

Being a Spiritually Minded Christian
Part Three
The Authority of the Word of God

- *As believers we have a choice: We can be naturally minded, carnally minded, or spiritually minded.*

1 Corinthians 2:14–15 (NKJV)

¹⁴But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

¹⁵But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.

- *As Christians we can have a spiritual mind which is to think the thoughts of God and to see and evaluate circumstances and events from God's perspective which is both heavenly and eternal.*
- *As Christians we can have a natural mind which sees and evaluates life only from this temporal physical earthly perspective.*
- *The natural mind sees things only from the natural perspective and either does not acknowledge the existence of a spiritual realm, or does not recognize the value or the activities of the spiritual realm.*
- *As Christians we can have a carnal mind which sees and evaluates life from a purely selfish perspective seeking to satisfy the fleeting lusts of the flesh.*
“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.” (Romans 8:7).
- *The three areas that enable us to develop into spiritually minded Christians are our relationship to the Word of God, Prayer, and Christian Fellowship.*
- *Today we are going to explore how to develop into spiritually minded Christians in relationship to the Word of God—the Bible.*
- *Of the three foundational principles that enable us to develop into spiritually minded Christians, it is the Bible that grounds us in the truth and provides a spiritual compass to ensure we do not stray from being Christ-centered.*
- *Though experience validates our faith, it is the Word of God, the Bible, that establishes our faith.*

John 18:37-38 NKJV

37 Pilate therefore said to Him, “Are You a king then?” Jesus answered, “You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”

38 Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?” And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, “I find no fault in Him at all.”

- *Just after Jesus stated, “My kingdom is not of this world,” Pilate responded skeptically, “Are You a king then?” Jesus' answer to Pilate was both straightforward and challenging, “You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”*

- *Jesus pointed out that no one can understand or know who He is without having the truth within them, “Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”*
- *Pilate's response to Jesus' statement regarding truth was both jaded and sarcastic, “What is truth?” however, in the next breath he declared, “I find no fault in Him at all.”*
- *When people claim that truth is subjective, they are really saying that truth does not exist and that there are no moral absolutes. Although this belief enables people to be a law unto themselves, at the same time, it leaves them in a quandary of uncertainty and confusion. This was Pilate's state of mind when he asked, “What is truth?”*
- *The criteria for knowing the truth is a sincere desire to do the will of God. “If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.” (John 7:17).*
- *Pilate, although he was troubled by his encounter with Jesus, did not want to do the will of God, nor did he want to know the truth. Pilate's question, “What is truth?” was not a sincere question, but a rhetorical one reflecting insincerity.*
- *Jesus clearly says that the devil “was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.” (John 8:44).*
- *Since the devil is the father of lies, one of his primary strategies is to keep people in the dark and away from the light.*
- *Since God is called the “the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning,” (James 1:17), He has given us the Bible as His Word so that we can know truth because “Your Word is truth.” (John 17:17).*
- *It is no wonder that so many skeptics have tried to destroy the credibility of the Bible, because the god of this world is the father of lies.*
- *If the devil could be successful in causing people to dismiss the veracity and authority of the Bible, then the world would be plunged into hopelessness, darkness, and confusion.*
- *Skeptics of all stripes and colours from university professors to regular Joes on the street have had a hand in trying to dismiss the authority of Scripture.*
- *Some academics devote their entire career to discrediting the Bible. Why is it that so much time and effort is spent trying to discredit the Bible, while no one spends any time trying to discredit the myth of Santa Claus? It is because the Bible is the Truth and something in rebellious and unregenerate man wants not only to hide from the truth, but to try to bury the truth, so others cannot find it either.*
- *The Bible was written over a period of some 1500 years by over 40 different authors, yet it displays a marvelous consistency and continuity from beginning to end, from Genesis to Revelation.*
- *In the age of humanism, starting in the late 1600s, skeptics first attacked the Bible saying it was not historically reliable, but was simply a collection of myths that bore no resemblance to reality. They argued the exodus was not a real event. They claimed that men such as King David, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and King Cyrus of Persia, to mention just a few, never really existed.*

