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1 Corinthians 2

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

1 Corinthians 2.

Topics.

- The testimony of God.
- I decided to know nothing except Jesus Christ and him crucified.
- Faith that rests not in wisdom, but in the power of God.
- The secret and hidden wisdom of God.
- Who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person?
- The natural person and the spiritual person.
- A spiritual person is to be judged by no-one.
- We have the mind of Christ.

The previous chapter: in the previous chapter Paul spoke about the Corinthian church being united in Christ and not esteeming and exalting men. He told them the message of the cross is the power to save to eternal life and about what appears to the world as the foolishness and weakness of God. The chapter ended with Paul saying that no human can boast in the presence of God.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

- In certain chapters this letter is written as though Paul is having a conversation with the Corinthians (i.e., he asks them a question and then answers it etc.).
- Though Paul's letter is directed to the Corinthian Church the content applies to any church or believer in the same situations.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-2

The Testimony of God.

- **1 Corinthians 2:1-2:** And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. ²For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

The testimony of God is the majestic Good News of the Gospel in Jesus Christ which states that whoever comes to God through repentance and faith in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ is not only approved of and accepted by God the Father but all their sins are forgiven, not because they are deserving of it, by any self-effort or religious good works, but because through faith in Christ righteousness is imputed from God to them as a pure and free gift. But this is not the end of the Good News since God's promises also state that the faithful in Christ will be resurrected to eternal glory and everlasting life. Can there be any better testimony than this? Thus, the reason the testimony of God is called the Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lofty speech: in this context carries two ideas, firstly speaking grandiose myths fables, parables, exaggerations, overstatements and hyperboles, and secondly speaking from a self-important proud and superior attitude to aggrandize self.

Wisdom: in this context does not refer to the wisdom that will make us wise which the book of proverbs tells us all to seek after, but to speaking from an egotistical, self-important attitude using excessive flattery and clever, calculating and scheming speech to persuade others to one's own ideas or to gain an advantage.

I decided to know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified: prior to Paul writing this letter he had heard from Chloe's people that there was quarrelling and divisions among their assembly (1 Cor 1:11) this maybe one of the reasons Paul made the decision to focus on Christ and him crucified since they were obviously confused over many things. Looking back to that era it is very easy to understand their contentions since they were embracing an entirely new message which calls Jews who had been indoctrinated in the Law of Moses for around four-thousand years to unite with Gentiles who had believed in idols and pagan gods thus the most likely reason Paul chose to focus on Christ.

The global family of Christ: perhaps if the global body of Christ could focus on Christ as Paul did and comprehend that even though there is within Christ's global family a multitude of divisions the one thing all brothers and sisters have in common with each other is the Lord Jesus Christ and him crucified. Maybe if we made Christ our foundational and uniting point and worked from this mindset and accepted that there will always be differences in certain understandings (as the Corinthian church had), but nevertheless realised we are all attempting to build on the same foundation with the same goal (howbeit not perfect) which is to rescue those destined to eternal death and save them to everlasting life and eternal glory, never forgetting that we are all flawed with aberrations and dysfunctions and therefore nothing will be perfect until...he who is perfect arrives.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:3-5

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Faith that rests not in Wisdom but in the Power of God.

- **1 Corinthians 2:3-5:** And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling⁴ and my speech and my message were not in plausible (enticing in KJV) words of wisdom (man's wisdom in KJV), but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power⁵ that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Wisdom: in this this context does not refer to the wisdom of God, but worldly wisdom i.e., the wisdom of the natural human mind (see wisdom above). Paul says when he visited those seeking God in the city of Corinth he was in fear and trembling this is an amazing statement when it is considered that Paul not only had an encounter with Christ, but was also given revelations of the New Covenant and the Good News of the Gospel and performed amazing miracles, so why does he state when he was with the Corinthians he was in trembling fear? Looking at Paul's education may shed some light on one of the reasons he may have been fearful. His father was a Pharisee and no doubt taught Paul the Old Testament Scriptures, added to this he was educated in the school of Tyrannus and we are told was counted blameless under Jewish law (Philip. 3:6). The education Paul would have received from his father and Tyrannus concerning the Jewish faith and Moses Law would mean two things:

1. That his intellectual knowledge would have far exceeded most.
2. That he would have been fully aware that the message of Christ he was proclaiming would to the Jewish mind appear to be contrary to Moses Law and to the natural mind would sound like some kind of imaginary illusion or a make-believe fictional story.

Being fully aware of this perhaps Paul's fear might have been the rejection, the mocking or even the persecution he might have received while visiting the city of Corinth.

NOTE: even today rejection and mocking is something most in Christ struggle with when testifying of Christ and the Good News of the Gospel especially with the advanced knowledge of our century which makes our message not only sound like an old fashioned and out of date myth, but also has the potential to make us appear naive for believing such a simplistic story that to the natural mind sounds like childish fantasies or imagined illusions of the mind thus the reason we need to trust that the Holy Spirit will be working through the Good News of the Gospel message as we share it.

