the Spirit of God has come he calls spiritual men.

I. THE NATURAL MAN RECEIVES NOT THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD, BUT COUNTS THEM FOOLISH.

1. Some oppose them violently, and do their best to put down such folly.
2. A greater proportion secretly despise and condemn. They dare say that religion is a good thing for old women, &c., but utterly repudiate it as a thing worthy the attention of wise men.
3. The great mass are indifferent. "For forms of faith let graceless zealots fight, he can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

II. THERE IS NOTHING WHATEVER IN THE THINGS THEMSELVES TO JUSTIFY SUCH AN ESTIMATION.

You do not know what you say when you declare that the gospel of Christ is absurd. It is generally pretty safe to ask a man who rails at the Bible, "Did you ever read it?" These learned gentlemen are like those critics who, when they meet with a new volume, take the knife and cut the first page, smell it, and then condemn or praise. The mightiest intellects confess that the truths of this book are above their highest flights. Even Newton said there were depths here which no mortal could fathom. As these things of the Spirit of God are wise and profound, so they are most important, and if not received, it is not because they are uncongenial with our necessities. There are some speculations which a man need not enter upon, but the doctrines of God teach you your relationship to your Maker; your condition before Him; how He can be just to man, and yet be gracious; how you can approach Him, and become His child; how you may be conformed to His image, and made a partaker of His glory.

III. THE REASON FOR THE REJECTION OF THE GOSPEL.

1. Want of taste. You have sometimes seen an artist standing before a splendid picture. "What a fine conception!" says he, "I could stand a week and admire that." Some bumpkin, however, says, "It looks to me to be an old decayed piece of canvas that wants cleaning." Then leaving the gallery, he notices on the wall outside a picture of an elephant standing on his head, and a clown performing in some circus, and he says, "That's more to my taste." Just so is it with the natural man. Give him some work of fiction — a daub upon the wall — and he is satisfied. But he has no taste for the things of God.
2. Want of organs. Just as a blind man cannot appreciate a landscape nor a deaf man music; so the natural man lacking the eye and ear of faith cannot appreciate the beauties and music of the gospel.
3. Want of nature. The brute cannot appreciate the studies of the astronomer because he lacks an intellectual nature; and so the mere man of intellect cannot appreciate the things of the Spirit because he lacks a spiritual nature.

IV. THE PRACTICAL TRUTHS WHICH FLOW FROM THIS GREAT THOUGH SORROWFUL FACT.

1. The absolute necessity for regeneration, or the work of the Spirit. You may educate a nature up to its highest point, but you cannot educate an old nature into a new one. You may educate a horse, but you cannot educate it into a man. You may by your own efforts make yourselves the best of natural men, but still at your very best there is a division wide as eternity between you and the regenerate man. And no man can help us out of such a nature into a state of grace. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."
2. If any of us have received the things of the Spirit, we ought to look upon that as comfortable evidence that we have been born again. ([1 Corinthians 2-13 Sermons](#))

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.

F F Trench on 1 Cor 2:14 - "I remember once being present," says Captain Basil Hall, "at the Geological Society, when a bottle was produced which was said to contain certain Zoöphytes (delicate water-animals, having the form of plants). It was handed round in the first instance among the initiated on the foremost benches, who commented freely with one another on the forms of the animals in the fluid; but when it came to our hands, we could discover nothing in the bottle but the most limpid fluid, without any trace, so far as our eyes could make out, of animals dead or alive, the whole appearing absolutely transparent. The surprise of the ignorant, at seeing nothing, was only equal to that of the learned, who saw so much to admire. Nor was it till we were specifically instructed what it was we were to look for, and the shape, size, and general aspect of the Zoöphytes pointed out, that our understanding began to coöperate with our sight in peopling the fluid which, up to that moment, had seemed perfectly uninhabited. The wonder then was, how we could possibly have omitted seeing objects now so palpable." How many are the things which appear to the illuminated Christians to be palpably revealed, which the unconverted cannot discover to have any place in the Scriptures of truth; and how much surprised does he feel that he could ever have overlooked them! F. F. TRENCH.

C H Spurgeon - Natural or Spiritual? ([Click for full sermon](#)) - 1 Corinthians 2:14 - THE Apostle Paul knows of only two classes of men—natural and spiritual. Before his eye all other distinctions are extinguished. Barbarian or Scythian, bond or free, male or female, circumcision or uncircumcision—all these varieties among men are mere accidents in his esteem. He does not stay to divide men, according to the symptoms of their nature. They may be devout men, such as make a profession of godliness, men of morality, men who have commenced sin, or men who have become adepts in it. He knows better than merely to judge of men by their symptoms; he takes either their diseased state or their healthy state, and so divides them. He lays the axe at the root of the trees, and doing so, he perceives only two classes of men—the natural and the spiritual. Under the term "natural," the apostle includes all those persons who are not partakers of the Spirit of God; it matters not how excellent, how estimable, how intelligent, how instructed they may be. If the Spirit of God hath not given to them a new and higher nature than they ever possessed by their creature birth, he puts them all down at once in the list of natural men. They are what they are by nature. They never professed to have received the Spirit of God. He puts them down, therefore, as natural men. On the other hand, all into whom the Spirit of God has come, breathing into them a new and diviner life, he puts down under the other head of spiritual men. They may be as yet but babes in grace; their faith may be weak; their love may be but in its early bud; as yet their spiritual senses may be little exercised, perhaps their faults may be in excess of their virtues, but inasmuch as the root of the matter is in them, and they have passed from death unto life, out of the region of nature into that which is beyond nature—the kingdom of grace—he puts them down also, all of them in one list, as spiritual men. And then he goes on to affirm concerning natural men,—those who are not partakers of the Spirit,—that the truths of God, which are spiritual, they do not and cannot receive. He teaches that it is utterly impossible that they ever should receive them, unless lifted out of that class of natural men and transformed by the Spirit's work into spiritual men. This change, however, being effected, they will not only receive the things of the Spirit, but embrace them with delight, feed upon them with intense satisfaction, and rise eventually into that state of glory which is next beyond the state of grace. ([Click for full sermon](#))

David Jeremiah - THE ILLUMINATION OF THE SPIRIT - PENETRATING LIGHT IN A DARK WORLD -
1 CORINTHIANS 2:13–15

Have you ever been lost in the dark? I have a friend who visited Bucharest, Romania, just months after the fall of that nation's insane dictator, Nicolae Ceausescu. Bullet holes scarred the walls of many buildings in that dreary capital city. Even with the tyrant deposed, it was still a nation filled with fear. It was also a nation filled with darkness, because commodities such as lightbulbs were simply unavailable in the country at that time. My friend was staying for a week in an apartment in one of those massive, cement, Soviet-style apartment complexes. He got out of a taxicab after a meeting on the first night and tried to remember where his apartment was. But everything was pitch dark. No streetlights. No lights in windows. Just black, hulking blocks of buildings—and a feeling of oppressive evil in the air. He got into an elevator in what he hoped was the right building. The elevator had no lights. The door shut, encasing him in a box of utter blackness. Was anyone else in the elevator? He didn't know. He felt for where the panel might be, found some buttons, and pushed one he hoped would take him to the third floor. The doors opened to yet another level of deepest night. An attack of panic began to clutch at his throat as he groped his way along an outside hallway. Was that the elevator doors he heard—opening again? Was he being followed? He stared in vain at the doorways, trying to make out an apartment number. Finally, he had to walk up to a door and try to feel the numbers. He finally got through the right door to the right apartment and, shaking with relief, vowed to pay much closer attention to instructions in the future. Before they had left home, the group leader had specifically told everyone to bring a small penlight or flashlight on this journey. What a difference a bright, cheery little light would have meant! In that thoroughly dark place, it would have cut through the gloom like a searchlight. And so it is in this dark world of ours. Without the illumination of God's Word, we have to feel our way along, guessing at dangers, guessing at direction, hoping against hope that we will find our way and won't stumble into trouble or disaster. But our Father has not left His children alone in the dark. The Holy Spirit is the One who shines His light on the pages of God's Word, so that we can find wisdom and direction in a fallen world. In this chapter we will discover that we can't really even understand the Bible without the Holy Spirit. Why? Because spiritual truth in the Bible can only be seen through spiritual eyes. In presenting God's Word to us, the Holy Spirit has a complex ministry of grace. First of all, He was involved in the inspiration of the written Word of God. He tenderly oversaw the whole process, utilizing the personalities of individual writers, but so directing them that the resulting text is precisely what He wanted to say. But He's also involved in a day-by-day ministry we call the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Illumination, of course, is the word for light. To illumine a dark room, you flip on the light switch. To illumine a thought or idea means to shine the light of understanding on it. The Bible tells us that without the Spirit of God shining on our hearts, we can never comprehend what the Bible says. There are a number of reasons for that. If you are an unbeliever, for instance, you simply will never be able to understand Scripture. You can read it. You can memorize it. You can diagram its sentences. You can take apart its Hebrew and Greek word by word. But it will never come alive. The light will never come on because you don't have the spiritual equipment to study it. "Well, David," you say, "that's just your opinion." No, that's the Word of God. Look with me at Paul's graphic description of those who don't know the Lord: "But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them." (2 Corinthians 4:3–4)

The Bible says that before you invite Christ into your life you have spiritual scales on your eyes and can't understand Scripture. You can read it for all you're worth, but it's just a bunch of words. It doesn't make any sense. You might as well be a Lithuanian trying to read a Portuguese phone book. In 1 Corinthians 2:14 we're told that the "natural man" (that's the person who doesn't know the Lord), "does not receive the things of the Spirit of God." Why doesn't he? Read on. "For they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." If I were to go up and down the aisles of the church where I pastor and ask for testimonies, I would have no trouble finding people who were perplexed and confused by the Bible before they were saved. Many of them would say, "You know, Pastor Jeremiah, before I invited Christ into my life, I tried to read that book, and it made no sense to me. In fact, it seemed like foolishness. I couldn't understand why people would study the Bible and get so excited about it, because to me it was just so much gibberish." But when the Spirit of God comes to live within you, He opens the Word of God so you can begin to understand it. He directs His light on its pages. He highlights verses that apply to your situation. He whispers meanings and insights into your mind. Sometimes those insights come as a quiet word of assurance in the night—like the soft glow of a night-light. At other times they come like thunderbolts, suddenly lighting up the sky. **That's illumination.** - It's the Spirit of God casting light on the Word and shining in our hearts, so that the Word begins to come up off the page and make sense in our lives. But did you know that Christians can be blinded too? Immaturity or carnality can dim our spiritual vision. Even though you have the basic equipment to study the Word of God when the Spirit comes to live within you, you can put a shade on that light by not walking in faith. Sometimes people say, "Well, I don't see why I need all this new truth. I don't need to know about this and that. After all, I'm saved, I'm going to heaven, and that's all I really care about. I don't really need to understand this stuff." But we really do need to know and understand these things; God has given the Bible to us as a key to success in the Christian life. There's nothing else that will help us, and you never know what portion of Scripture (even Malachi!) the Holy Spirit might want to pick up and use as a tool to change your life. There are many thousands of books published each year, of course, but the Bible is different. Solomon's words are still appropriate. In fact, more than ever. "Be warned," he said; "the writing of many books is endless, and excessive devotion to books is wearying to the body. The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person" (Ecclesiastes 12:12–13, NASB). What Solomon was saying is that God's wisdom is different than the world's wisdom. Paul picks up on that thought in his letter to the Corinthians. (God in You)

Related Resource - [Illumination of the Bible](#)

James Smith - Those hidden treasures of spiritual strength—mountain full of horses and chariots of fire— can only be seen and trusted by those who have received the holy eye-salve of Him who has all power in Heaven and on earth (Rev. 3:18). No amount of learning or scholarship will ever be able to do the work of this eye-salve, which is the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit that quickeneth (Jn 6:63). (Handfuls on Purpose)

Selwyn Hughes - The relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Word of God is an important one. Some tend to put the emphasis on one side or the other. But the moment we separate the Spirit and the Word, we are in trouble. The late Donald Gee once said: "All Spirit and no Word, you blow up. All Word and no Spirit, you dry up. Word and Spirit—you grow up." Without the Spirit, the Word is a dead letter; with the Spirit, it is a living and powerful force. The Devil has a policy of "divide and conquer." And if he can get us to separate the Word from the Spirit, then he has us just where he wants us. (Every Day with Jesus)

Spiritual Discernment Impaired - Darwin gives an account of two blind men with whom he was in the habit of conversing for some years. They both told him that "they never remembered having dreamed of visible objects after they became totally blind." So, when men give themselves to lower and meaner things, the higher and nobler faculties of the soul come in to trouble them less and less. By and by the spiritual and the unseen is to them as though it were not.

