

Understanding the Wisdom of God

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 2:6–16

Code: 1816

INTRODUCTION

A. Human Wisdom

In the previous lessons, we learned that one of the many problems that existed in the Corinthian assembly was the failure of the Christians to break away from human philosophy. The Corinthians were in a very immoral and philosophically oriented society, a world that was based upon the lusts and reasoning of men. Those who became Christians were dragging that immorality and rationalism into the church. The book of 1 Corinthians was written to get the Corinthian Christians to remove from their lives this immorality and rationalism.

Before they became Christians, the people were associated with certain philosophers. After they accepted Christ, they still adhered to their former philosophers--thus bringing different philosophies with them into the church. Because these philosophies disagreed with one another, there was disunity in the church. In response to that situation, Paul wrote from chapter 1 verse 18 through chapter 3 (and even part of chapter 4) telling them that human philosophy was unnecessary, and that human wisdom had nothing to offer them. In this lesson we will continue with Paul's argument against the necessity of human wisdom.

1. The Profits of Human Wisdom

Please don't misconstrue what is being said here. Man has developed some amazing things scientifically and technologically that have been to our benefit. When I say we should reject human wisdom, I don't mean that we're to reject every possible application of human wisdom; rather, we're to object to human philosophy. We're only to reject that part of man's reasoning which attempts to answer ultimate questions.

Christians aren't saying they have the answer to everything. For example, if my wife's washing machine breaks down, just because I'm a Christian doesn't mean I can fix it. I have to call someone to fix it--perhaps an unsaved person. There are some things that human wisdom provides for me that I don't have. If I need my car fixed, I'm not so concerned about whether a Christian fixes it as I am that a good mechanic does it. Some of the greatest teachers I've ever had, and some of the most influential people in my life have been non-Christians who knew their area of education or technology very well. But when the world tries to understand where man came from, why he's here, where he's going, and what his meaning is, it can't do it. When men try to define God, morality, real joy, real peace, and real happiness, they fail. That's what philosophy is: the study of wisdom, and the search for ultimate wisdom.

There are other things that human wisdom has done. Do you know that soon you'll probably be able to select the sex of your child before it's born? Do you realize that very soon there will be genetic controls and microsurgery by radiation and laser beams? The control of the aging process will soon enable us to live as long as a hundred years. Someday tooth decay will be eliminated by welding enamel on your teeth with laser beams. (You'll be able to choose any color you want!) There will be spot welding of the retina, and a bloodless knife in surgery, which is a beam that cuts and cauterizes at the same time.

So, Christians aren't saying that man's technology hasn't helped us. They think that the advancements of medical technology and scientific technology are wonderful.

2. The Problems of Human Wisdom

But one thing that is bothersome about the philosophy of man is that it continues to drown man in print. Did you know there are two thousand new book pages printed every second? There are 365 thousand hardback books printed every year--that doesn't include the paperbacks. There are 60 million pages a year produced. And most of it espouses the philosophy of man. It became so difficult to store all this information that microfilm was developed. But microfilm doesn't work anymore; it's too big. There's a new method of storing information called laser storage. Information is stored on a crystal; a laser beam is shot at it and refracted onto a screen, thereby storing that information in the tiniest part of a crystal. Imagine carrying your education around with a pocket full of crystals! Laser storage, however, is bulky compared to molecular storage. Using molecular storage, the entire Library of Congress can be put on an object the size of a sugar cube. But very few can afford the machine required to read the stored information.

Christians are not denying that man's wisdom has made great contributions. In fact, in some ways, worldly people are lot smarter than Christians are. You say, "Are you kidding?" No, that's what Jesus said in Luke 16:8: ". . . the sons of this age are in their generation wiser than the sons of light. " In other words, the world is smarter about some things in their own domain than Christians are about other things in their domain. This is the principle: If the Christian would apply himself to the gaining of godliness in the same way that the worldly man applies himself to the gaining of worldly things, God would be able to do much greater things through the church.

Human wisdom has its place in the world. But when it's applied toward ultimate truth--the things which deal with God, sin, man's destiny, salvation, transforming lives, morality, and ethics--it is absolutely bankrupt and worthless.