- *However, with the advent of modern archeology in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, evidence of the existence of the people and kingdoms spoken about in the Bible were found. Many of the stories and places found in the Bible were also corroborated by archeological finds.*
- *The next line of attack by the skeptics was that the Old Testament writings could not have been copied correctly over the centuries and must have morphed many times by copying errors, intentional additions, or omissions.*
- *However, in 1948, in the caves of Qumran, numerous scrolls and Jewish writings were found which became known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. Among these scrolls they found a complete scroll of the prophet Isaiah. It was dated in the range of 300 BC. Although this scroll of Isaiah predated any other existing scrolls of Isaiah by 1100 years, the texts were virtually identical!*
- *Since the historicity of the Bible could no longer be disputed and the accuracy of the transmission of the Bible by the copyists was no longer a serious objection, the skeptics had to deal with the many prophecies that were contained in the Old Testament, which historians had to admit were later fulfilled.*
- *For example, the Book of Isaiah was written around 700 BC, but it contained a detailed prophecy about a Persian King called Cyrus who would order the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. The wonderful thing about this prophecy is that it was recorded 150 years before the actual event!*
- *The only way the skeptics could explain the fulfillment of these and many other prophecies was to say that these prophetic books were written much later—after the actual events had taken place. Changing the date of the writing was their only option, because they didn't believe predictive prophecies were even possible.*
- *The importance of the Bible, starting with what we now call the Old Testament, is so essential that without it no one would have recognized or even expected the appearance of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Saviour of the world.*
- *It was through Old Testament writings that God's plan of salvation was given in marvelous detail and prophesied with astounding accuracy. That is why Paul wrote that the greatest legacy we have received from the Jews is the Old Testament, "What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God." (Romans 3:1-2).*
- *The early church did not have access to what we call the New Testament, which was written several decades after the actual events. The church did have access to the sacred writings of what we call the Old Testament. We see an example of this access when Jesus went into the synagogue and read from the book of Isaiah. (Luke 4:17).*
- *All the doctrine that was developed in the New Testament came from the Old Testament. Without the Old Testament the world would have been incapable of knowing the truth or knowing about God's plan of salvation.*

1 Corinthians 15:3–4 (NKJV)

³For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

⁴and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

- *Our faith in Christ is not simply based on our personal experience or what people have told us, but is firmly based “according to the Scriptures.”*

Ephesians 4:11–15 (NKJV)

¹¹And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

¹³till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

¹⁴that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

¹⁵but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—

- *God gave the five-fold ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers for building up the body of Christ and equipping the saints for the work of the ministry.*
- *The ultimate goal that God has for each Believer individually and for the Church corporately is that we “may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ.”*
- *Paul described the process by which maturity and the fullness of Christ will be manifest, to “come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.” The words “unity of the faith” and “the knowledge of the Son of God” speak about correct and accurate doctrine that comes only from the Bible—God’s Word.*
- *When our faith is not based solidly on the Bible we develop doctrine around subjective experiences or personal interpretations of Scripture. When taken out of context it leads to subjective doctrine which produces instability and confusion, “that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.”*
- *There can be two extremes in the Body of Christ:*
- *People can be so focused on supernatural experiences that sound biblical doctrine falls by the wayside in their pursuit of religious experiences.*
- *The other extreme is when people see so much “charismatic chaos” from “sign seekers,” who develop unsound doctrine, that they dismiss the supernatural manifestations that God want to show them in their daily lives.*
- *Both extremes actually reflect a divergence from the plain truth of Scripture.*

Acts 17:10–11 (NKJV)

¹⁰Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.

¹¹These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

- *The Bereans were described as “more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica,” because instead of simply agreeing with everything Paul taught, they went back to the Scriptures, in this case the Old Testament, and “they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.”*
- *The Greek word for “fair-minded” means “a willingness to learn and evaluate something fairly; to be open minded,” and it signifies not only an openness to learn, but an eagerness to study and test the things they had heard.*
- *In Christian circles there is a tendency to develop a habit of being lazy by either simply accepting whatever we hear preached from the pulpit or simply dismissing things that are taught when they do not conform to the ideas we already have.*
- *Since the Holy Spirit inspired the Scriptures, God’s Word can only be understood correctly by the spiritually minded Christian, “knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:20-21).*
- *When a naturally minded person reads the Bible, its significance and truths are hidden. When the Holy Spirit begins to open our spiritual eyes, the Bible becomes the most wonderful and precious book in all creation. That is why it is essential that when we read the Bible we first ask the Holy Spirit to speak to our hearts, because “the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”*
- *When a naturally mind person reads about the miracles and healings recorded in the Bible they either dismiss them as myths or come up with a natural explanation to eliminate the supernatural. So the naturally minded person dismisses the Bible as untrue based on its supernatural content.*
- *The natural minded person immediately dismisses the authority of the Bible simply based on their own philosophical beliefs that miracles and supernatural events don’t exist and don’t actually happen.*
- *The Bible from Genesis to Revelation is drenched and permeated in the supernatural. The reality of God and His power are intricately woven into every part of the Bible.*
- *If God’s supernatural intervention, miraculous events, and supernatural healings do not actually take place at this present time, then the Bible is just a mythological book that contains no truths and carries no authority.*
- *One of the infallible proofs of the reality of the Gospel Message is the supernatural. “And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.” (Mark 16:20).*
- *If a large part of Christ’s and His disciples’ ministries consisted of miracles and healings then so should ours!*