The Natural Man Blind to the Things of the Spirit of God - Set a man down on one of the jutting crags of the Andes, and with the shadows of midnight or the scarf of a morning mist hanging around him he sees nothing of the shaggy fantastic grandeur with which he is environed. He stands on one of the "altar thrones" of creation, with the sweep of the firmament above him, and the jeweled earth beneath him; but until the sunshine sifts its radiance on his sightless eyeballs, darkness confused and confusing shuts him in on every side. So with the spirit world in its relation to the natural man. That world envelopes him like an atmosphere or sea of life, touching him at every avenue of soul and sense with its glory; but the perceptive faculty is wanting and he cannot behold it. The flashing skies are dark to his closed eyes. Neither can the dark mind see God.

The Ignorance of the Natural Man - "Suppose," says an old divine, "a geometrician should be drawing outlines and figures, and there should come in a silly, ignorant fellow, who, seeing him thus employed, should laugh at him; would the artist, think you, leave off his employment because of his derision? Surely not; for he knows that his laughter is but the fruit of his ignorance, as not knowing his art, and the ground upon which it goes: and therefore he keeps on drawing, even though the fellow keeps on laughing."

F F Trench - "I remember once being present," says Captain Basil Hall, "at the Geological Society, when a bottle was produced which was said to contain certain Zoöphytes (delicate water-animals, having the form of plants). It was handed round in the first instance among the initiated on the foremost benches, who commented freely with one another on the forms of the animals in the fluid; but when it came to our hands, we could discover nothing in the bottle but the most limpid fluid, without any trace, so far as our eyes could make out, of animals dead or alive, the whole appearing absolutely transparent. The surprise of the ignorant, at seeing nothing, was only equal to that of the learned, who saw so much to admire. Nor was it till we were specifically instructed what it was we were to look for, and the shape, size, and general aspect of the Zoöphytes pointed out, that our understanding began to coöperate with our sight in peopling the fluid which, up to that moment, had seemed perfectly uninhabited. The wonder then was, how we could possibly have omitted seeing objects now so palpable." How many are the things which appear to the illuminated Christians to be palpably revealed, which the unconverted cannot discover to have any place in the Scriptures of truth; and how much surprised does he feel that he could ever have overlooked them!

Festus - An Example of the Man in 1 Corinthians 2:14 - PORCIUS FESTUS succeeded Felix as procurator of Judæa. His appointment was probably in 60 A.D., and so we have here one of the few data for fixing the chronology of the Acts. His tenure of office was brief, as he died in the year 62. It was marked by the dispersion of the sicarii, and by the dispute concerning the wall of the Temple, which was put up to interrupt the view of its courts from the new wing of Agrippa's palace. **THE MAN OF GOOD INTENTION** - 1. In personal character Festus seems to have been a great improvement upon his predecessor. The portrait given in the Acts is that of a high official anxious to perform the duties of his exalted position conscientiously, and with the equity and justice so characteristic of Rome and the Roman Government at their best. Three days after his arrival at Cæsarea he went up to Jerusalem, when at once the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul. Their resentment was kept alive by the continued diminution of the funds sent from the Hellenistic synagogues. Festus ordered the accusers to come down to Cæsarea and there lay their accusation against St. Paul. After a stay of eight or ten days in Jerusalem, he proceeded to Cæsarea, and, on the day after his arrival, took his seat in the procurator's court and summoned the prisoner to his presence, where his accusers, who had in the meantime also arrived from Jerusalem, repeated the charges which they had already formulated against St. Paul before Felix.

Once again he was accused of being guilty of offences (1) against the law of the Jews, (2) against the Temple, and (3) against Cæsar, all of which charges he emphatically denied, and in support of which the prosecution was unable to produce any evidence. The character of the charges seemed to Festus, who showed no tendency to treat his prisoner with any degree of injustice, to be more suitable for consideration by a Jewish than by an Imperial tribunal, seeing that they were concerned principally with questions of Jewish law and religion. He therefore suggested to St. Paul that the case should be transferred to Jerusalem, where he could be tried before the Sanhedrin, while his own presence at the hearing would guarantee that justice should be done to him. It is manifest from this suggestion that he attached but slight importance to the charge of treason to the Empire, which would have been much too serious a matter to be entrusted to the decision of an inferior court. St. Paul declined to go to Jerusalem, and appealed to Cæsar. ¶ Paul knew that Festus, honest as he might be in the intention to secure him a fair trial, would be powerless to save him from being murdered by the way, and, besides, it was altogether illegal to refer to a Jewish court a case which had been already brought under the Imperial jurisdiction, by being transferred to Cæsarea. Sent to Jerusalem, the dagger awaited him; sent to Rome, he must, as he rightly believed, be set free. ¶ The root of honesty is an honest intention, the distinct and deliberate purpose to be true, to handle facts as they are, and not as we wish them to be. Facts lend themselves to manipulation. Many a butcher's hand is worth more than its weight in gold. What we want things to be, we come to see them to be; and the tailor pulls the coat and the truth into a perfect fit from his point of view. Oh, to get life out of our sinful and selfish desires, and "walk in the light as he is in the light," not wishing merely, but "willing to live honestly!" ([For full text of Festus click here](#))

H. W. Beecher. - If you bring me a basket full of minerals from California, and I take them and look at them, I shall know that this specimen has gold in it, because I see there little points of yellow gold, but I shall not know what the white and the dark points are that I see. But let a metallurgist look at it, and he will see that it contains not only gold, but silver, and lead, and iron, and he will single them out. To me it is a mere stone, with only here and there a hint of gold, but to him it is a combination of various metals. Now take the Word of God, that is filled with precious stones and metals, and let one instructed in spiritual insight go through it, and he will discover all these treasures; while, if you let a man uninstructed in spiritual insight go through it, he will discover those things that are outside and apparent, but those things that make God and man friends, and that have to do with the immortality of the soul in heaven, escape his notice. No man can know these things unless the Spirit of God has taught him to discern them.

Seeing The Rainbow - Richard De Haan - 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; 2 Cor. 4:3-4). They are like that visitor who saw the waterfall and the sunshine—but not the rainbow. Can you see the rainbow? If you can, be sure to tell others how they can see it too. ([Our Daily Bread](#))

It's possible to read the Bible through
Yet never see the glory that is there;
But when you know who Jesus really is,
You'll see Him on its pages everywhere.
—Hess

**Without the light of God's Spirit,
we'll be in the dark about God's Word.**

Spiritual Deafness - Richard De Haan - The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him. —1 Corinthians 2:14 - Some people suffer from a strange hearing disorder—they can hear sounds but can't understand words. They have no trouble hearing a bird sing or a watch tick, but words are as unintelligible as if they were a foreign language. The source of the problem is not in the ears. It stems from an injury to the brain.

There is also a spiritual deafness that affects many people. Because of a sinful heart, those without faith in Christ can read the Bible and hear the teachings of God's Word, but its spiritual message is foolishness to them (1 Corinthians 2:14).

That explains why some people can appreciate the Bible as literature, as reliable history, and as a source of high moral standards, but they fail to understand its spiritual message. They don't grasp the significance of what it says about Christ—His death on the cross for our sins, His resurrection, and His ministry of intercession for us in heaven today. These truths make no sense to them.

As you read the Bible, do you “hear” what it says? If not, ask the Lord to open your understanding to what it says about Jesus. Put your trust in Him as your personal Savior and experience a spiritual birth. That's the cure for spiritual deafness. ([Our Daily Bread](#))

We cannot understand God's truth
Until we know the Lord;
It's when our heart is home to Him
We understand His Word.
—Anon.

**The key to understanding the written Word
is knowing the Living Word.**

The Secret Is - Julie Ackerman Link - If you believe Rhonda Byrne, author of the bestselling book *The Secret*, “The shortcut to anything you want in your life is to be and feel happy now!” According to Byrne, this has to do with something called the law of attraction. If you think only about things that make you happy, she says, happy things will be attracted to you.

Sounds easy enough. However, the Bible says that “the secret” to life is something very different. It has to do with “the law of the Spirit of life” that sets us free from “the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:2), not with the “law of attraction.”

According to the apostle Paul, the most important thing to know is “Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2). **To those who are concerned with happiness now, this is indeed foolishness** (1Cor 2:14). They do not recognize the power of God in what appears to them as weakness.

The Lord created us with a desire to know what is secret. In His wisdom, He kept certain things hidden in mystery for a time (v.7). But now, through His Holy Spirit, He has made them known. And the secret He reveals has nothing to do with having happy thoughts in order to obtain happy things; it has to do with having the mind of Jesus Christ (v.16). ([Our Daily Bread](#))

There is a law that made us free—
In Romans 8 this truth is heard;
The secret is to walk with God
And daily lean upon His Word.
—Hess

**To know lasting happiness,
we must get to know Jesus.**

Spiritual Eyesight - Richard De Haan - The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. —1 Corinthians 2:14 - The great 19th-century preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon told the story about a woman who said to Joseph Turner while he was painting, “Why do you put such extravagant colors into your pictures? I never see anything like them in nature.”

“Don't you wish you did, Madam?” he said. It was a sufficient answer. He saw them, even if she did not.

In a similar way, believers in Christ can see many spiritual truths that unbelievers simply cannot recognize. When we are born again, the indwelling Holy Spirit gives us understanding of the “deep things of God” (1Cor 2:10). With the help of the Spirit, we can apprehend the truths of the Word of God and appreciate their beauty and significance. We can see wonderful things in Scripture that are completely unnoticed by those who are spiritually blind.

As you faithfully read and study the Bible, as you listen to trustworthy Bible teachers, and above all as you rely on the Holy Spirit, be thankful that you can understand God's message. Like the psalmist, we should pray, “Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law” (Ps. 119:18). Scriptural insight is available only to those with spiritual eyesight.

Silently now I wait for Thee,
Ready, my God, Thy will to see;
Open my eyes—illumine me,

Spirit divine!
—Scott

**The Spirit of God enables the people of God
to understand the Word of God.**

1 Corinthians 2:15 But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one:

Greek - ho de pneumatikos anakrinei (PAI) [ta] panta, autos de up' oudenos anakrinetai. (PPI):

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].

Barclay - But a spiritual man exercises his judgment on the value of all things, but he himself is under no man's judgment.

CSB 1 Corinthians 2:15 The spiritual person, however, can evaluate everything, yet he himself cannot be evaluated by anyone.

NET 1 Corinthians 2:15 The one who is spiritual discerns all things, yet he himself is understood 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:

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.

NLT - We who have the Spirit understand these things, but others can't understand us at all.

Wuest Expanded Paraphrase - But the spiritual man investigates indeed all things, but he himself is not being probed by anyone.

- **he who:** 1Co 3:1, 14:37 Ga 6:1 Col 1:9
- **Appraises:** 2Sa 14:17 1Ki 3:9-11 Ps 25:14 Pr 28:5 Ec 8:5 John 7:17 Eph 4:13,14 Php 1:10, 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
- **Reciprocal:**, 1 Samuel 17:29 - General, 2 Samuel 12:21 - What thing 2 Kings 18:22 - whose high places Nehemiah 6:12 - I perceived Job 34:3 - the ear Proverbs 8:9 - General, Isaiah 36:7 - is it not Matthew 16:23 - thou savourest Mark 2:16 - How Luke 7:35 - General, John 7:8 - I go not John 8:15 - judge John 11:31 - She goeth 1 Corinthians 4:3 - it is 1 Corinthians 14:24 - he is convinced Colossians 1:28 - in all 1 John 2:20 - and ye

THE SPIRITUAL MAN

Adrian Rogers nicely sums up the essence of this passage noting that "The spiritual man walking with divine illumination will be a mystery to those about him."

But (de) - Always pause to ponder this **term of contrast**, asking at least what the writer is contrasting? Clearly in context Paul is contrasting the **natural man** (1Cor 2:14) and the spiritual man.