3. The Passages on Human Wisdom

Paul illustrates to the Corinthians that human wisdom isn't necessary in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5. Using himself as the example, he told them in verse 1 that he didn't come to them "with excellency of speech or of wisdom. " He said in verse 4, ". . . my speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom. . . . " The reason for this, according to verse 5, was because he didn't want their faith to stand on human wisdom. Paul said, ". . . I determined not to know any thing among you, except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (v. 2). Paul didn't come to the Corinthians with sophisticated philosophy; he came to them with the simple message of the gospel.

Everything about the gospel is very simple. In fact, it's so simple, that "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness. . . " (1:18a). They say, "This is stupid; it's nonsense! Do you expect us intellectuals, with all of our wisdom, to believe that the crux of human destiny is in the death of one man on a cross?" People still say that today. They think that Christianity is only for little kids and old ladies--that no intelligent man could believe in it.

B. True Wisdom

In 1 Corinthians 2:6, Paul states, "However, we speak wisdom. . . . " In a sense, Paul was saying, "Our words may seem foolish and simple to the world, but we are speaking true wisdom. We reject human reason, and teach only true wisdom. Philosophy can't save you from sin. " Do you realize that even after all the philosophies which have been invented, man is still as bad as he's ever been? Wars, crime, and other things continue to get worse.

1. Its Recipients

Paul says, ". . . we speak wisdom among them that are perfect. . . " (1 Cor. 2:6a). Only the saved have this wisdom. The word "perfect" [Gk. *teleios*] in this verse means "full grown and mature. " Whenever *teleios* is used to mean "perfect ones," it has to be interpreted in its context because it can mean "a Christian who's very mature," or it could just mean "a Christian. " Because Paul is saying that a Christian is one who has true wisdom, and one who is complete in Christ, we know that the phrase "them that are perfect" refers to Christians in general. Paul is not contrasting mature Christians with infantile ones; he's contrasting Christians with unbelievers. So Paul is saying, "We

are speaking wisdom among those who are believers. "

2. Its Riches

Let me illustrate this: Think back to the time when you weren't yet a Christian. Your reaction to the gospel then was probably one of rejection--you thought of the gospel as foolishness. The fact that Christ died on a cross for man didn't seem very profound to you. But when you became a Christian, suddenly the whole meaning of the gospel acquired unfathomable depth. It seems like the longer you're a Christian, the deeper the Bible gets in meaning. Paul felt this way when he said in Romans 11:33, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" Before you became a Christian, the gospel seemed very simple; after you became a believer, you looked at the gospel and the cross and couldn't even begin to figure out with your human reason all that was involved.

So, the Apostle Paul says, "We are speaking wisdom. The only people who understand it, though, are believers. Unbelievers can't understand it because it isn't human philosophy; it's the wisdom of God. " Ephesians 1:8-9 says that it's God who gives the understanding of His wisdom.

In verses 6-16, Paul divides the text into two points. Knowing these two points will not only be helpful for you to better understand this passage, it will also enable you to share about God's wisdom with others. The first point is that true wisdom is not humanly discovered, and the second point is that true wisdom is divinely revealed.

I. TRUE WISDOM IS NOT HUMANLY DISCOVERED (vv. 6-9)

A. Man's Wisdom Confined (v. 6)

You can't discover God on your own; you can't transcend the supernatural. You can't understand God any more than something lower than you can understand you. Did you ever hear two bugs discussing human anatomy? It's just as ridiculous to hear two men saying to each other that they understand God. Truly knowing God is outside our human realm.

One night I was at a meeting, talking with some people who were telling me their opinions about God. I've heard many people say what they think about God. But any opinion that man has about God is irrelevant. Man cannot know God, no matter how hard he tries. He can't know God because he cannot escape the confines of a natural existence and leap into the supernatural dimension. True wisdom--ultimate truth regarding God, man's destiny, and salvation--is not known to man's mind. Yet all the religions of the world are efforts on the part of man to find God.

