

God's Spirit Helps Believers

1 Corinthians 2

Group ¹	C	V	Description
Paul's Reliance upon the Spirit	2	1-5	Remember Paul's original gospel message and Spiritual power
		6-13	God's Spirit reveals God's nature to Believers
		14-16	"Natural" men can't understand God without the Spirit

Reflections

We have all known people who can be very persuasive in speaking to people. At the present time in America, we see many speeches given as people are trying to influence people to vote for them in the upcoming national, state, and local elections this fall and some of these are more persuasive than others. As Christians, we need to be both very careful and intentional in how we present the gospel. Paul is our example in this and we learn more about his process for presenting the gospel to others.

Let's begin by looking at the text by answering the following questions. (If you're interested in my answers you will find them at the end.)

1. What was Paul's attitude in proclaiming the "testimony of God" to the Corinthians? v1
2. What was Paul's goal in preaching? v2
3. How does Paul describe his mental/emotional state while with the Corinthians? v3
4. How did Paul present the gospel and what did he avoid? v4
5. What reason does Paul say that he presented the gospel in the manner he did? v5
6. Does Paul ever use or wisdom while speaking? If so, when? v6
7. What is not the source of the wisdom Paul teaches? Why? v6
8. Who does Paul say is the source of the wisdom he does use and how long has it been in existence? v7
9. How does Paul describe the wisdom from God? v7
10. Who hadn't understood the wisdom of God? v8
11. How would their actions have been effected if they had understood the wisdom of God? v8
12. Paul then quotes a passage in support of this truth. What does the passage say about the wisdom of God in relation to the eye, the ear, and the heart? v9
13. Who helps us understand the wisdom of God and what makes it possible for them to do this? v10
14. What does Paul say about man's ability to understand the thoughts of others? v11
15. What has God given to Christians and why? v12
16. How does Paul convey the things he teaches? v13
17. Who doesn't accept the wisdom of God? v14

¹ (NASB) "Group" column from the headings in the NASB text.

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18. Why can't they accept them? v14
19. What does Paul say is the only way that the wisdom of God can be accepted? v14
20. What does Paul tell us about those who are spiritual? v15
21. Why does Paul say that this is possible? v16

Conclusions

How we present the gospel and other teachings regarding God is important. The focus has to be on God's power through the Spirit working in believers. Also, we should avoid man-made philosophies while trying to share the message with others so that they are not misled or not understand the true nature of God's mystery.

It is also clear in this chapter that God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are uniquely connected and are all active in revealing God's thoughts to mankind. All three are active in the lives of believers to help us understand the very nature of God and what His plans and purposes are for the world.

There and Then: Here and Now

Answer the questions below as you reflect on your own life and this part of our study²: *my LOG vs others SPECK*. *Here are some possible responses I've identified from the text that might apply to anyone.*

- S - Are there *sins* for me to avoid or confess?
 -
- P - Are there *promises* from God for me to claim?
 -
- E - Are there *examples* for me to follow or avoid?
 -
- C - Are there *commands* for me to obey?
 -
- K - How has this passage increased my *knowledge* about God / Jesus / Holy Spirit?
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² *Navigator Bible Study Handbook* (The Navigators), with additions & Matthew 7:1-5.

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Responses to Questions

1. Paul wanted to make sure that he didn't present the gospel with "superiority of speech or of wisdom." The idea is that he didn't want to use a man-made philosophy, which the Corinthians were all too familiar with.
2. Paul only wanted to preach "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" which is the very heart of the gospel. God's law does give a "formula" for living like a man-made philosophy but the gospel isn't a philosophy, it's Jesus death, burial, and resurrection.
3. Paul describes himself as being "in weakness and in fear and in much trembling." In 2 Corinthians 10:10, Paul shares how others thought of him and his teaching. He didn't rely on his personality, appearance, or persuasive speech to proclaim the gospel.
 - o **2 Corinthians 10:10 NASB** For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible."
4. Paul relied on the demonstration of the Spirit and of power.
5. Paul explains that he didn't want the faith of the Corinthians founded on some wisdom of man, which has the possibility of changing, but on the power of God. This is important because there have been many philosophies developed by men over the years. Some have been good and some not so much. All of them were lacking something though. In contrast, the gospel has never changed. It has always been that Jesus died for sinners and then rose from the dead.
6. Paul does use wisdom of sorts when speaking to mature believers.
7. The source for Paul's wisdom is "not from this age or of rulers of this age." The reason is that men come and go through the years and their philosophies also can be seen as in and out of fashion with the times.
8. The source of Paul's wisdom is God who established it before the ages. Proverbs 8 speaks of how God established wisdom before the creation of the world.
9. Paul says that the wisdom of God has been hidden and that it is a mystery.
10. Paul says that the rulers of this age hadn't understood the wisdom of God.
11. If the rulers of this age had understood the wisdom of God, that is the hidden mystery of who Jesus was, they wouldn't have crucified Him.
12. "THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND *which* HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN" ... In other words, no part of man is able to comprehend God on their own.
13. The only way that mankind is able to understand "ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM" is by His Spirit.
14. Paul then makes the anthropological comparison of our ability to understand God's thoughts to that of our ability to understand the thoughts of others. We might have inklings, but not fully on our own. So too, we might have inklings as to what God thinks regarding a matter but we can only fully know God's with the help of the Spirit.
15. That is why God gave us His Spirit so that He can help us understand the things of God that are for us unsearchable or unknowable on our own.

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16. Paul conveys the things he teaches by words taught by the Holy Spirit, “combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.”
17. The natural man doesn’t accept the things of the Spirit of God.
18. Because they seem like foolishness to him.
19. The only way that the things of the Spirit of God can be understood is through the Spirit which God has given to us.
20. The spiritual person appraises all things and cannot be appraised by anyone.
21. Paul reminds us of mankind’s inability to know the mind of God on their own. “But we have the mind of Christ.” That is the only way to understand this mystery of the wisdom of God.

Key Words: New Testament, Letters, 1 Corinthians, God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, Gospel, Wisdom, Philosophy



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