He who is spiritual - This is an apt description of the man who is illuminated by the Spirit of God and is able to appraise the wonderful truths of God.

Adrian Rogers - "**He that is spiritual discerns all things.**" I mean, he can look into the Word of God; he can know what God is doing, what God is up to.

As **William MacDonald** says "Not only must these truths be miraculously revealed and miraculously inspired, but they can only be understood by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit."

Alford on **he who is spiritual** - "he, in whom the spirit rules: and since by man's fall the spirit is over-ridden by the animal soul, and in abeyance, this always presupposes the infusion of the Holy Spirit, to quicken and inform the spirit—so that there is no such thing

as an unregenerate spiritual man."

William Barclay says "the man who is **pneumatikos** is the man who is sensitive to the Spirit and whose life is guided by the Spirit."

KJV Bible Commentary says the spiritual man is "he who is dominated by the Spirit... The difference between the **natural man** (1Cor 2:14) and the spiritual man is primarily that the spiritual man has been exposed to God's revelation, has received it, and founded his faith upon it. He can judge now both earthly and heavenly things. He can discern what is and what is not of the gospel and salvation, and whether a man truly preaches the truth of God. It is important to observe that the spiritual man does not lose his power of reasoning. Nor does Paul renounce the concepts of reason and logic. Rather, he elevates revelation above reason, and subjects the imaginations of human reason to the objective truth of God. The natural man operates in reverse. (Hindson, Edward E.; Kroll, Woodrow Michael)

Spiritual (4152)(**pneumatikos** from **pneuma** = wind, spirit <> in turn from **pneo** = to blow) is an adjective which means pertaining to the wind and then relating to the realm of the spirit referring to the inner, invisible sphere of a human being.

W E Vine says that **pneumatikos** "always connotes the ideas of invisibility and of power... **pneumatikos** refers to the purposes of God revealed in the Gospel by the Holy Spirit, 1Corinthians 2:13, and the words in which that revelation is expressed, are 'spiritual,' 1Corinthians 2:13, matching, or combining, spiritual things with spiritual words (or, alternatively, 'interpreting spiritual things to spiritual men.')

Vine goes on to add that "The **spiritual man** is one who walks by the Spirit both in the sense of Gal 5:16 and in that of Gal 5:25-note, and who himself manifests the fruit of the Spirit in his own ways... According to the Scriptures, the 'spiritual' state of soul is normal for the believer, but to this state all believers do not attain, nor when it is attained is it always maintained. Thus the Apostle, in 1Corinthians 3:1-3, suggests a contrast between this **spiritual state** and that of the **babe in Christ**, i.e., of the man who because of immaturity and inexperience has not yet reached spirituality, and that of the man who by permitting jealousy, and the strife to which jealousy always leads, has lost it. The spiritual state is reached by diligence in the Word of God and in prayer; it is maintained by obedience and self-judgment (**Ed: Self-examination** = 2Cor 13:5-note). Such as are led by the Spirit (Gal 5:18-note) are spiritual, but, of course, spirituality is not a fixed or absolute condition, it admits of growth; indeed growth in 'the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,' 2Peter 3:18-note, is evidence of true spirituality." [From Notes on Galatians, by Hogg and Vine, pp. 308-319.] ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words](#))

Alford on **appraises all things** - not merely all spiritual things; for the Apostle is generalizing, and showing the high position of the spiritual man, who alone can judge things by their true standard

Appraises... appraised (350) is the same verb **anakrino** used above (see discussion there) in 1Cor 2:14 which conveys the idea of a careful exam even as one would do in legal processes.

Appraised by no one ("subject to no one else's scrutiny") - The NAB render it "is not subject to judgment by anyone." This could be misinterpreted if taken out of context. Paul is NOT saying believers are not ever to be subject to other believers, for that would counter other Scriptures that speak of proper subjection (spouses Eph 5:21-note, wives Eph 5:22-note, younger men to elders 1Peter 5:5-note). Nor is Paul teaching that "spiritual" people have been granted a "free pass" so to speak and no longer are subject to evaluation by other spiritual saints.

Clearly Paul is not saying believers are exempt from criticism as illustrated by the "critical" things he wrote to the saints at Corinth in this very letter!

NET Note on "**appraised by no one**" - Or "is evaluated" (i.e., "is subject to evaluation [appraisal]"); Greek "he himself is discerned," that is, the person without the Spirit does not understand the person with the Spirit, particularly in relation to the life of faith.

Adrian Rogers - "**He that is spiritual discerns all things, but he himself is judged of no man**" (1 Corinthians 2:15). People don't understand him. They think he's a few bricks shy of a full load. They don't understand him. He's not understood of anybody. Do you know why they don't understand us? Do you know why the world will never understand a Christian—I mean, a real Christian? Because the world doesn't understand Christ. Look at it, huh? "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ" (1Corinthians 2:16). So, if they can't understand Him, then how are they going to understand us, when we have His mind? They will not understand us, but we'll understand them, because we have the wisdom of God.

John Piper has an interesting thought on who is "**spiritual**" - When Paul speaks of a "**spiritual**" person he does not mean an especially religious person or a person who spends much time in prayer and Bible reading. He means a person who is led by the Spirit of God and bears the fruit of the Spirit. We know this from Gal 5:16-6:1 where Paul calls believers to walk by the Spirit, to be led by the Spirit, and to bear the fruit of the Spirit, and then in Gal 6:1 says, "If anyone is overtaken in a trespass you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of meekness." In other words, the spiritual people are the people in whom God is at work

producing the fruit of meekness, love, joy, peace, kindness, and the rest.

Tony Evans - The Spiritual Man - Spiritual men and women—Christians—have learned to think as Christ thinks because they have the mind of Christ. To “appraise” in the verse above means to examine. A spiritual person examines life from God’s perspective. What our brain is to our body, our mind is to our soul. A spiritual person has developed spiritual perception. In our planning and decision making, do we ask ourselves what God would think about this? Spiritual people should consistently take God’s viewpoint into consideration in all they do. Of course, we’re not expecting perfection, but our lives should reveal a pattern of including God in everything. Spiritual people connect present decisions with future consequences because they are mature. Immature people often fail to connect their present decisions with future consequences. They want gratification now. Their thought is for the moment. Children are like that. How often do we encounter a child who talks about saving money? However, we do hear children talk a lot about spending money. Because of their maturity level, they see only short-term consequences. Their view of the future is limited. Spiritual people have learned to perceive things from a divine vantage point. They have the ability to discern. (A moment for your soul: devotions to lift you up)

EXCURSUS ON ILLUMINATION

The remainder of the note on 1Cor 2:10 is a brief excursus on the necessity of spiritual illumination when reading the Bible.

Puritan writer **Steven Charnock** emphasizes the intimate association of the Holy Spirit and illumination writing that “The Word is the chariot of the Spirit, the Spirit the Guider of the Word.”

Illumination and Conviction - Christians’ knowledge of divine things is more than a knowledge of biblical words and theological ideas (**Ed Comment: It is more than "intellectual" knowledge. It is "heart" knowledge which with the enablement of the Spirit hopefully becomes experiential knowledge! See the illustration that follows this paragraph!**). It is an understanding of the reality and relevance of the works of God testified to by Scripture. The **natural man** (1Cor 2:14) who does not have the Spirit, even though familiar with Christian ideas, still lacks this deeper understanding, and is like the blind leaders of the blind (Mt. 15:14). Only the Holy Spirit, Who searches **the deep things of God** (1Cor 2:10), can bring this understanding to minds and hearts darkened by sin. It is called a **spiritual understanding** because it is an understanding given by the Holy Spirit (Col 1:9-note; cf. Luke 24:25; 1 John 5:20). Those who, along with correct instruction from the Scriptures, **have an anointing from the Holy One ... know all things** (1John 2:20-note). The work of the Spirit in imparting this understanding is called **illumination** or **enlightening**. **It is not a giving of new revelation, but a work within us that enables us to grasp and to affirm the revelation of the Bible, as it is read, preached, and taught. Sin clouds our minds and wills so that we miss and resist the force of Scripture. The Spirit, however, opens and unveils our minds and attunes our hearts so that we understand what God has revealed** (2Cor 3:14-16-note; 2Cor 4:6-note; Eph. 1:17-18-note; Eph 3:18-19-note). **Illumination** is the application of God’s revealed truth to our hearts, so that we grasp as reality for ourselves what the sacred text says. Protestant theologians shortly after the Reformation spoke of **illumination** as an act of grace that proceeds in two stages. The first stage of illumination takes place when one encounters the ministry of the Word. This external illumination prepares a person for the second stage, the internal ministry of the Holy Spirit that leads to salvation. The Spirit speaks through the law, that convicts a person of sin, and the Gospel, that conveys knowledge of God’s grace and forgiveness (cf. Luke 1:79). It is through the illumination of the Spirit that the ministry of the Word conveys the effectual calling to salvation. Although illumination by the Spirit begins the process, or order, of salvation (Heb. 6:4; 10:32), it continues throughout the life of the believer. The Holy Spirit leads us to a deeper understanding of God (John 16:13), prompting both repentance for the sins that we commit and assurance of God’s grace and the certainty of our election. We receive this illumination through the ministry of the Word and through prayer, meditation on God and His revelation, and the struggle to live our lives in a manner consistent with revelation. ([Reformation Study Bible](#))

ILLUSTRATION OF OUR NEED FOR ILLUMINATION - Tony Evans writes that “Before cable television came into my neighborhood, I used a television antenna. I had a workman come out one time because I was having problems with my reception. He said, “Your signal is strong, but your antenna is not pointed in the right direction.” The Word of God is strong. There’s no problem with the “signal.” But our heart’s antenna is often not pointed in the right direction. A lot of us are fiddling with our lives trying to fix them when the problem is that our spiritual antenna is not pointed toward God. Therefore, we cannot pick up the Spirit’s signal.

John MacArthur illustrates need for **illumination** in initial conversion - In the natural realm, darkness can be a debilitating and frightening thing. The story is told of a missionary who was on board ship one dark night when suddenly he was awakened by the frantic cry of “Man overboard!” Immediately he arose from his bunk, grabbed the portable lamp from its bracket, and held it at the

window of his cabin. He couldn't see anything, but the next morning he was told that the flash of his lamp through the porthole emitted just enough light to enable those on deck to see the missing man clinging to a rope. They rescued him seconds before his strength would have given out. The light had shone just in time to save the man's life. In the spiritual realm, darkness is even more devastating because it represents sin with all its disastrous consequences... Unbelievers are characterized as children of darkness. They are enslaved to Satan, the prince of darkness, who blinds their minds so they don't see the light of Christ's glorious gospel (2 Cor. 4:4). They love darkness and reject light because they don't want their evil deeds to be exposed (John 3:19–20).

Christians, however, have been called "out of darkness into [God's] marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). That refers to God's taking the initiative to save us. As an unredeemed sinner, you could never have turned from darkness on your own because you had neither the ability nor the desire to do so. God had to grant you **saving grace and the illumination of His Spirit** so you could recognize truth and respond accordingly. That blessed privilege is known only to Christians. What a joy it is to not only recognize God's truth but also to walk in it daily! (Drawing Near—Daily Readings for a Deeper Faith)

ILLUMINATION - the act of making understood, a lighting up or supplying with light, infusion of intellectual light; an enlightening of the mind by spiritual light.

ENLIGHTENMENT - the giving of spiritual insight, freeing from ignorance and misinformation. (See Job 33:30, Ps 19:8)

1Cor 2:14b says that spiritual truths are "spiritually appraised," which is clearly an allusion to the supernatural illumination of the Spirit in believers. He "turns the light on" in our spirit so that we can know spiritual truth given to us by God.

You can know Greek and not know God!
You can know Hebrew and not know Him!