Christianity teaches that we can't find God; He finds us. In Luke 19:10 we read, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. " We often hear people say in their testimonies, "I found the Lord. " However, they didn't find God; He found them! If you had to look for God, you would never find Him because that is beyond your capabilities. Thank God that He came and found you! We are not able to transcend our system. Notice how Paul points that out in verse 6: ". . . we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the princes of this age, that come to nothing. " This wisdom is not something available to the philosophers of this age. The word age is the Greek word *aion*, which can be translated "world," "age," or "era. " *Aion* is a word that refers to time. Paul was saying, "We're not speaking the wisdom of this particular time. " The wisdom of every era there has ever been doesn't amount to anything. It's rendered ineffective and empty. I'm not here to tell you my opinions and tell you wonderful philosophies. I'm here to tell you what the Bible means by what it says, because it is the revelation of God.

So, Paul says that ultimate truth is outside the boundaries of the wisdom and the philosophers of this era. **B. God's Wisdom Concealed(vv. 7-9)**

1. The Information Concealed (v. 7)

Paul begins verse 7 by saying, "But [Gk. *alla*, the strongest adversative in the Greek language] we speak the wisdom of God. . . . " In other words, "We are not speaking the wisdom that is of this world's systems or philosophers; rather, we are speaking the wisdom of God. " Paul is talking about

a supernatural, divine wisdom. The world looks at God's wisdom as foolishness, but believers understand that wisdom. Reading more of verse 7, Paul says, ". . . we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom. . . ." The reason the world didn't understand God's wisdom was because it was an unknowable wisdom. God put His wisdom outside the boundaries of man's capacity.

a. The Mystery Defined The word "mystery" is the Greek word *mysterion*. It doesn't mean something that's occultic, clandestine, or puzzling. It's not referring to finding your way through a maze in the quest for the wisdom of God. The word "mystery," in this context, means "a secret which is impossible for man to penetrate, but which God has chosen to reveal. " The word points to the impossibility of man knowing God's secret, and the love of God which makes it known. b. The Mystery Displayed Aren't you glad that even though we couldn't know His wisdom, God revealed it? It would be tragic if we couldn't know it. We can't know it on our own--it's outside of us. Aren't you glad that ultimate truth is outside of man? Man hasn't done much with what he's got. God's wisdom is a mystery; that is, God has hidden it. Verse 7 says that "God ordained [Gk. *proorizo*=`predetermined'] before the ages" the wisdom which He hid. Before time began, God designed a marvelous salvation plan, and hid it. Through Christ and the New Testament, the mysteries of God's plan were all revealed. In Ephesians 3, Paul says that he was the Apostle who was given the dispensation of the mysteries. (God gave Paul the privilege of writing and explaining the mysteries to others.) Verse 7 ends by telling us that God has opened that mystery to us "unto our glory [i. e. , our blessing, our eternal excellence]. " For all time and before all time, God planned our eternal blessing. At the right time, He unfolded His mystery. The Old Testament saints never saw God's mystery, yet they believed in His coming revelation, and God accepted that as saving faith. We know the full revelation of the mystery, not because we comprehended it, but because God has now revealed it. Paul is saying, in effect, "The world can't understand this wisdom; it doesn't come from the world. God has hidden it. Because of that, men will never find God on their own. Men will never develop a religion that is true. God's wisdom cannot come from within man's world. " Verse 8 is a living illustration of this fact:

2. The Illustration Communicated (v. 8)

"Which none of the princes of this age knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. "

The phrase "the princes of this age [era] " refers to the princes of the era in which Paul lived--the New Testament period. The princes at that time were the Jewish and Roman leaders. He says, "Let me give you an illustration of the fact that the world doesn't know God, and that the leaders of the world have never known God by their own reason. The Jewish and Roman leaders didn't know God, for if they had, `they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. '" (The phrase "the Lord of glory" proves that Jesus was God. The word "glory" encompasses all of the attributes of God.)

This is the apex of showing that man's wisdom can't know God.

Brilliant Romans and educated, well-known Jews schooled in the Old Testament together crucified Christ. That shows how much they really knew--they didn't know anything! I love the way Paul calls Him "the Lord of glory" in contrast to the humiliation of crucifixion. The leaders crucified the Lord of glory. This shows how far off human wisdom was from the truth. The Romans, with all their gods and religions, didn't know God. The Jewish people, with all their information, didn't know God. The Roman and Jewish leaders crucified Him.

