

Being a Spiritually Minded Christian Part One

1 Corinthians 2:1-16 NKJV

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

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

- *Paul described how he proclaimed “the testimony of God” to the church in Corinth.*

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- *“The testimony of God” speaks about the evidence that God wants us to consider, understand, accept and believe.*
- *Paul did not come with excellence of speech or wisdom. He did not try to impress them with great intellectual arguments or philosophical discussions. Instead, he presented the very heart of the testimony of God in all its glory and in all its simplicity – “Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”*

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3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.

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

5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

- *Paul continued by describing his own demeanor and appearance when he proclaimed the testimony of God, “I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.”*

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- *Paul’s presentation of the testimony of God was not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but through the power of God and the gifts of the Spirit.*
- *Then Paul explained the reason he presented the Gospel in such a way, “that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”*
- *Our faith should be anchored fully and solely in the reality of God Himself.*

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

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

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- *Just after Paul said that he did not preach persuasive words of human wisdom so that our faith should not rest on man's wisdom, he then said, "However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature."*
- *Paul made a clear distinction between human wisdom, which he defined as the wisdom of this age, and the wisdom that is of God.*

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- *Paul then says that he speaks "the wisdom of God in a mystery." The Greek which is translated as "mystery" is μυστήριον (mystērion) and it means "the content of that which has not been known before but which has been revealed to an in-group or restricted constituency."*

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- *In English the word mystery implies a secret which people have tried to uncover but which they have failed to understand. However, the Greek word μυστήριον (mystērion) means something quite different. The idea is not that some people have sought to find some secret knowledge but were unable to, but something that was unknown before has been revealed to at least some persons by the one who possessed or understood this secret knowledge.*

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- *We were not the ones who sought to know God but He was the One that sought to save us, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)*

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- *God in His great love for us revealed the greatest mystery, the incarnation of Christ, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory." (1 Timothy 3:16)*

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

- *There are a number of important points that we can learn from this verse.*
- *First, the wisdom of this age is not able to discern or understand spiritual things.*
- *Second, the wisdom of this age is not able to recognize the Lord of glory. People are unable to come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ through human wisdom.*

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- *Third, the wisdom of this age is incapable of recognizing or discerning God's ways. This results in men making decisions that are contrary and even hostile to God, "for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."*

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- *Fourth, and most gloriously, God is able to use the most misguided and rebellious intentions of man to bring salvation to those who will respond in faith to Him, for "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." (Ephesians 1:7 NKJV)*

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

- *Paul continued by speaking of the glory that God has prepared for those who love Him by saying that it is so wonderful that even the hearts of men are unable to imagine what Heaven is like.*

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- *The reason that men cannot comprehend or even imagine the wonder and the glory of Heaven which God has prepared for those who have put their faith in Christ is because, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard."*
- *In other words, one cannot compare our earthly experiences to understand heavenly ones, since heavenly experiences are so much greater than earthly ones. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:9).*

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- *Although Paul himself had an experience in the third Heaven, he was unable to even find words to describe the things he saw or heard, when he said "how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." (2 Corinthians 12:4).*

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

- *After Paul said, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him,” then he made this startling statement, “But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit.”*

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- *Although the natural man cannot understand let alone fathom what wonderful things God has in store for those who love Him, He does reveal to it to those who have put their faith in Christ.*

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- **“But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit”** – *The Greek word translated as “revealed” is ἀποκαλύπτω (apokalyptō) which means, “to take the cover off, to uncover, to disclose, to cause something to be fully known.” It is from this word that we derive the English word “apocalypse.”*

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- *It is interesting that the word apocalypse has become synonymous with the idea of catastrophic events, holocausts, decimation, total devastation, and annihilation.*
- *However, the Bible uses the word for revelation (ἀποκάλυψις) in a very positive sense. The word evokes an earnest excitement and expectation in the hearts of believers who long for the return of Christ. (1 Peter 1:7; 1:13; Philippians 3:20).*

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- *To the world the Book of Revelation (ἀποκάλυψις) is filled with foreboding and destruction, but to followers of Christ it is filled with an earnest expectation of the full revelation of the sons of God. (Romans 8:19).*
- *The Book of Revelation is where God brings judgment on all the works of the devil and brings to an end all rebellion and ungodliness and ushers in His Eternal Kingdom. Ultimately, all sickness, sin, wars, death, and suffering will be brought to an end for all eternity!*

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- *The reason the world sees the Book of Revelation as such a negative and fearful prophetic book is because this sinful world is brought to an end. This world identifies with sinful things and considers the lusts of this life to be good and God's ways to be repressive and evil. "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20).*

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- *The world sees the Book of Revelation in the most negative and fearful light, but as believers we look forward to this present evil age coming to an end, because "God has revealed to us through His Spirit" "the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*
- *Believers should be looking forward to this earthly life ending and being together with Christ in Heaven, "because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven." (Colossians 1:5).*

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- *God reveals the things He has prepared for us "through His Spirit." It is only through the Holy Spirit that we can know these things and that is why to the world these things remain a total mystery.*
- *The revelation that the Holy Spirit gives us regarding the glories of Heaven and the wonders of eternal life cause us to "rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory." (1 Peter 1:8).*

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

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.