J C Connell - True enlightenment is the intellectual and moral effect produced upon a person by the reception of the Christian revelation (The Bible). It is not a mere intellectual illumination or understanding of divine truth, for this spiritual insight manifests itself in ethical action. Christians are "sons of light and sons of the day," as Paul puts it (1Th 5:5). (The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible)

Warren Wiersbe on Spirit Illumination related to the Message Preached - **Illumination** is the work of the Holy Spirit, and we must depend on him to teach us new truths and to remind us of truths we may have forgotten. When a congregation is "in the Spirit," the Word comes forth with power and penetration. We experience what the little girl in London meant when she said to her mother, "**Mother, is Mr. Spurgeon speaking to me?**" The Word becomes personal... The blessing doesn't come because we hear the Word; it comes because we do the Word. Anything else is pure deception. (God Isn't in a Hurry: Learning to Slow Down and Live)

Does the fact that God's Spirit illuminates God's Word mean that we are going to everything there is to know about God? Clearly the answer is no for Dt 29:29 makes it clear that "the secret things belong to the Lord our God."

Adrian Rogers explains "Nobody knows everything there is to know about God. I want you to put this down in your margin—Deuteronomy 29:29." Rogers adds that "Illumination Does Not Apply to Every Area of Life... it's not going to help you an math test! ... Illumination Does Not Mean that We're Not to Study the Bible..." "I love that phrase "the sword of Lord and Gideon." Gideon could not have done it without the Lord. The Lord would not have done it without Gideon. "The sword of the Lord and Adrian"—It is God's Word; but, as you study it, the Holy Spirit, then, will turn the light on in your soul. And, many of us are not diligent in our Bible study, and, therefore, the Holy Spirit of God does not illumine us. The fruit of the Spirit is discipline, the study of the Word of God. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." (2Ti 2:15) So, illumination is not a license for laziness, okay?... when the Holy Spirit of God moves upon our heart, and He helps us to understand these things, then Bible study becomes personal communion with God. You see, you don't read the Bible like any other book. You are having fellowship with God, because the Holy Spirit of God is teaching you."

Adrian Rogers on **illumination** - You might want to write down in your margin this verse, right here—Psalm 119:18—a wonderful, wonderful verse to pray, when you go to study the Word of God. It says this: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things in thy law" (Ps 119:18). Have you ever prayed that? Have you ever thought, "Well, I can just go to the Bible, and I can pull the truth out of the Bible"? Let me tell you, friend: You cannot. You may know Greek and not know God; you may know Hebrew and not know Him. I don't care who you are in that seminary, or any other Sunday School class—unless you lay that intellectual pride in the dust and pray this prayer—"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things in thy law"—you'll not know the God of this book. I want to tell you, my friend: It took a supernatural miracle to reveal it; it took a supernatural miracle to write it; and, it'll take a supernatural miracle for you to understand it. Do you believe that? Listen. Most of us don't believe it. If we really believed it, we would agonize before the Lord; we would pray before the Lord; and, we would be saying, "Lord, open Thou mine eyes."

Tony Evans - 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. When you get all of this working in your life, you're going to

grow as a follower of Christ!... The Spirit of God shines His light on the Word of God. Back in Genesis 1:2, we discover that the Spirit was hovering over creation. Then in Ge 1:3 God said, "Let there be light." Light was not present until the Spirit of God hovered. Why is that important? When the Spirit of God hovers and the Word of God speaks, order comes out of chaos. That's what happened in creation. The earth was "formless and void" before the Spirit and the light came (Genesis 1:2). Does your life ever feel formless and void? Ever feel empty, chaotic in your life? Guess when you move from chaos to order? You do so when the Word of God is mixed with the hovering Spirit. That's not just reading your Bible; that's asking God to illumine what you read and submitting your heart to it. Then God brings order out of chaos. (What matters most: four absolute necessities in following Christ)

Roy Zuck on the **importance of the Spirit** in accurate reading of the Bible - Since inaccurate interpretation of Scripture can lead to improper conduct, one must be sure he is interpreting properly. Adequate application of truth builds on an adequate understanding of truth. A distorted meaning of a Bible verse or passage may result in misguided living. The Holy Spirit, as the "Helper" (John 14:16, 26; 15:26), is available to help believers ascertain the correct meaning of the Bible's statements, commands, and questions. He is involved in the hermeneutical process because He is "the Spirit of truth" who, Jesus said, "will guide... into all truth" (John 16:13). And as Paul wrote, "We have... the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us" (1 Cor 2:12). John wrote, "His anointing teaches you about all [spiritual] things" (1 John 2:27). Probably "anointing" refers to the Holy Spirit; by metonymy the act of anointing stands for what is given in the anointing, namely, the indwelling Holy Spirit... The Spirit's illuminating of Christians, then, must include something more than mental apprehension of the Bible... In illumination the Holy Spirit's work is not only to show what the Bible means, but also to persuade Christians of its truth. Illumination is the Spirit's work, enabling Christians to discern the meaning of the message and to welcome and receive it as from God. **Hodge** states that obedience in the believer's life is the inevitable result of the illuminating work of the Spirit. [Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology] ([The Role of the Holy Spirit in Hermeneutics](#))

See also the article by [J. Theodore Mueller - The Holy Spirit and the Scriptures](#)

We sing a simple chorus **"Open the Eyes of My Heart, I want to see You!"** Today, God's Spirit answers this prayer as He enlightens our eyes to see Jesus in His living and active Word, but one day when our faith becomes sight the Living Word face to face forever! Maranatha, Lord Jesus!

RELATED RESOURCE - [Illumination of the Bible](#)

Notice how all the following passages in some way speak of the illumination of the Word by the Spirit.

(John 6:45) "It is written in the prophets, '**AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.**' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.

(1John 2:20, 27) But you have an anointing (the Holy Spirit) from the Holy One, and you all know... As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as **His anointing (the Holy Spirit) teaches you about all things** (in the context of false teachers trying to deceive them), and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him. (**Related Resource - [Our Anointing - The Holy Spirit](#)**)

(Luke 24:45) Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,

(Ps 18:28) For You light my lamp; The LORD my God **illuminates** my darkness.

(Ps 19:8b) The commandment of the LORD is pure, **enlightening** the eyes.

(John 14:26) "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, **He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.**

(John 16:13) "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, **He will guide you into all the truth**; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

(Eph 1:18) (Having just referenced the Holy Spirit in Eph 1:13-14 then Paul prays) I pray that the eyes of your heart may be **enlightened**, so that (purpose clause) you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, (The Holy Spirit gives illumination in answer to prayer. Contrast our adversary's work of blinding the mind in 2 Cor. 4:4)

(Col 1:9-10) For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

(Dan 2:22) "It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the

light dwells with Him.

(Ps 119:18) **Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your law.**

Adrian Rogers - When you begin to read the Bible, here's a prayer that you ought to pray - Psalm 119:18. When God opens your eyes you're going to see things you never saw before, you're going to hear things you never heard before, you're going to know things you never knew before because God the Holy Spirit is going to teach you.

(Ps 119:130) The **unfolding** (unveiling) (literally of an unobstructed opening into an enclosure) of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.

(**Bridges** - Thus the Spirit and the word conjointly become our guide—the Spirit enlightening and quickening the word—and the word evidencing the light of the Spirit.) (**Spurgeon** - The mere hearing of the word with the external ear is of small value by itself, but when the words of God enter into the chambers of the heart then light is scattered on all sides. The word finds no entrance into some minds because they are blocked up with self conceit, or prejudice, or indifference; but where due attention is given, divine illumination must surely follow upon a knowledge of the mind of God. **Oh, that Thy words, like the beams of the sun, may enter through the window of my understanding, and dispel the darkness of my mind!**) (The clause does not refer to the mechanical opening of the book by the reader, but to the spiritual opening of its true sense by divine illumination, to the mind which naturally cannot discern it. Joseph Addison Alexander)

(Ps 119:34) Give me understanding, that I may observe Thy law, And keep it with all my heart.

(Ps 119:73b) Give me understanding, that I may learn Thy commandments.

(Ps 119:125) I am Thy servant; give me understanding, That I may know Thy testimonies.

(Ps 119:144) Thy testimonies are righteous forever; Give me understanding that I may live.

James Smith - The fountain of divine truth is the Lord Jesus Christ, the repository of divine truth is the Holy Scriptures, the proper abode of divine truth is the sinner's heart, and the sacred revealer of truth is the Holy Spirit.

Adolph Saphir - (Quoting Blaise Pascal) "Scripture assures us, that in every instance, when the beauty of creation manifests its Author, it is not from the simple contemplation of natural objects, but owing to a divine illumination, which disposes the heart aright."

Baptist Confession - We acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word

John Calvin - God does not bestow the Spirit on His people in order to set aside the use of His Word, but rather to render it fruitful... The heavenly doctrine proves to be useful and efficacious to us in so far as the Spirit both forms our minds to understand it and our hearts to submit to its yoke.

Adrian Rogers - You can have a divinely inspired Bible in your hand and not understand it apart from (divine) illumination.

C H Spurgeon - All the illumination in the world will not make a man see spiritual things unless the Holy Spirit opens his eyes (Salt Cellar)... God, by his Spirit, brings old truth home to the heart, gives new light to our eyes, and causes the word to exercise new power over us, but He reveals no new facts, and He utters no words in any man's ears concerning his condition and state. We must be content with the old revelation and with the life and power and force with which the Holy Spirit brings it to the heart. Neither must any of us seek to have any additional revelation, for that would imply that the Scriptures are incomplete. {Exploring the Heart and Mind of Spurgeon}

C H Spurgeon on the Spirit - Forget not the Holy Spirit; endeavor to obtain a clear view of his nature and character, his attributes, and his works. Behold that Spirit of the Lord, who first of all moved upon chaos, and brought forth order; who now visits the chaos of your soul, and creates the order of holiness. Behold him as the Lord and giver of spiritual life, the **Illuminator**, the Instructor, the Comforter, and the Sanctifier.

C H Spurgeon - ILLUMINATION OF the Bible - Use the hammer of diligence, and let the knee of prayer be exercised, and there is not a stony doctrine in revelation which is useful for you to understand, which will not fly into shivers under the exercise of prayer and faith. You may force your way through anything with the leverage of prayer. Thoughts and reasonings are like the steel wedges which give a hold upon truth; but prayer is the lever, the prise which forces open the iron chest of sacred mystery, that we may get the treasure hidden within. (**Related Resource** - [Illumination of the Bible](#))

C H Spurgeon - The best interpreter of a book is generally the man who wrote it. The Holy Spirit wrote the Scriptures. Go to him to get their meaning, and you will not be misled.

John Piper - If God does not open our eyes, we will not see the wonder of the Word. We are not naturally able to see spiritual beauty. When we read the Bible without the help of God, the glory of God in the teachings and events of the Bible is like the sun shining in the face of a blind man. Not that you can't construe its surface meaning, but you can't see the wonder, the beauty, the glory of it such that it wins your heart... we must pray to God for supernatural illumination when we read the Bible. "**Open my eyes.**"... We will never see the beauty of spiritual reality without God's illumination. We will never see the wonder and glory of what the Word teaches without God's opening the eyes of our hearts and giving us a spiritual sense of these things. The point of teaching this and knowing this is to make us desperate for God and hungry for God, and to set us to pleading and crying out to God for his help in reading the Bible... (You can see many things when you come to the Word without God's opening the eyes of your heart. You can see words and grammatical constructions. You can see logical connections. You can see historical facts. You can see an author's rational intention. You can see some human emotions. None of that requires that God open your eyes in a special spiritual way. But what you cannot see is the spiritual beauty of God and his Son and their work in the world. You cannot see that God is infinitely desirable above all things. A blind person cannot see the sun, though he can know many facts about the sun and pass a test in astronomy with a score higher than a person who can see the sun. Knowing about and knowing by sight are not the same. Knowing that honey is sweet and tasting honey are not the same.)... In Ephesians 1:18 Paul prays this way. He says, "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling ..." In other words, "I've taught you these things and you have received them with your external senses, but unless you perceive the glory of them with your spiritual sense ("the eyes of your heart") you will not be changed. (See also Ephesians 3:14-19; Colossians 1:9 with Col 3:16). Now these are Christians he is writing to, which shows that we need to go on praying until we get to heaven for spiritual eyes to see. ([Open My Eyes That I May See](#))

Piper - And therefore we must pray for it—"Open my eyes." And if we would stay alive in God and be real and authentic and intense in our love for Him, we must be desperate to have this enabling every day. So pray, pray, pray. Read Psalm 119 and see how many times he prays for divine help in knowing God and his ways.

John Piper - We should pray ...