You ask, "Why is it that men cannot know God? Why is it that God's wisdom is hidden?" Verse 9 gives the answer:

3. The Ignorance Clarified (v. 9)

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. "

Here, Paul quotes part of Isaiah 64:4. This verse is frequently taken out of context. I can remember

someone telling me that the verse referred to heaven--that we cannot yet see what heaven will be like. There is no relationship, however, between this verse and heaven. Paul isn't talking about heaven; rather, he is talking about ignorance. He's saying that unbelievers aren't able to know what salvation is like. God, from the ages past, prepared fantastic things for the people who love Him. The people who don't love Him can't know what those things are. The world, in its quest for truth, cannot know about salvation.

There are only two ways you can make a conclusion about truth from a human viewpoint: the first way is objective, the second way is subjective. The objective way is by the external, empirical, experiential method. The subjective way is by reason or logic.

First, let's examine. . .

a. The Objective Way to the Truth (v. 9a)"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard. . .

"There are only two ways that you can assimilate objective truth: through the eye or through the ear. But, ultimate truth cannot pass through the human eye or ear. That's what's meant by the phrase "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard. " Ultimate truth is not observable. You cannot discover God through empiricism. Second, let's look at the other way men come to conclusions about the truth:b.

The Subjective Way to the Truth (v. 9b)". . . neither have entered into the heart of man. . . "The word "heart" here simply means "mind. " In other words, you can't know ultimate truth internally from a subjective thought process. You can't come to God by rationalism. That makes the situation hopeless for man, doesn't it? God has a great plan for those that love Him, and He has hidden it from the world. It wasn't known by the men of Christ's era. That's proven by the fact that they executed Jesus. Had they known God's plan, they wouldn't have executed Him. People today who reject Jesus continue to prove that man can't know God's truth, or they wouldn't be rejecting Jesus. They can try by experiment to find it, and they can try by logic to find it, but they won't find it--because it is not knowable in those ways. Paul has made his first point clear: The wisdom of God cannot be discovered by the human mind. Let's look at Paul's second point:

II. TRUE WISDOM IS REVEALED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT (vv. 10-16)

If human wisdom cannot find God, then the only way man can know God is for God to reveal Himself to man. Some time ago, while I was in high school, I visited a girl who was in an iron lung. It's terrible for a person to have to be in an iron lung. While I was visiting, I couldn't help but think that I was free, able to do whatever I wanted and go wherever I wanted. And here was this lovely girl, unable to go anywhere. Anything that she experienced had to come to her. That's an apt illustration of natural man. He is in the iron lung of his own incapacities. Everything comes to him from the outside in. He isn't going anywhere. Paul tells us in the following verses that the Holy Spirit has invaded man's locked box with the truth. True wisdom is revealed by the Holy Spirit.

There are three steps in the Spirit's transmission of God's truth: revelation, inspiration, and illumination. Let's look now at the first step, which is. . .

A. The Revelation of the Holy Spirit (vv. 10-11)

1. Revealing God's Message (v. 10)

a. The Agent of Revelation (v. 10a)"But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit. . . "Whereas we would never have been able to know God on our own, He came to us and revealed Himself. He came to our little locked box--our iron lung--and gave us information about Himself. The word "revealed" here is the Greek word *apokalupto*, which means "to disclose something that was previously hidden," or "to unveil something that was veiled. " God made Himself known to us through the Holy Spirit. It's the Holy Spirit, who is the agent of transmission for the Trinity, who brought the revelation of God to us. He discloses God's truth to us. b. The Source of Revelation (v. 10b)". . . for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. "The Holy Spirit is the One who knows the deep recesses of the mind of God. The phrase "searcheth all things" doesn't mean that He's ignorant and has to search around to find out the things of God. He's God too, and knows everything.

That phrase simply means that He is the One who penetrates the inner being of God--He's God's own Spirit. Aren't you glad that the Bible wasn't written by some secondhand angel, but instead, God's Holy Spirit? Angels aren't capable of being perfect instruments of God's revelation--Satan was once an angel. God didn't entrust the transmission of His Scriptures to anybody outside the Trinity. The Holy Spirit was dispatched with the information because He's the One who knows the inner recesses of God's nature.