- *Christians can also be naturally minded and provide natural explanations of the supernatural events recorded in the Bible. Or they may take the cessationist view that supernatural events ceased at the end of the apostolic age, and no longer occur in our present age.*
- *The manifestation of the power and presence of the Holy Spirit is what will force people to face the reality of God. It does not mean they will believe the Gospel message, but it does mean that they will be confronted with the supernatural and they must choose to either accept it or reject it.*
- *The natural mind sees only unexplained events and occurrences, never the miraculous.*
- *One of the greatest disservices we can do to the Gospel Message is try to downplay the supernatural and relegate the work of the Holy Spirit as He is manifest through the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit and the miracles, signs, wonders, and healings to a prior time period.*
- *Often, when Christian apologists debate atheists they use a number of arguments to show the validity of the Gospel and of the Bible, such as its historical accuracy and philosophical soundness, but they steer away from God's present supernatural intervention in the lives of people today.*
- *One of the reasons the topic of present day miracles is avoided by Christian apologists when debating atheists is because it opens them up to being dismissed entirely as being foolish. However, Paul clearly stated, "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." (1 Corinthians 1:18).*
- *Another reason that present day miracles are not discussed in the debate is because it brings the debate to a head. The atheist will be forced to either totally denounce the idea of miracles as complete foolishness, or be brave enough to look at the evidence with an open mind.*
- *The very first step for us to become spiritually minded Christians is that we must be convinced of the veracity and authority of God's Word—the Bible.*
- *The second step for us to become spiritually minded Christians is that we must choose to submit our lives to the authority of God's Word.*
- *The natural mind will not be able to recognize the authority of God's Word and the carnal mind will not be able to submit to the authority of God's Word, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be." (Romans 8:7).*
- *The spiritually minded Christian both recognizes the authority of God's Word and gladly submits his life to the authority of His Word. "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome." (1 John 5:3).*
- *The third step for us to become spiritually minded Christians is that we must learn to value and have a love for God's Word, the Bible. "How sweet are Your words to my taste, Sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Psalm 119:103).*
- *Not only is the Word of God to be compared to something delicious that is to be eaten, it is also to be seen as something containing hidden treasures. "I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure." (Psalm 119:162).*

- *Jesus reinforced this idea of the Word of God containing many precious treasures. “Then He said to them, “Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old.”” (Matthew 13:52).*
- *The Bible enables us to understand the thoughts of God and to know Him in an intimate and personal way. “How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You.” (Psalm 139:17-18).*

John 13:23–25 (NKJV)

²³Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.

²⁴Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke.

²⁵Then, leaning back on Jesus’ breast, he said to Him, “Lord, who is it?”

- *This is such a touching scene. John is resting his head against Jesus’ bosom and John described Himself as one “whom Jesus loved.”*
- *When the disciples wanted to ask Jesus whom He spoke about concerning His betrayal, Peter directed his question to John, the one closest to Jesus’ heart.*
- *Why was John the one who had the privilege of resting his head on the very bosom of God Himself? Because he chose to! Anyone of the disciples could have done the same. John knew he was loved and responded in kind.*
- *When it says, “the disciple whom Jesus loved” it does not mean Jesus loved any of the other disciples less. John chose to come close to Jesus and experience His love and to express his love for Him.*
- *Christ wants to share His thoughts and secrets with us because He calls us His friends. “No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.” (John 15:15).*
- *It is our great loss when we are so busy that we do not have time to read His Word, understand His thoughts, or experience His love. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.” (Revelation 3:20).*
- *It’s dinnertime with Jesus! Who wants to come?*
- *In the next message in this series we will begin to study how to read, meditate, and study the Bible and how to develop our relationship with Christ through the Word of God.*