- 1. That God would teach us his Word.** Psalm 119:12b, "Teach me Your statutes." (See also Ps 119:33, 64b, Ps 119:66, 68b, Ps 119:135). True learning of God's Word is only possible if God Himself becomes the Teacher in and through all other means of teaching.
- 2. That God would not hide his Word from us** Psalm 119:19b, "Do not hide Your commandments from me." The Bible warns of the dreadful chastisement or judgment of the Word of God being taken from us (Amos 8:11). (See also Ps 119:43).
- 3. That God would make us understand his Word.** Psalm 119:27, "Make me understand the way of Your precepts" (Ps 119:34, 73b, Ps 119:144b, 169). Here we ask God to cause us to understand—to do whatever He needs to do to get us to understand His Word.
- 4. That God would incline our hearts to His Word** Psalm 119:36, "Incline my heart to Your testimonies and not to [dishonest] gain." The great problem with us is not primarily our reason, but our **will**—we are disinclined by nature to read and meditate and memorize the Word. So we must pray for God to **incline our wills**.
- 5. That God would give us life to keep his Word.** Psalm 119:88, "Revive me according to Your lovingkindness, so that I may keep the testimony of Your mouth." He is aware that we need life and energy to give ourselves to the Word and its obedience. So he asks God for this basic need. (See also verse 154b)
- 6. That God would establish our steps in his Word.** Psalm 119:133, "Establish my footsteps in Your word." (**Ed:** First pray Ps 119:38) We are dependent on the Lord not only for understanding and life, but for the performance of the Word. That it would be established in our lives. We cannot do this on our own.
- 7. That God would seek us when we go astray from his Word** Psalm 119:176, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Your servant." It is remarkable that this godly man ends his psalm with a confession of sin and the need for God to come after him and bring him back. This too we must pray again and again...

How earnest was he in these kinds of prayers? How earnest should we be? One answer is given in Psalm 119:147, "I rise before dawn and cry for help; I wait for Your words." He gets up early! This is top priority. Would you make it that? ([Open My Eyes That I May See](#))

Ian Paisley - Oh for the illumination of the Holy Spirit! For He Who wrote the Book can best expound what He Himself wrote.

Vance Havner - 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.

Bruce Hurt - O blessed holy book, the Bible, for there is no other book one can read in which the Author Who wrote it is present with (in) you and ready and willing to explain what He wrote!

The Holy Spirit and the Holy Word operate together.

Spurgeon - If you do not understand a book by a departed writer you are unable to ask him his meaning, but the Spirit, Who inspired Holy Scripture, lives forever, and He delights to open the Word to those who seek His instruction”

Bob Deffinbaugh - Apart from the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the natural man will never grasp what God is saying or doing.

Ronald Dunn - Unless God imparts the spiritual ability to hear his voice, one hears nothing but meaningless words.

Abraham Kuyper - **Illumination** is the clearing up of the spiritual consciousness which in His own time the Holy Spirit gives more or less to every child of God... Only in that light can one see the glory of Scripture and apprehend its beauty; without this it is but a stumbling-block to him.

Martin Luther - If God does not open and explain Holy Writ, no one can understand it; it will remain a closed book, enveloped in darkness... Proper understanding of the Scriptures comes only through the Holy Spirit.

Alexander Maclaren - He who has the Holy Spirit in his heart and the Scriptures in his hands has all he needs.

Thomas Manton - God’s mind is revealed in Scripture, but we can see nothing without the spectacles of the Holy Ghost.

H C G Moule - The blessed Spirit is not only the true Author of the written Word but also its supreme and true Expositor.

George Muller - If the Holy Spirit guides us at all, He will do it according to the Scriptures, and never contrary to them.

John Newton - (The Holy Spirit) has not promised to reveal new truths, but to enable us to understand what we read in the Bible; and if we venture beyond the pale of Scripture we are upon enchanted ground and exposed all the illusions of imagination and enthusiasm... We are directed to expect the teaching and assistance of the Holy Spirit only within the limitations and by the medium of the written word.

A. T. Pierson - If you want to understand the Bible, get on your knees ... You will learn more in one hour of prayerful communion with the Spirit than in a thousand years in all the schools of human culture.

James Smith - While the Spirit of Inspiration is no longer with us, the Spirit of Illumination is.

C. H. Spurgeon - There is a real nutriment for the soul in Scripture brought home to the heart by the Holy Spirit.

A. W. Tozer - The Bible is a supernatural book and can be understood only by supernatural aid.

Vanhoozer “The Spirit’s work in interpretation is not to change the sense [of scripture] but to restore us to our senses”

E Blencowe - While vast numbers read not the Scriptures at all, MANY READ THEM, BUT UNDERSTAND THEM NOT. Their meaning is sealed up. If we would profit by the Scriptures, we must not read them like another book... DO WE READ THE SCRIPTURES CONTINUALLY WITH THIS CONVICTION, THAT, WITHOUT THE TEACHING OF THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST, WE CANNOT UNDERSTAND THEM?

Selwyn Hughes - Every time we open the Bible, we must be careful to pray for the illumination of the Spirit so that we don't finish up making the Bible say what we want it to say. When we receive that help, we are following the divine design—letting the Spirit bring home to our hearts the truth and meaning of His own Word. This attitude of humility and receptivity gives the Holy Spirit the opportunity He needs to build the truth of the Word of God into our spirits. Approaching the Bible in this way, said the late J. B. Phillips, "is like rewiring a house where the electricity has not been turned off." As we read the Scriptures, we are touching something that has a current of power flowing through its pages—a power not put there by any man. The Holy Spirit has gone into it, so is it any wonder that the Holy Spirit comes out of it?

Sinclair Ferguson on the Spirit's ministry of **illumination** - He enlightens our minds to enable us to know, see, grasp, and apply the will and purposes of God. There was an immediacy to illumination in the temporary gifts God gave. The Spirit taught the apostles “all things” (John 14:26) and led them into all truth (John 16:13). Now, however, He continues this work in us through the Scriptures He enabled the apostles to write for us. (In Christ alone: Living the Gospel Centered Life)

Daniel Wallace - Scholarly study of the Bible can be done either in a way that invites the Holy Spirit to do his transforming work through His Word, or in a way that suffocates the work of the Spirit in the scholar’s study, and in his or her life and ministry. When it

comes right down to it, however, who among us does not want to have “the good hand of his God on him” as Ezra did? (Ezra 7:10) I will argue that this requires that we not only do good scholarship from an academic point of view, but that we do it with the kind of heart perspective that invites—yes, calls upon and welcomes—the Holy Spirit to do what he intends to do through his word in our study, our lives, and our ministries. **This work of the Holy Spirit is sometimes called “illumination,” the goal of which is to bring the Word of God to bear so “that the eyes of” our “heart” may be “enlightened”** (Eph 1:18; note “the Spirit of wisdom and revelation” in Eph 1:17 [niv]). (Who’s Afraid of the Holy Spirit? An Investigation into the Ministry of the Spirit of God Today)

What Is the Biblical Doctrine of Illumination? -

Answer - Simply put, illumination in the spiritual sense is “turning on the light” of understanding in some area. Throughout the ages, people in every culture and religion have claimed some kind of revelation or enlightenment from God (whether true or not). When that enlightenment deals with new knowledge or future things, we call it prophecy. When that enlightenment deals with understanding and applying knowledge already given, we call it illumination. Regarding illumination of the latter type, the question arises, “How does God do it?”

The most basic level of enlightenment is the knowledge of sin, and without that knowledge, everything else is pointless. Psalm 18:28 says, “You, O LORD, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light.” Psalm 119, which is the longest chapter in the Bible, is a song about God’s Word. In Ps 119:130, it says “The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.” This verse establishes the basic method of God’s illumination. When God’s Word enters the heart of a person, it gives light and understanding to them. For this reason, we are repeatedly told to study the Word of God. Psalm 119:11 says “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.” Ps 119:98 and Ps 119:99 say “Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me. I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes.”

Regular study of the Word of God will give direction and understanding in the issues of life. This is the first method of God’s illumination and the starting point for us all. In Psalm 119 we also find another type of God’s illumination. Ps 119:18 says, “Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.” These are not new revelations, but things which have been written and revealed long before, and just now understood by the reader (one of those “aha!” moments). Similarly, Ps 119:73 says, “Your hands made me and formed me; give me understanding to learn your commands.” The plea is for personal understanding and application of God’s laws as they are studied by the individual. Fifteen times in Ps 119, God is asked to teach or give understanding regarding His laws.

One passage that sometimes stirs controversy regarding illumination is John 14:26, “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” Jesus was speaking to His disciples in the upper room, giving them last instructions before His death. This special group of men was to be responsible for spreading the good news of Jesus Christ to the whole world. They had spent three and a half years with Him, watching His miracles and hearing His teachings. They would relay those things to the rest of the world, and would need God’s special help remembering those things accurately. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would teach them and remind them of what had been said, so they could give it to others (including the writing of the Gospels). This verse does not teach that the Spirit will do so with all believers (though there are other verses that speak of the Spirit’s illuminating work).

What is the Holy Spirit’s illuminating work in believers? Ephesians 1:17–18 tells us that the Spirit gives wisdom and revelation concerning Jesus Christ, and opens the eyes of understanding so we can know God’s purposes in our lives. In 1 Corinthians 2:10–13, God has revealed His plans for us by His Spirit, who teaches us spiritual things. The context here points to the Word of God as that which has been revealed. The Spirit of God will always point us to the Word of God for our instruction. As Jesus told His disciples in John 16:12–15, the Spirit simply repeats what the Father and the Son have already said. This repetition helps us remember and fully hear what God has already told us. Sometimes we have to hear things several times before we actually hear them. That’s where the Spirit comes in.

One thing that is sometimes overlooked in the discussion of illumination is the purpose of it. To hear some arguments, it would seem that the whole purpose of illumination is an accurate and academic understanding of God’s Word. There is no question that God desires us to accurately understand what He has given us. Words have meaning, and we must pay attention to the details in those words. If, however, we stop there, we simply have an academic understanding of facts or philosophies, which do no one any good. Going back to Psalm 119, we find purpose statements connected with the illumination verses. “I will meditate on your wonders” (Ps 119:27), “I will keep your law and obey it with all my heart” (Ps 119:34), “that I may understand your statutes” (Ps 119:125), “that I may live” (Ps 119:144). The illumination always points to action. Why does God help us understand His Word? So we are able to live in its light. 1John 1:6 challenges us, “If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.” We could paraphrase it to say, “If we say we’ve been enlightened, but still walk in the dark, we lie about understanding God’s Word.” The Spirit of God, who enlightens us to hear and understand God’s Word, then takes that knowledge and guides us in living it. Romans 8:14 says “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” The illuminating and leading work of the Holy Spirit in our lives is a confirmation that we are indeed children of God. ([What is the biblical doctrine of](#)

THE HOLY SPIRIT GUIDES AND DIRECTS

Roy Zuck - How does the Holy Spirit "guide and direct" [Bernard Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation] believers in their involvement in the interpretive process?" What does that guidance mean? Fourteen propositions are suggested as a means of speaking to some of these issues.

1. The Spirit's ministry in Bible interpretation does not mean He gives new revelation. His work is always through and in association with the written Word of God, not beyond it or in addition to it. The Holy Spirit and the Word operate together. The Bible, being God-breathed (2 Tim 3:16), has power to generate faith (Ps 19:7; Ro 10:17; 2 Tim 3:15; James 1:18; 1 Pet 1:23), to sanctify and nurture (John 17:17-19; Acts 20:32; Eph 5:26; 1 Pet 2:2), and to enlighten (Ps 119:105,130; 2 Tim 3:16). The Holy Spirit, along with the Word, is said to regenerate (John 3:5-7; Titus 3:5), to sanctify (2Th 2:13; 1 Pet 1:2) and to enlighten (John 14:26; 16:13; 1 Cor 2:10-15). "The written Word... is always indissolubly joined with the power of the Holy Spirit." [J. Theodore Mueller, "The Holy Spirit and the Scriptures,"] The Bible, God's Word, is "living and active", "operative or effective" (Heb 4:12; cf. 1Th 2:13; 1 Pet 1:23). But its effectiveness is evident only when the Holy Spirit is at work in connection with the Word. "The Word of God can have no efficacy unless at the same time the Holy Spirit works in the hearts of the hearers, creating faith and making men's minds open to receive the Word." [6] In relation to man's receptivity, Calvin wrote, "The heavenly doctrine proves to be useful and efficacious to us in so far as the Spirit both forms our minds to understand it and our hearts to submit to its yoke." [7]

2. The role of the Spirit in interpreting the Bible does not mean that one's interpretations are infallible Inerrancy and hence infallibility are characteristics of the Bible's original manuscripts, but not of the Bible's interpreters. The manuscripts were inerrant because of the Holy Spirit's guarding and guiding the writers to record what He wanted recorded, word for word. But such a superintending work cannot be claimed for interpreters of the Word. In inspiration the Holy Spirit superintended the authors in order to override any human error. In interpretation the Holy Spirit guides but He does not guard against infallibility. To elevate one's interpretations to the level of infallibility would blur the distinctions between inspiration (a past, now completed work of the Spirit in the recording of Scripture) and interpretation (a present, ongoing work of the Spirit in helping interpreters in the comprehending of Scripture). Also it would ascribe to Protestants a level of infallibility for human leaders which evangelicals reject in Roman Catholicism. Therefore allowing the right of private (individual) judgment in interpreting the Bible does not mean that all the results of private interpretation are accurate.