2. Revealing God's Mind (v. 11)

a. The Hidden Things of a Man (v. 11a)"For what man knoweth the things of a man, except the spirit of man which is in him?. . . "I can come up to you and say, "I know you!" and describe your ears, your nose, how you react to things, and your personality; but I can't know you as well as you know yourself. You will never know me in the same way that I know myself. I know things about myself that you will never know. The only thing that will ever really know the depths of you is your own spirit. Even after many years of marriage, there are certain things people never unveil about themselves. Paul is saying here that the thing that knows a man best is that man's own spirit. b. The Hidden Things of God (v. 11b)". . . Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. "The Holy Spirit knows the deep recesses of God just as a man's spirit knows the deep recesses of that man like no one else does. When God revealed Himself to us, He didn't send a secondary messenger. He sent the Holy Spirit, and no one knows God better than Him. This is what revelation is: The Holy Spirit brings the deep things of God to man. In a sense, He comes from heaven with a package for us from God. You ask, "What is the package that He brings it in? How does revelation come to us?" That leads us to the second step of the Spirit's transmission of God's truth:

B. The Inspiration by the Holy Spirit (vv. 12-13)

1. The Method of Delivery (v. 12)

"Now we have received. . . that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. "

Some people say that the Bible is just the opinion of man. I tell them to look at that verse: It's saying that we have received God's revelation "that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. " Where did the Bible come from? It was given by God. What did the Apostles do with it? They received it. Inspiration was the vehicle for carrying the revelation. The Spirit of God brought it, and the Apostles received it.

Notice the word "we," which appears twice in verse 12, and once again in verse 13. That does not refer to Christians in general. It refers to the Apostles and the writers of Scripture. They are the ones who received God's revelation and recorded it, and we have received it from them. Paul was among those who received God's revelation. The Spirit gave God's revelation to the Apostles and Scripture writers, and they in turn made known "the things that are freely given to us of God. " In John 14:26 the Lord said, "When I leave you, the Comforter will come and He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said. " That was not a promise for all believers. That was spoken to those who would write the New Testament. It was to them that the Holy Spirit would give recall of all that Jesus said. Have you ever wondered how John could have written the whole Gospel of John (21 chapters) and recorded all the exact words of Christ? He could do it because the Holy Spirit brought everything to his remembrance. The method by which the Holy Spirit did this was inspiration. Second Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. . . . " In the Greek, the phrase

"inspiration of God" is one word, theopneustos.

It means "God-breathed. " God breathed it into the minds of the Scripture writers. The Bible was not made up by men, and it is not the opinion of men. It was "freely given to us of God," a gift brought by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:12).

2. The Method of Documentation (v. 13)

"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth. . . . "

Paul is saying, "When I speak to you, it is not with my words, but the Holy Spirit's words. " This verse clearly teaches that the very words of Scripture were given by the Holy Spirit.

That's what is called "verbal inspiration. " Some people say, "God inspired the general thoughts to the Apostles, and they wrote them in their own words. " Such thinking denies what this verse is saying. Besides, how could you have a thought without words? Paul writes emphatically, "We are not speaking to you in our own words, but in the words which the Spirit has graciously given us in the revelation of God. " When Paul sat down to write 1 Corinthians, the Spirit of God took control of that man, went into his brain, and pulled out the words that were in his own vocabulary and arranged them in the order that He wanted them written. The Holy Spirit selected the words, using the life and personality of Paul so that the words reflected him as well.

Sometimes people ask me, "Why do you preach in such detail? You study every verse and every word. " I do that because every word came from the mouth of God. When Satan was tempting Jesus, the Lord didn't generalize Deuteronomy 8:3 and say, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by the general principles of God. " He quoted it specifically: ". . . Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Mt. 4:4). God breathed the right words into the minds of the Apostles, and they wrote them. That is inspiration. The word Scripture means "writing. " The inspiration of the Scriptures didn't stop in the minds of the Apostles, but was transmitted into their writings.