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- *God has given us His Spirit so "that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God."*
- *It is like you found the perfect gift for someone for their birthday. Although it's not their birthday yet, you are so eager to show it to them that you give them a sneak peek, just so you can see the delight on their face.*

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13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

- *Man's wisdom does not teach these revelations, but the Holy Spirit is the One who teaches and reveals these heavenly mysteries.*
- *The Holy Spirit teaches us these mysteries and revelations by comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

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

- *"The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God ... because they are spiritually discerned." – One of the characteristics of the natural man is that he does not understand spiritual things. In fact, they appear as foolishness to him.*

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- *Because the natural man only sees things in the light of this life, his every decision is based solely on temporal values and gains, because, "If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!" (1 Corinthians 15:32).*
- *The natural man sees Christians who live sacrificial lives for Christ as foolish, since they see the temporal as the only reality. As Paul said, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable." (1 Corinthians 15:19).*

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- *We could rightly say that a natural man has a natural mind. He sees things only from the point of view of the natural or physical life. He is totally incapable of seeing or discerning the spiritual realm and does not even realize that a spiritual reality exists.*

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

16 For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

- *"He who is spiritual judges all things," because when we are spiritually minded we are able to see things from the proper perspective.*
- *If we only view things from the natural perspective we will only see part of the picture and we will fail to evaluate things correctly.*

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- ***“yet he himself is rightly judged by no one” – When a person is spiritually minded those who are naturally minded may consider his decisions and life choices foolish, because they are evaluating him only from the temporal earthly point of view. They fail to understand that there is an eternal and heavenly perspective that needs to be considered.***

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- ***“But we have the mind of Christ” – Whoever is born again has the mind of Christ, but we need to be spirit led to allow our thoughts to be conformed to His thoughts.***

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- ***We can have a spiritual mind which is to think the thoughts of God and to see things from His perspective which is both heavenly and eternal.***
- ***We can have a natural mind which is seeing and evaluating life only from this temporal physical earthly life.***

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- ***There is a third type of perspective or mind we can have and it is called the carnal mind, “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).***

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- ***The difference between the natural mind and the carnal mind is that the natural mind sees things from the natural perspective and does not acknowledge or accept there is a spiritual realm. In contrast, the carnal mind is one that is given over to satisfying the selfish lustful desires of the flesh.***

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- ***Romans 8:6 warns that those who are carnally minded will be led away by devastating lustful desires that will produce destructive consequences in their lives, “For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”***
- ***The warning of Romans 8:6 “to be carnally minded is death” is not directed toward unbelievers but Christians!***

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- *As believers we have a choice: We can be naturally minded, carnally minded, or spiritually minded.*
- *The additional danger of being naturally minded is that it will lead to us become carnally minded and we can end up becoming entrapped in lusts and unable to serve God. “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).*

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- *To be spiritually minded is more than just acknowledging that there is a spiritual realm or that there is a Heaven. To be spiritually minded is to be led by the spirit and allow the mind of Christ to change our ways of thinking and “put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.” (Romans 13:14).*

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- *The Pharisees and Jewish religious leaders both acknowledged the existence of God and the spiritual realm, but they were naturally minded because they relied on their own intellect to try to understand God and to change themselves.*

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- *The Jewish religious leaders were not spiritually minded, but naturally minded. Although they knew the Word of God and could recite it, they failed to understand the Word of God, did not understand how to apply the Word of God to their lives and even opposed the purposes of God by condemning Jesus Christ and later persecuting the Church.*

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John 19:6–8 (NKJV)

⁶Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!” Pilate said to them, “You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him.”

⁷The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.”

⁸Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid,

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- *The chief priests and the officers said that Jesus must be crucified and then referred to the Law to justify their condemnation of Jesus. “We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.”*

- *Because the chief priests were naturally minded they didn't understand what they were saying. Although they were actually correct in what they said about the Law, they did not understand what the Law actually taught.*

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- *They thought they were saying that Jesus had to die because He had blasphemed by declaring that He was the Son of God. However, they were actually saying that Jesus had to die because He made Himself the Son of God. The Law taught that the Son of God would come as a Man, the Messiah, to die and take away the sins of the world.*
- *Their justification for Jesus dying on the cross was this: "We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God."*

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- *The reason Jesus had to die is because "He made Himself the Son of God," and "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16).*
- *Jesus Christ the Son of God is the creator of all things, for God "has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds." (Hebrews 1:2).*

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- *The reason Jesus had to die is because He made Himself the Son of God by coming in the form of a man so He could die on the cross of Calvary to redeem us from our sins.*
- *Jesus Christ prepared a body for Himself, so He could come as the Son of God and die for our sin, "Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me." (Hebrews 10:5). Jesus made Himself the Son of God and who else could do that but God Himself!*

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- *The central purpose why Jesus came to this earth and was born as a man was to die for our sin, just as Jesus said when He prayed to His Father, "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." (John 12:27-28).*

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- *The Pharisees thought they were spiritually minded, but they were both naturally minded and carnally minded.*

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- *They were naturally minded because they tried to interpret the Word of God from their own intellectual abilities and they tried to find salvation within themselves, “For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.” (Romans 10:3).*
- *They were also carnally minded because they were motivated by selfishness and envy, “For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.” (Matthew 27:18).*

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Romans 1:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

- *To be spiritually minded is to understand that our relationship with God and everything we do for Him and everything He does through us is based on our faith in Jesus Christ for “The just shall live by faith.”*

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- *Next week we will explore how to determine if we are naturally minded, carnally minded, or spiritually minded and how to develop into spiritually minded Christians.*