3. The work of the Spirit in interpretation does not mean that He gives some interpreters a mental acuity for seeing truths under the surface that are not evident to any other dedicated Bible students. The interpreter, then, if he thinks he finds a "hidden" meaning divergent from the normal, literal meaning of the passage, cannot claim the Holy Spirit's help.

4. The role of the Holy Spirit in Bible interpretation means that the unregenerate do not welcome and apply God's truth, though they are able to comprehend many of its statements cognitively. Obviously unsaved men can mentally grasp something of the objective data of the Bible. Many unbelievers have understood many of the historical facts presented in the Word of God. Some have even followed the logic of certain portions of the Bible. They have cognitively grasped certain objective biblical facts - that certain Bible personalities performed certain tasks, said certain words, went to certain geographical locations, argued with certain points of logic, and so on - yet they do not personally know the God of the Scriptures. "The world through its wisdom did not know him" (1 Cor 1:21). Even with determined and diligent research on a high scholarly level, they are unable to respond to the true divine sense of the Scriptures. [8] The Spirit's illuminating of Christians, then, must include something more than mental apprehension of the Bible of which non-Christians are capable. Though the unsaved may mentally observe objective data of the Bible, it remains foolishness to them (1 Cor 1:18; 2:14). Though perhaps able to follow the logic of Paul's reasoning in his epistles, unbelievers do not "take to heart" the truth involved. The grammar of John 3:16 may be clear to the unsaved, but this does not mean that they receive to their hearts the truth of the verse. The unsaved do not welcome God's truth, because it strikes at the very core of their sinfulness.

Only the saved are able to welcome God's truth. When Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 2:14 that "the man without the Spirit ("soulless, 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. Rather, Paul meant that a non-Christian does not welcome its truth! The Greek word translated "accept" means "welcome." If "receive" were intended, a different Greek word would have been used. The verse does not mean that an unsaved person, who is devoid of the Holy Spirit, cannot understand mentally what the Bible is saying; instead it means that he does not welcome its message of redemption to his own heart. [Daniel F. Fuller, "Do We Need the

Holy Spirit to Understand the Bible"?) He rejects the message, refusing to appropriate it and act on it. By contrast, people in Berea "received (from "") the message with great eagerness" (Acts 17:11), and the Thessalonians "received the Word... with the joy of the Holy Spirit" (1Th 1:6).

The statement in 1 Corinthians 2:14 that the things of the Spirit of God are "foolishness" to an unbeliever would indicate that he has some understanding of what the Bible says. Otherwise, if nothing were communicated to him, how could he judge such a communication to be foolish? He could not call something foolishness unless he had some cognitive awareness of it. "But," someone may argue, "this verse also states that an unsaved person cannot even know the things of the Spirit. Does not this argue against the point being made that the unsaved can be cognizant of Bible facts?" No, because the Greek word (*ginosko*) that is used means "know by experience", as opposed to *eido* which means "know intuitively or intrinsically." An unbeliever does not know God's truth experientially. He may grasp portions of it mentally, but he does not discern it spiritually nor experience it personally. Virkler summarizes this point well when he writes: "Thus unbelievers do not know the full meaning of scriptural teaching, not because that meaning is unavailable to them in the words of the text, but because they refuse to act on and appropriate spiritual truths for their own lives. Furthermore, the psychological results of such refusal make them less and less able (and willing) to comprehend these truths." [Henry A. Virkler, *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation*]

In illumination the Holy Spirit's work is not only to show what the Bible means, but also to persuade Christians of its truth. Illumination is the Spirit's work, enabling Christians to discern the meaning of the message and to welcome and receive it as from God. Hodge states that obedience in the believer's life is the inevitable result of the illuminating work of the Spirit. [Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*]

To receive God's truths fully, one must first understand them and then appropriate them. Bromiley expresses this fact when he says that the Holy Spirit, who has given the Word of God, seeks to "open the eyes of the readers to perceive its truth and receive its light." [Geoffrey W. Bromiley, "The Biblical Doctrine of Inspiration"] Klooster puts it this way: "Understanding Scripture requires more than an intellectual grasp of the historical setting of the text or the literary structure of the passage". Heart-understanding demands the heart response in the totality of one's being to the living, triune God." [Fred H. Klooster, "The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Hermeneutic Process"]

5. The Spirit's role in hermeneutics does not mean that only Bible scholars can understand the Bible. The Bible was given to be understood by all; hence its interpretation is not in the hands of an elite few. (cf. 1 John 2:20, 27). And yet believers ought not neglect the interpretive helps that can be afforded by biblical scholars.

6. The Holy Spirit's role in interpreting Scripture requires spiritual devotion on the part of the interpreter Thomas "Aquinas used to pray and fast when he came to a difficult passage of Scripture. Most of the scholars whose Biblical studies have blessed the church have mixed prayers generously with their studies." [Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*] "A deep religious experience has enlightened many an otherwise ill-instructed mind as to the meaning of much of the Holy Writ." [McClintock and James Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*] "Apart from the quickening of the Spirit, the interpreter will have only words and phrases. Only through the Holy Spirit can he enter into the meaning of the biblical writers..." [A. Berkeley Mickelsen, *Interpreting the Bible*] However, this is not to say that prayer automatically guarantees that a person's interpretations will be accurate. Spiritual devotion, depth, and sensitivity make correct interpretations more possible, but does not assure their accuracy. More is involved, as other propositions indicate.

7. The Holy Spirit in interpretation means that lack of spiritual preparedness hinders accurate interpretation [Joseph Parker, *The Paraclete*] A worldly Christian, one who is not obeying the truth and is not yielded to the Lord, is unable to understand the Word fully (1 Cor 3:1-3) and "is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness" (Heb 5:13). A Christian who is in sin is susceptible to making inaccurate interpretations of the Bible because his mind and heart are not in harmony with the Spirit. As Chafer wrote, "Carnality of life excludes [believers] from understanding, or progressing in, the deep things of God." [Lewis Sperry Chafer, *He That Is Spiritual*] God reveals His truths by the Spirit only to spiritual Christians. "The spiritual man" has greater depth in his discernment of spiritual truths (1 Cor 2:15).

8. The role of the Spirit in interpretation is no substitute for diligent study. With a heart sensitive to the Spirit, the interpreter must study the Word intensely. The point here is that the Spirit does not make study superfluous. "The more self-consciously active the interpreter is in the process, the more likely is the Spirit's illumination." [Klooster, "The Role of the Holy Spirit,"] The Holy Spirit works through the efforts of the individual as he reads the Bible, and studies it, meditates on it, and consults other works about it. In the inspiration of the Bible the Holy Spirit was working but so were the human authors. In a similar way in the interpretation of the Bible, human work is involved.

9. The Spirit's work in biblical interpretation does not rule out the use of study helps such as commentaries and Bible dictionaries. "It is often asserted by devout people that they can know the Bible competently without helps." [Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation,*] They assume they can go to the Bible and that the Holy Spirit interprets it for them directly. This seems to

them more spiritual than relying on man's writings. Ramm answers this view by stating that no one has either the right or the learning to bypass all the godly learning [Ibid] of other Bible scholars both past and present. He suggests that such an affirmation is "a veiled egotism." [Ibid]

Of course commentaries can come between a person and the Bible. It is possible to rely on others' interpretations to the neglect of one's own personal study of the Scriptures. Rather than using commentaries and other study helps as a crutch and accepting others' views unquestioningly, one should consult them and evaluate the views suggested in the light of his own study of the Scriptures (cf. Acts 17:11). This should be done prayerfully and humbly in dependence on the Spirit's guidance.

Chafer addresses this point well. "No student of the Scriptures should be satisfied to traffic only in the results of the study of other men. The field is inexhaustible and its treasures ever new. No worthy astronomer limits his attention to the findings of other men, but is himself ever gazing into the heavens both to verify and to discover; and no worthy theologian will be satisfied alone with the result of the research of other theologians, but will himself be ever searching the Scriptures." [Systematic Theology, 8 vols]

10. The ministry of the Holy Spirit in Bible interpretation does not mean interpreters can ignore common sense and logic.

Since the Spirit is "the Spirit of truth" (John 14:17; 15:26 ; 16:13), He would not teach concepts that failed to meet the tests of truth. (In a correspondence theory of truth, truth is what corresponds to the actual state of affairs.[Cf. Norman L. Geisler, "The Concept of Truth in the Contemporary Inerrancy Debate"]) The Holy Spirit does not guide into interpretations that contradict each other or fail to have logical, internal consistency.

Two believers may be spiritual, but one or both may be wrong in their understanding of a Bible passage because of failure to think through the Bible logically. Two contradictory views may both be wrong, or one may be wrong, but they cannot both be correct. The Spirit seeks to aid the Spirit-filled learner to think clearly and accurately. The interpreter "must employ principles of reasoning in making inductions, deductions, analogies, and comparisons." [25]

Bible students recognize that while the Bible is a unique book - inspired by the Holy Spirit and therefore infallible and authoritative - it is a written means of communication (from God to man), which suggests that it must be understood in that light. As with any written communication the interpreter seeks to expose the meaning of the passage in its original setting, as it was understood by its original hearers. The Bible was written in languages unknown by most modern readers today, in cultural environments that differ from those in Western culture, in geographical settings that are distant from most present-day readers of the Bible, and in literary styles unlike many common literary forms today. These gaps - linguistic, cultural, geographical, and literary - are often hindrances to communication. Removing these hindrances or closing the gaps is much of what is involved in properly interpreting the Bible. [26]

Just as one uses common sense in seeking to bridge communication gaps within his own culture, so he should use common sense in interpreting the Bible. A reader normally gives an author the benefit of doubt if the author makes a statement that seemingly conflicts with a previous statement. The same should be granted the Bible. Also a reader normally uses principles of logic in seeking to understand an author's writing. He does not read into the writing a meaning that is foreign to the material. The same should be granted with regard to the Bible.

Though spiritual truths often supersede man's reasoning ability, they do not contradict or conflict with reason. Clear thinking, then, along with normal procedures followed in comprehending written communications is essential in Bible interpretation and harmonizes with the Holy Spirit's role.

11. The place of the Holy Spirit in interpreting the Bible means that He does not normally give sudden intuitive flashes of insight into the meaning of Scripture.

Though many passages are readily understood, the meaning of others may come to light only gradually in the arduous process of careful study (as stated earlier in proposition 8). Still other times an interpreter may concentrate on a passage a long time with its meaning still eluding him. But later, after leaving the passage for awhile, the meaning may seem to jump to his mind suddenly. "The interpreter's struggle to understand always precedes that... experience, it does not occur in connection with a text on which one has expended no effort." [27] This sudden insight, if it occurs, does not come without his having studied the passage earlier.

To speak of the Spirit's part in hermeneutics is not to suggest some mysterious work that is beyond verification or validation. Lee argues against the view that the role of the Holy Spirit in interpretation and religious instruction means that His activity is a "mysterious and unfathomable" work [28] so that learning activity is unexplainable, unpredictable, or unverifiable, [29] or that teaching and learning are "miracles magically wrought by... zaps of the Holy Spirit." [30] Though Lee stresses this valid point about learning not coming by sudden impulses of the Holy Spirit, he then goes too far in ruling out the Holy Spirit's work altogether. [31] To depend on the Holy Spirit is, Lee says, to "spookify" religious instruction as if it were "an ethereal, mysterious, non-terrestrial affair which is fundamentally beyond the regular workings of nature." [32] But while some educators may seek to overemphasize the Holy Spirit, an equally dangerous direction is to neglect His work completely.