The revelation of God was given into the minds of the Apostles, who wrote it out. But the whole process doesn't stop there. There are a lot of people who have a Bible and either don't know what's in it, or they misinterpret it. Some people read the Bible and say, "Jesus isn't God. " There are many things people misunderstand about the Bible. The reason is that they don't have. . .

C. The Illumination of the Holy Spirit (vv. 14-16)

This is the third step of the transmission of God's truth by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit enlightens us to understand the Scripture, because you can read a Bible and not understand it.

1. Evaluating the Bible (vv. 14-15a)

a. The Natural Man (v. 14)"But the natural [Gk. psuchikos] 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. "The natural, fleshly man lives in a physical, material world, and can't know or sense God. He can't get out of his little box. You can hand him a Bible and tell him to read it, but he won't understand it. He will think it's all foolishness. He can't know it because it is spiritually evaluated. A spiritually dead man cannot discern that which is spiritually discerned. The psalmist, in Psalm 119:18, prayed a beautiful prayer: "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law. " We don't just need God to give us the law, but we also need God to open the eyes of our understanding. The Spirit has to illuminate the mind. Truth is available, but only those that are illumined will understand that truth. The natural man may have God's revelation in his hand--he may have the inspired writings-- but without the illumination of the Holy Spirit, they won't make sense to him. He's like a blind man who can't see the sun; he can't see the Son of righteousness. He's like a deaf man who can't hear sweet music; he can't appreciate the sweet song of salvation. Martin Luther said, "Man is like a pillar of salt, like Lot's wife, yea, like a log and a stone, like a lifeless statue which uses neither eyes nor mouth, neither sense nor heart. . . . until he is enlightened, converted, and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. " The Holy Spirit is needed in order to understand the things of God. b. The Spiritual Man (v. 15a)"But he that is spiritual judgeth all things. . . "The person who has the Holy Spirit can evaluate all things. He who has the resident truth teacher has a point of reference in himself, and has the anointing of 1 John 2:27. He does not have any need for human philosophers. It's through the Holy Spirit that the Word of God becomes alive and meaningful to us. This is true for all Christians! The world doesn't know the truth, and the world can't know the truth. You know the truth because the Spirit of God dwells in you and teaches you the truth and makes the Bible come alive.

2. Evaluating the Believer (vv. 15b-16)

a. Judging a Christian (v. 15b)". . . yet he himself is judged of no man. "Have you ever noticed how difficult it is for the world to evaluate Christians? There is no way that a natural man can evaluate a spiritual man. A natural man cannot know a Christian any better than he can know Christ. What did the world do to Christ? They crucified Him. What is the world going to do to us? They'll laugh at us, mock us, call us fools, and in some places, kill us. Quoting from Isaiah 40:13, Paul tells in verse 16 why the world will treat us as they did Christ:b. Judging Christ (v. 16)"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ. "In other words, nobody can judge a spiritual man, for to do that would be to judge the Lord Himself. We have the mind of the Lord. Because of that, the world can't understand us, just like they couldn't understand Christ. Isn't it nice to know that the reason the world can't understand us is because we have the mind of Christ? We're as big a mystery to the world as He was. That's good company to be in!When someone denies the claims of Jesus, he is really saying, "God, let me correct a few misconceptions You have. " When a person tells me, "I don't believe that stuff about Christ. Let me tell you my opinion," I say, "Oh, so you're going to tell God what He should believe?" I can say that because the Lord dwells within me, and He's my Teacher. If someone wants to instruct me, they are really trying to instruct the mind of Christ, because I have the mind of Christ.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, Paul is simply saying that man, with his human reason, can't know God. God has to reveal Himself to man. God has revealed Himself in three steps by the Holy Spirit: through revelation, inspiration, and illumination. When a person becomes a Christian, the Holy Spirit illuminates God's revelation so that he might understand it. Because the Spirit of God dwells in us, He is our Teacher and we know the truth.

Man's desire to acquire knowledge is great. If you want to know the truth, here's how to do it: Commit your life to Jesus Christ, and He'll plant within you the resident truth teacher and you'll know the truth. Once you have come to know the truth of God, you'll be free. Free from what? Free from the quest of truth. You will have found it. You'll be at rest.