A wise man once said:

- You cannot say the wrong thing to a person with the right heart nor can you say the right thing to a person with the wrong heart.” Only God knows the heart of the person and therefore how they respond to the Gospel message is not in our control the only thing we have any power over is proclaiming the message and therefore no-one should feel condemned simply because people do not respond and should always be encouraged by the fact that not everyone responded to the greatest Shepherd to ever have spoken the eternal majestic and glorious message of God.

Demonstration of the Spirit and of power: the words, “Demonstration of the Spirit and of Power” can refer to the manifestation of the fruits of the Spirit (courage, compassion, grace, kindness etc.), to great acts of charity and courage or to miracles and the working of the Holy Spirit in a person’s life. Paul’s words, “That your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God” (v5) mean the following two things:

1. That it is not our clever or enticing words that save a sinner to eternal life, but the power of God, (i.e., the Holy Spirit working through the word of God on the heart of those the Gospel is being proclaimed to).
2. Neither are we saved by self-effort and good works (i.e., the wisdom of men), but by the power of God, referring to His saving grace that is granted to all those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:6-10

The Secret and Hidden Wisdom of God.

- **1 Corinthians 2:6-10:** Yet among the mature (them that are perfect in KJV) we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. ⁷But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. ⁸None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him" ¹⁰these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

The mature: (them that are perfect in KJV) in this context refers to those who have accepted Christ in contrast to those who denied him and the wisdom Paul is referring to is the Good News of the Gospel and the message of salvation in Christ whereas the wisdom of this age refers to the law and by extension to those trying to earn eternal salvation through self-effort and good works.

The secret and hidden wisdom of God refers to:

- The death and resurrection of Christ to eternal glory.
- The Good News of the Gospel which proclaims that those in Christ are set free from the Law of sin and death which states, "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 6:23).

- The Gentiles through Christ are now being grafted into the commonwealth of Israel and becoming partakers of all the promises made to Abraham.

These are the things the rulers of Christ era (the Chief Priests, Pharisees, Scribes and elders) did not understand.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:11-13

Who knows a person's thoughts except the Spirit of that Person?

- **1 Corinthians 2:11-13:** For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹²Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. ¹³And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

What Paul is saying seems obvious, i.e., no-one knows the thoughts of another person except that person themselves and likewise no-one knows the thoughts of God except God Himself, but it is important to note that the focus is thoughts and not the heart since there is a distinction i.e., we can often know the heart of God and of a person, but we cannot know their thoughts, God's heart is love which is manifested in the cross and the words of Jesus himself:

- For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

A person's heart is often manifested in their actions, i.e. those who do self-sacrificing works of charity obviously have a heart of compassion whereas those who use others for their own gain clearly have a heart filled with selfishness, thus though we may to some limited degree know a person's heart we cannot know their secret thoughts.

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The Spirit who is from God: Paul says that he and the apostles and by extension all who believe in Christ have received, "The Spirit who is from God, that they might understand the things freely given to them by God (v12) the Spirit from God in this context refers to the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Christ is that Spirit within us that desires to honour God and the name of Christ and which opens our eyes to the things of God and the word of God.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:14-16

The Natural Person and the Spiritual Person.

- **1 Corinthians 2:14-16** The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. ¹⁶For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

The natural person refers to those driven by the lower nature, i.e., pride, ego, greed and selfish-ambition etc., to these people the death and resurrection of Christ and the Good News of the Gospel sounds like foolishness since they functioning from pride and ego, contrasted to a spiritual person who is humble and seeks out God by studying and examining, scrutinising, analysing and dissecting all things.

A spiritual person is to be judged by no-one: Paul's focus in these verses is inward thoughts and motives, not outward behaviour which if contrary to God's nature and offensive to Christ should be corrected or disciplined in love (not condemnation or judgment), but no-one should be judged inwardly. Paul is telling the Corinthian congregation (and by

extension all who belong to Christ) that they cannot judge a spiritual person, since they belong to the Lord and not one of them knows what the mind of Christ is for another brother or sister in Christ and therefore if they are unable to instruct Lord regarding another who belongs to him they certainly cannot judge each other in the Lord.

NOTE: the things Paul has in mind here are not outward sinful behaviour, but the keeping of traditions, culture, head coverings, whether one uses unleavened bread while another is OK with any kind of bread for communion, eating meat and not eating meat, things like drinking alcohol in moderation or singing hymns or songs of praise in worship etc., these are the kind of things Paul is telling the Corinthian brothers and sisters not to judge each other because they do not know the thoughts, motives and conscience of that person.

We have the mind of Christ: the statement, "We have the Mind of Christ" is in the context of judging others and in this context refers to that focus of Christ's mind which was totally surrendered to the will of his Father and set on living his life for the well-being of others by showing forgiveness, kindness and compassion to all who came to him. Jesus himself said:

- God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him" (John 3:17)

This means to have the mind of Christ in this context is to be solely motivated to do what is in the best interest of others to bring them into Christ and eternal life and encourage those who are already in the body of Christ in contrast to judging and condemning.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.