12. The Spirit's ministry in interpreting the Bible is included in but not identical with illumination.

Illumination, as stated

earlier, is the Spirit's work on the minds and hearts of believers that enables them not only to discern the truth but also to receive it, welcome it, and apply it. In interpretation a believer is aided by the Spirit to ascertain the meaning of a passage. This is the first step in illumination. But illumination is not complete until one has appropriated it to his life. Interpretation involves perception; illumination includes it but also involves reception.

13. The role of the Spirit in scriptural interpretation does not mean that all parts of the Bible are equally clear in meaning. Some scholars claim that all the Bible is equally perspicuous, that its meaning is clear and plain. However, perspicuity does not mean that all parts of the Bible are equally clear. Even Peter said that Paul's epistles "contain some things that are hard to understand" (2 Pet 3:16). Perspicuity means, instead, that the central message of the Bible, the message of salvation, is clear to all.

14. The Spirit's work in interpretation does not result in believers having a comprehensive and completely accurate understanding of the entire Scriptures. The exact meaning of many passages still eludes many Bible scholars, even after a lifetime of study in the Scriptures. The precise meaning of some verses will not be known until believers see the Savior "face to face" (1 Cor 13:12). Students of the Bible, even though they are devout and are Spirit-taught, must admit that the correct interpretation of at least some passages simply cannot be fully ascertained this side of heaven.

These propositions suggest that at least five elements are necessary for properly interpreting the Bible: salvation, spiritual maturity, diligent study, common sense and logic, and humble dependence on the Spirit of God for discernment. Clearly the Holy Spirit needs to be much involved in the process of a believer's efforts to comprehend and interpret the Bible. ([The Role of the Holy Spirit in Hermeneutics- by Roy B. Zuck](#))

[Open My Eyes, That I May See](#)

Written by Clara H Scott

[Piano rendition by Nathanael Provis](#)

[\(Beautiful!\)](#)

Open my eyes, that I may see

Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me;
Place in my hands the wonderful key
That shall unclasp, and set me free.

Refrain:

*Silently now I wait for Thee,
Ready, my God, Thy will to see:
Open my eyes, illumine me,
Savior divine!*

Open my ears, that I may hear

Voices of truth Thou sendest clear;
And while the wave notes fall on my ear,
Ev'rything false will disappear.

Refrain

Open my mouth, and let me bear

Gladly the warm truth ev'rywhere;
Open my heart, and let me prepare
Love with Thy children thus to share.

Refrain

Charles Hodge - Spiritual Judgment - The epithet **pneumatikos** ("spiritual") as applied to believers is significant and comprehensive. It does not mean rational as opposed to sensual. It is the indwelling of the Spirit that gives character to the believer. The Spirit has an illuminating power, so that new discernment is imparted to the soul. This does not arise from light shed on the object, but from the effect produced on the mind. Its faculty of vision is restored; its eyes are opened. Before it was blind — not rationally so as not to perceive truth in its logical relations, nor morally so as to be insensible to moral distinctions, but spiritually so that it cannot discern the things of the Spirit. The case of the Jews in their judgment concerning Christ is an example. They saw that He was a wise man, that He was just, benevolent, and kind. They understood His words, but had no such discernment of His

character as enabled them to see the glory of God as it shone in Him. The effect, therefore, produced in the mind is the ability to discern the things of the Spirit. Hence —

I. THERE IS A COINCIDENCE OF JUDGMENT BETWEEN THE BELIEVER AND GOD. What God declares to be true the believer sees to be true. He acquiesces in the judgment of God as to sin, the method of salvation, the person of Christ, the doctrines of grace, the reality and importance of eternal things. So in his judgments of men. Those whom God approves the believer approves. This is the ground —

1. Of the unity of faith among believers.
2. Of the unity of fellowship; so that all Christians recognise each other.
3. Of the authority of the Church, and of the only legitimate authority of tradition.
4. Why schism is a sin.

II. THERE IS ALSO A COINCIDENCE OF FEELING, i.e., the spiritual love what and whom God loves, and hate what and whom God hates. The friends of God are their friends. This is the reason why they have a common experience, and why they love each other as brethren.

III. THERE IS A CONFORMITY IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER WITH THE WILL OF GOD. He does what is in accordance with the mind of the Spirit. This is the ground of the community of worship. They all walk by the same rule and worship the same God and Saviour.

IV. ALL BELIEVERS ARE UNITED SO AS TO FORM ONE BODY.

Baffled? - Vernon C. Grounds - "Read it three times." That was the advice William Faulkner gave when readers of his novel *The Sound And The Fury* complained that they couldn't understand it. That's good counsel. Some books require a first reading, a second reading, and still another reading before they yield their meaning. If we believe that a book has value, we may be willing to spend time and effort in deciphering and grasping its message. Faulkner's advice surely can be applied to passages in the Bible that initially puzzle and perplex us. After all, the apostle Peter commented that Paul's letters contained some things that are "hard to understand" (2Pe 3:16). While some concepts may be difficult, they're not impossible to comprehend.

But suppose you encounter texts that continue to baffle you even though you read them over and over. What then? Ask the Lord to open your understanding (Lk 24:45; 1Cor. 2:10-16). Consult a commentary. Ask your pastor. If no light dawns, temporarily set those passages aside. Then wait patiently for the Holy Spirit to **illuminate** what may be baffling to you now. As you grow in grace, you will also grow in understanding. Meanwhile, put into practice the teachings you do understand (**Ed Comment:** cp the spiritual dynamic in Jn 7:17 = obeying leads to knowing!). ([Our Daily Bread](#))

Open my eyes that I may see
Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me;
Place in my hands the wonderful key
That shall unclasp and set me free.
—Scott

**To understand the Word of God,
Rely on the Spirit of God.**

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: tis gar egno (AAI) noun kuriou, os sumbibasei (FAI) auton? hemeis de noun Christou echomen. (PAI)

- **who:** Job 15:8, 22:2, 40:2 Isa 40:13,14 Jer 23:18 Ro 11:34
- **But:** John 15:15, 16:13-16, 17:6-8 Ge 1:12 Eph 3:3,4)
- **Reciprocal:**, Deuteronomy 29:29 - secret Job 11:7 - Canst Job 21:22 - teach Job 36:23 - Who hath Isaiah 40:28 - no searching Daniel 4:35 - What John 7:8 - I go not 2 Corinthians 6:6 - knowledge

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. [Isa. 40:13.]

Barclay - For who ever understood the mind of the Lord so as to be able to instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

NLT - How could they? For, "Who can know what the Lord is thinking? Who can give him counsel?" But we can understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ.

Wuest Expanded Paraphrase - 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.

For (gar) - For is a strategic **term of explanation** which always begs the question "**What is Paul explaining?**" In context, he has just stated that the spiritual man is "himself... appraised by no one."

Ellicott on **for** (explaining what Paul is explaining) - This is the proof that (or explanation of why) the enlightened spiritual man cannot be judged (**Ed**: appraised - remember **anakrino** means to sift up and down, thus examining carefully and in a legal sense meant to question in order to pass a judicial sentence) by any one who is not thus enlightened. ([1 Corinthians 2 - Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#))

Mare - This verse is confirmatory of 1Cor 2:15. In quoting the LXX of Isaiah 40:13, Paul establishes further that the Christian is not subject to man's judgment in spiritual things. The quotation in the form of a question casts doubt on man's knowing God's wisdom, but the statement ("we have the mind of Christ" 1Cor 2:16b) gives reassurance that the Christian does know it. This explains 1Cor 2:15b—the person who has God's Spirit is not subject to judgments by one who does not have the Spirit." (The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 10)

Charles Hodge explains the **for** this way - This is a confirmation of what precedes. No one can judge a spiritual man, for that would be to judge the Lord. The Lord had revealed certain doctrines. The spiritual discern those doctrines to be true. For any man to pronounce them false, and to judge those who held them, supposes he is able to teach the Lord. As no one can do this, no one can judge those who have the mind of Christ, that is, those whom Christ by his Spirit has taught the truth. Syllogistically stated, the argument would stand thus: No one can instruct the Lord. We have the mind of the Lord. Therefore no one can instruct or judge us. The first member of this syllogism is expressed in the language of Isaiah 40:15 (Actually Lxx of Isa 40:13), according to the Septuagint. The philosophers of Greece and the scribes among the Jews had sat in judgment upon Paul, and pronounced his preaching foolishness (**Ed**: E.g., in Acts 17:18 some among the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers called Paul an "**idle babbling**" a spermologos = a "seed picker" like the crow, chattering, picking up and repeating trifling things." Compare Acts 17:32 "when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to **sneer**" which is the verb chleuazo literally meaning to throw out the lip, thus to scoff, mock, deride). He tells them they were not competent judges. The natural man cannot discern the things of the Spirit (1Cor 2:14), and is incompetent to judge those whom the Spirit has taught. As what we teach is the mind of the Lord, to condemn our doctrine, or to judge us as the teachers of those doctrines, is to condemn the Lord. (**Ed**: An interesting thought!) ([1 Corinthians 2 - Hodge's Commentary](#))

Paul is quoting from Isaiah 40:13 which reads (from the Hebrew translation) - "Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, or as His counselor has informed Him?" Paul does not quote the Hebrew but the Septuagint version which is virtually identical with the Greek text (see above). The Lxx has "tis gar egno noun kurios... os sumbiba auton," which is translated into English as "**Who has known the mind of the Lord**, and who has been His counselor to **instruct Him?**" Isaiah 40:13 is also quoted in Ro 11:34.

Known ([1097](#))(**ginosko**) means to know by experience, which is far more than just an accumulation of facts.

Mind ([3563](#))(**nous**) refers to human intellectual perception and moral judgment. It is the God given faculty of perceiving and understanding and is the channel through which truth reaches the heart. Nous describes everything in the realm of the intellect, including one's will, emotions, ability to think, reason and decide.

Lord ([2962](#))(**kurios**) is the One in control. When one referred to someone as "Lord" they were not only acknowledging the position of authority, but they were also referring to someone who, in that position of authority had a concern and a passion for others who are under his authority.

Instruct ([4822](#))(**sumbibazo** from **sun** = together + **bibazo** = to make to go up) means to bring together, to make or cause to go or come together, to join together, and all of these meanings occur in both a literal and figurative sense. To consider, to compare or to examine, as one would evidence, and thus prove. By extension sumbibazo means to teach or instruct.

The main ideas in the NT uses are (1) to bring together or unite - literally of the body held together by ligaments (Eph 4:16), figuratively, of the mystical body (church) united or joined together (Col 2:2, 19) (2) figuratively in an intellectual sense, to mentally put together -- to draw a conclusion in the face of evidence, "to conclude in one's mind by putting facts together," to give thought to

something in order to reach a suitable conclusion, opinion, or decision (Acts 16:10) (3) to cause a person to unite with one in a conclusion or come to the same opinion, to demonstrate or prove conclusively. Bloomfield adds it means "to prove, demonstrate, namely, by showing the connection and tracing the chain of facts or reasoning." (Acts 9:22) (4) Bloomfield explains that "from the sense to prove or show what a thing is" come the idea to teach or instruct others therein; to instruct or teach of instructing by putting together (1Cor 2:16), and this is the meaning in all 10 Septuagint uses (see below).