Focusing on the Facts

1. Is all of human wisdom to be rejected? Explain.
2. What important principle can be learned from what Jesus said in Luke 16:8?
3. Using 1 Corinthians 2:1-5, explain how Paul used himself as an example to prove that human wisdom was unnecessary for the Corinthians.
4. Who are the recipients of true wisdom? To whom does the word "perfect" refer in 1 Corinthians 2:6? How do we know this?
5. Why can't man know God? What has man attempted to do through the different religions in the world?
6. People sometimes say, "I found God. " What is wrong with saying that? Explain.
7. Why can't men know the wisdom of God? Define the word "mystery" as it is used in 1 Corinthians 2:7.
8. When did God ordain the wisdom which He hid (1 Cor. 2:7)? When were the mysteries of God's plan revealed?
9. To whom does the phrase "the princes of this age" refer? How does Paul prove that the Jewish and Roman leaders didn't know God (1 Cor. 2:8)?
10. How is 1 Corinthians 2:9 commonly misinterpreted? What is Paul really talking about in that verse?
11. What are the two ways you can make a conclusion about truth from a human standpoint? Explain what is involved in each. What is it that cannot be discovered by either method?

12. What is the only way that man could ever know about God? What three steps were involved in the revealing of God to man?
13. What does the word "revealed" mean in 1 Corinthians 2:10? Through whom was God's truth transmitted to man?
14. Explain what is meant by the phrase "for the Spirit searcheth all things" in 1 Corinthians 2:10. Why didn't God use angels to transmit His revelation?
15. What was the "package" in which God's revelation came?
16. Who are the ones being referred to by the word "we" in 1 Corinthians 2:12-13? Support your answer with Scripture.
17. What is meant by the term verbal inspiration? Describe how this process occurred.
18. Why is it that many people don't understand the Bible? What does it mean for the Holy Spirit to illuminate the mind?
19. A spiritually _____ man cannot discern that which is spiritually _____.
20. Why is it difficult for a natural man to evaluate Christians? What happens when a natural man judges a Christian, or tries to instruct a Christian?

Pondering the Principles

1. In this lesson, we learned that not all of human wisdom is to be rejected. Write a list of the things that man has invented or done which are to your benefit. Go over that list, and check the things that you would find very difficult not to have. Can man really take the credit for the abilities that he has to make the things on your list possible? Read and memorize Psalm 139:14: "I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Thy works, and my soul knows it very well" (NASB).
2. The word "mystery" in 1 Corinthians 2:7 refers to that which cannot be understood in the human realm, but only understood with divine revelation. Read the following verses: Psalm 25:14; Proverbs 3:32; Amos 3:7; and Colossians 1:26. What do those verses say about the secrets of God? Read 1 Peter 1:10-12. In verse 10, how does Peter characterize the prophets who prophesied God's unknown plan of salvation? What does verse 11 say these prophets were searching for? Whom were the prophets indwelt by? The last part of verse 11 says that the Spirit of Christ "testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. " Can you imagine the great curiosity the prophets of the Old Testament had regarding the promised Messiah? What does Peter say about the angels in regard to God's revelation, at the end of verse 12? Do you have the same desire that the Old Testament prophets and the angels expressed for learning more about the revelation of God? Take time now to pray and thank God that you live in an age in which the mysteries concerning Christ can be clearly understood, and that you will continually desire to learn from God's revealed truth made available through the Scripture.
3. There are many people today who deny that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Read the following verses: Exodus 4:10-12; Jeremiah 1:4- 9; 30:1-2; Ezekiel 3:10-11; Acts 22:14-15; Galatians 1:10-12; Hebrews 1:1-2; and Revelation 1:10-11, 19. Who was the source of the words each of these men spoke? Read 2 Peter 1:20-21. What does this verse say about prophecy? What does 2 Timothy 3:16 have to say about the Scriptures? Using what you've learned about the divine origin of the Bible, how would you refute those who say that the Holy Spirit only gave the Scripture writers the general idea of what was to be written, and it was up to the writer how he worded it?

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