

Paul established earlier that neither the message of the Gospel, nor the recipients, nor he as the messenger of the Gospel had conformed to standards of human wisdom. This rejection of human wisdom did not, however, mean that there was no wisdom in what Paul spoke. He did speak wisdom, and he spoke it to those who were mature. Though hidden in God (2:6-9), this wisdom could be revealed by the Spirit of God (2:10-13). Indeed only by the Spirit could spiritual truth be understood (2:14-16).

I. Affirmation that wisdom is spoken (2:6a)

II. Explanation of this wisdom's nature, revelation and effects (2:6b-16)

1. *The nature of divine wisdom*: it is a hidden wisdom, a mystery.
 - a. It is not a temporal, human wisdom which is limited to a human perspective.
 - b. It is an eternal wisdom which has its source in God and has divine characteristics. It is a secret or "mystery" which means that it has been hidden in God but also now revealed by God. Never-the-less it remains hidden to some. This wisdom was planed in eternity past for our (future) glory.
 - c. It was not nor could not be understood by the Jewish and Roman leaders who crucified Jesus. The crucifixion is a proof of that lack of understanding. Scripture, too, supports that our physical senses – eyes and ears – and mental capabilities are not sufficient to figure out God's plans.
2. *The role of the Spirit in receiving this wisdom*: the Spirit reveals this mystery to us, who have the Spirit, because He knows the mind of God.
 - a. In contrast to the world we have had this wisdom revealed by God through His Spirit. It emphasizes that we have received it, in contrast to the world which has not.
 - b. The Spirit knows every detail in God's thinking and is therefore capable of revealing His wisdom. It is the same principle which is true among people. Only the person knows his/her own thoughts. Only the Spirit of God knows the thoughts of God.
 - c. This very Spirit, who knows the thoughts of God, is the Spirit which we have received. God has purposefully given us His Spirit so that we can truly know the things which He has given us. Paul and others communicate the very thoughts of God with words of God since both – thought & word – have been given by the Spirit of God.
3. *The results of having or not having the Spirit*: the Spirit alone enables spiritual understanding.
 - a. All men fall into one of two categories. The "natural" category is not to have the Holy Spirit. This is the state into which everyone is born. Being without the Spirit results in at least two things which Paul explains.
 - 1) The "natural" man does not welcome the things revealed by the Spirit, which things he considers foolish.
 - 2) The "natural" man is not even equipped to be able to understand, since it takes the Spirit of God to judge those things which come from God. It is like the "deaf judging music" or the "blind judging art."
 - b. The other category of people is the one who does have the Holy Spirit. These are those who belong to Christ (cf Romans 8:9).
 - 1) Any matter of truth can be judged by the person who has the Spirit of God. They need not have an opinion on everything but they are able and permitted to judge all things.
 - 2) No natural person is able to pass judgment on the spiritual person, since in this also they are not equipped to do so. The person who does not know God cannot discern in another person what is of God.
 - 3) Believers, however, **are** capable of knowing God's will and doing it, since by the Spirit they have the mind of Christ.

This passage speaks directly to common false thinking.

- 1) Who is best equipped to understand Scripture? According to this passage to be equipped to understand Scripture requires having the Spirit of God. Other skills may be helpful but are of themselves insufficient.
- 2) To what extent or in what way is truth relative and is there absolute truth? Truth finds its source in God who does not change. Only the application of God's truth changes.
- 3) To what extent is mankind, because of our finiteness and fallen nature, capable of discerning turning and understanding truth? Without the Spirit we cannot know the thoughts of God. A finite being cannot know an infinite being exhaustively. However believers have received the Spirit of God. By His Spirit we can accurately know that which He chooses to reveal.

III. Accusations (3:1-4)

We are left with questions about sin and differences among believers. If believers have the Spirit and He reveals God's thoughts, why do they exist? These will be addressed in the accusation which Paul will bring against the Corinthians in 3:1-4.