Bloomfield - Col. 2:19 "held together" = we have a metaphor taken from joiners' work, in which the pieces of wood are so fitted and joined together by straight lines, squares, miters, etc. that they all seem one entire piece. (A Greek and English Lexicon to the New Testament, 1840)

TDNT on non-Biblical usage - In non-bibl. Gk. συμβιβάζω means strictly "to cause to stride together" (causative of βιβάζω/βοιῶν). 1. "To bring together," "to bring about an agreement," Ditt. Syll.3, I, 75, 24 (428/7 B.C.); "to reconcile by mediation," Hdt. (only) I, 74, 3; Thuc. (only) II, 29, 6; Dio C., (συμβιβάζομαι "to be reconciled"), 45, 8, 2; Plat. (only) Prot., 337e. 2. Intellectually, esp. in philosophical usage, "to compare" (analytically), "to infer," Plat. (only) Hi., II, 369d; Resp., VI, 504a: λόγος, reason, συμβιβάζει (acc. with inf.), Ocellus Lucanus, 40, "to draw conclusions," often in Aristot., e.g., Topica, VIII, 11, p. 161b, 37 f.; De Sophisticis Elenchis, 28, p. 181a, 22; then "to show" (with ος) that all who are gifted with virtue are of noble birth, Ps.-AristotRhetAI, 36, p. 1441a, 6 etc. Hence finally "to expound, set forth," Philodem. Philos. Volumina Rhet., I, 57, 19; 174, 3 abs.; 172, 24; 4 cf. Ocellus Lucanus, 40 (→ n. 9). (Theological dictionary of the New Testament)

Sumbibazo - 7x in 7v - **NAS Usage:** concluded(1), concluding(1), held(1), held together(1), instruct(1), knit together(1), proving(1), together*(1).

Acts 9:22 But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by **proving** that this Jesus is the Christ.

Comment - Great word picture - Paul brings together Scriptural proofs to support the fact that Jesus is the OT Messiah and the result in natural men (1Cor 2:14) was not surprising - they were confounded (imperfect tense pictures this as occurring over and over)!

Acts 16:10 When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, **concluding** (Webster says "**conclude** implies arriving at a logically necessary inference at the end of a chain of reasoning") that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Wayne Barber explains sumbibazo in this verse - What is happening here is Paul was saying, "Hmm, I'm not stupid. I tried to get to Asia, and the Holy Spirit wouldn't let me." The imperfect tense was used there. "I kept trying, and I kept trying, and I kept trying. I tried to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus shut the door. Now something is going on here, because here I am down here in Troas, and now I've had this vision." So putting all of the facts together, the vision being a large part of that, he concluded, "I must go to Macedonia." God had completely redirected his route.

Acts 19:33 Some of the crowd **concluded** it was Alexander, since the Jews had put him forward; and having motioned with his hand, Alexander was intending to make a defense to the assembly.

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.

Ephesians 4:16-note from whom the whole body, being fitted and **held together** by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Colossians 2:2-note that their hearts may be encouraged, having been **knit together** in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself,

Comment by Wayne Barber - So to knit describes that which holds us together or causes us to cohere together. That is the STRENGTH OF THE CHURCH, but when error gets in and you get your eyes off of Jesus and that love which He puts in your heart for others, at that moment you're going to start being separated. Is your local body fused together as a body, absolutely knit together by the love of the Lord Jesus Christ or are their factions, divisions, things that separate you? Where did that come from? Somebody got their EYES OFF OF JESUS!!! Somebody stopped allowing that love working in their heart that could make them committed to the spiritual benefit of other people. When this process occurs, the body becomes disunited by error. Paul knows how dangerous this principle is... you let this sort of thing get into the church and you had better look out!! There is nothing but DIVISION from that point on. It is only Christ and His love that UNITES the body of

Christ.

Bloomfield feels that in Col 2:2 the phrase **knit together in love** "has reference to the closing up of schism by bringing together the discordant parties who make the schism."

Colossians 2:19-note and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and **held together** by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.

Comment: Sumbibazo gives us a word picture of intimate relationships and unity which is the result of saints walking in truth and love and being bound together (by the Spirit).

Sumbibazo in the Lxx - 10x in 10v and always with the meaning of to teach or instruct and usually translating the Hebrew verb *yarah* which means first to throw or shoot, the implication being that the instruction of Yahweh may be compared to archery in the sense that the "arrow" of God's teaching (i.e., the laws, commandments, and statutes of the Mosaic covenant) was aimed at a "target"—man's heart and God's holiness.

Exodus 4:12 "Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and **teach** you what you are to say."

Exodus 4:15 "You are to speak to him and put the words in his mouth; and I, even I, will be with your mouth and his mouth, and I will **teach** you what you are to do.

Exodus 18:16 "When they have a dispute, it comes to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor and **make known** (teach) the statutes of God and His laws."

Leviticus 10:11 and so as to **teach** the sons of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them through Moses."

Deuteronomy 4:9 "Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but **make** them **known** (teach) to your sons and your grandsons.

Judges 13:8 Then Manoah entreated the LORD and said, "O Lord, please let the man of God whom You have sent come to us again that he may **teach** us what to do for the boy who is to be born."

Psalms 32:8 I will instruct you and **teach** you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you.

Isaiah 40:13 Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, Or as His counselor has **informed** Him? 14 With whom did He consult and who gave Him understanding? And who **taught** Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge And informed Him of the way of understanding?

Daniel 9:22 He gave me instruction and talked with me and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to **give** you **insight** with understanding.

Adrian Rogers applies the truth that we have the **mind of Christ** - When a man is walking in the Spirit, he thinks Jesus' thoughts after Him, and that is wisdom to have the mind of Christ. Oh Glory, hallelujah.

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)

THE MIND OF CHRIST

But - Strong contrast. We, the spiritual men, have the mind of Christ and so can appraise all things ("all things" of course is relative and obviously does not connote that we who are spiritual can be omniscient!)

We - Note the contrast of this **we** with the **you** of 1Cor 3:1-3, for he goes from spiritual me to not so spiritual men!

Mare says Paul's statement that **we have the mind of Christ** "implies that we and all God's people can understand spiritual truths and spiritual wisdom in a way similar to the way the Lord knows them. 1Cor 2:16 climaxes Paul's argument about his preaching God's "foolishness" (the cross of Christ) without ostentation. Let the philosophers of Greece (cf. Acts 17:18, 32) and the Jews in their sign-seeking jeer and mock. They cannot really judge the message of Paul, who has the mind of Christ, because they do not have

the Spirit of God and cannot judge spiritual truths." (Ibid)

Hodges - What in the Old Testament is said of **Jehovah** is often in the New Testament applied to Christ. This is the case here. Who hath known the mind of the Lord? means, who hath known the mind of Jehovah? We have the mind of Christ, therefore, means, we have the mind of Jehovah. What is true of the one is true of the other. The same person who is revealed in the New Testament as the Son of God, was revealed of old as Jehovah. This teaches how firm a foundation the believer has for his faith, and how impossible it is for any one taught by the Spirit to give up his convictions to the authority of men. ([1 Corinthians 2 - Hodge's Commentary](#)) (See also **Jehovah = Jesus**)

Morris on the **mind of Christ** - He does not mean that every Christian can understand all Christ's thoughts. He means that the indwelling Spirit reveals Christ. The spiritual person accordingly does not see things from the viewpoint of the worldly. He sees them from the viewpoint of Christ. (1 Corinthians: an introduction and commentary, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries)

Barclay on the **mind of Christ** - It is easy to become so involved in the world that there exists nothing beyond it. We must pray to have the mind of Christ (Ed comment: Paul states "we have the mind of Christ" so better to pray that this would become our experience more and more), for only when He dwells within us are we safe from the encroaching invasion of the demands of material things.

Disciple's Study Bible on **mind of Christ** - Humans cannot know everything God knows and plans. Christians can have the Spirit to reveal Christ's mind in a specific decision. The ascended Lord continues to help His followers have the proper point of view toward life.

How can I have the mind of Christ? - In 1 Corinthians 2:16, Paul quotes Isaiah 40:13 and then makes a statement concerning all believers: "We have the mind of Christ." Having the mind of Christ means sharing the plan, purpose, and perspective of Christ, and it is something that all believers possess. Having the mind of Christ means we understand God's plan in the world—to bring glory to Himself, restore creation to its original splendor, and provide salvation for sinners. It means we identify with Christ's purpose "to seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:10). It means we share Jesus' perspective of humility and obedience (Philippians 2:5–8), compassion (Matthew 9:36), and prayerful dependence on God (Luke 5:16). ([Got Questions Ministries](#))

Play this great old hymn which is very Scripturally sound - Yea, even sing this HYMN to HIM as your prayer today.. He will answer exceeding abundantly according to His good and acceptable and perfect will...

May the mind of Christ my Savior

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.

May the Word of God dwell richly
In my heart from hour to hour,
So that all may see I triumph
Only through His power.

May the peace of God my Father
Rule my life in everything,
That I may be calm to comfort
Sick and sorrowing.

May the love of Jesus fill me
As the waters fill the sea;
Him exalting, self abasing,
This is victory.

May I run the race before me,
Strong and brave to face the foe,
Looking only unto Jesus
As I onward go.

May His beauty rest upon me,
As I seek the lost to win,
And may they forget the channel,

Seeing only Him.

Charles Stanley - The computer age is here to stay and, along with it, a new dictionary of technological terms. One that we should be familiar with by now is software, which is the operational basis for all computer systems. Impressive computer hardware is displayed in ads and on desks; but the compact, hidden software makes the system functional.

In a sense a person receives an entirely new software package when he receives Christ as Savior, Lord, and Life. He is taken out of Adam (his old way of living) and placed into Christ (his new way of living). Through the indwelling Holy Spirit, he now has "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16), which allows him to align his thoughts with those of Christ and to view life from God's perspective.

Such thoughts do not automatically register, however. Our old software package of selfishly oriented, independent thinking has made deep inroads into our personalities. We are presented daily with the mind-set of a godless world and the darts of our constant adversary, the devil.

Experiencing the benefits of your new nature and your new mind depends upon the daily introduction of spiritual programming provided by the Father for your new life in Christ.

Dear God, thank You for reprogramming me—taking out the old, pouring in the new. I praise You that I now have the mind of Christ, which allows me to align my thoughts to view life from Your perspective. (On holy ground)

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 Philippians 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 the 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](#)

John MacArthur - TOO LITTLE THOUGHT

For "who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ. 1 CORINTHIANS 2:16

Some people assume worry is the result of too much thinking. But in reality it's the result of too little thinking in the right direction. When we were saved, we received a new mind or way of thinking. Now our human thought patterns are injected with divine and supernatural ones. The apostle Paul said, "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. 8:5-6). Because of the Spirit of God in our lives, we think on a spiritual level, not a fleshly one. Paul also said, "Of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30). Since God imparts His wisdom to us, we can think the deep thoughts of the eternal God. (Truth for Today)

Max Lucado - Changed to His Likeness - February 22

We Christians actually do have within us a portion of the very thoughts and mind of Christ. 1 CORINTHIANS 2:16 TLB

The distance between our hearts and [Jesus' heart] seems so immense. How could we ever hope to have the heart of Jesus? Ready for a surprise? You already do.... If you are in Christ, you already have the heart of Christ. One of the supreme yet unrealized promises of God is simply this: if you have given your life to Jesus, Jesus has given himself to you. He has made your heart his home. It would be hard to say it more succinctly than Paul does: "Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20 MSG)....

He has moved in and unpacked his bags and is ready to change you "into his likeness from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor. 3:18 RSV).

Just Like Jesus (Grace for the Moment)

God Loveth Adverbs - Philip Yancey - But we have the mind of Christ. —1 Corinthians 2:16 - The Puritans wisely sought to connect all of life to its source in God, bringing the two worlds together rather than dividing them into sacred and secular. They had a saying, "God loveth adverbs; and careth not how good, but how well." Adverbs describe verbs—our words of action and activity. The proverb implies that God cares more about the spirit in which we live than the concrete results.

Pleasing God doesn't mean that we must busy ourselves with a new set of "spiritual" activities. As the Puritans said, whether cleaning house or preaching sermons, shoeing horses or translating the Bible, any human activity may constitute an offering to God.

We spend much time immersed in the mundane. "But we have the mind of Christ," Paul reminds us (1 Cor. 2:16). That truth is to guide everything we do. Caring for an elderly parent. Cleaning up after a child. Sitting on a porch with a neighbor. Fielding a customer's complaint. Filling out patient charts at a nurses' station. Sitting in traffic. Sawing lumber. Reporting tips. Shopping for groceries.

We need faith and the mind of the Lord Jesus to recognize something of lasting value in even our most ordinary tasks. ([Our Daily](#)

Bread)

In the common round of duty
Lift thy heart in praise;
For the Lord hath surely promised
Strength for all thy days.
Tovey

**The world crowns success;
God crowns faithfulness!**

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.**