

“Deep Thoughts by the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 2:6-16)

It has been said, “Any idiot can be complicated; but it takes genius to be simple.”¹ Indeed, the most effective oral and written communicators are those who take profound truths and make them simple. This has bearing on every area of our lives. When we communicate with others either individually or corporately, we must be clear and simple. The well-known acronym K.I.S.S. (“Keep It Simple Stupid”) applies here.

Although the apostle Paul is a deep thinker, he always strives to bring his great learning down to common folks like you and me. However, the passage that we will be looking at has endured a most unfortunate history of application in the church. Almost every form of spiritual elitism, “deeper life movement,” and “second blessing” doctrine has appealed to this text; however, each of these is nearly 180 degrees the opposite of Paul’s intent.² Unfortunately, this trend continues today. By appealing to “the deep things of God” and “secret wisdom” all kinds of false doctrines are being perpetuated and widely accepted. Therefore, we must be on the alert against this passage and others like it being abused. Our goal must be to understand why Paul has written this section of 1 Corinthians and how it applies to our lives.

The book of 1 Corinthians expresses Paul’s heart for a disunified church to become unified (1:10). Thus far, Paul has humbled everyone including himself. He has said to the Corinthians, “Your message is foolish (1:18-25), you yourselves are foolish (1:26-31), and I am foolish (2:1-5).” Outside of that everyone and everything is just fine. Now in 2:6-16,³ Paul states that the only way the Corinthians and you and I can live a wise life is by having the right perspective and power. He will argue that *without the light of God’s Spirit, we’ll be in the dark*. Paul begins by addressing the right perspective in 2:6-9.

1. True wisdom is cross-centered (2:6-9). In order to be truly wise and to consistently exercise a wise perspective, we must have a proper view of wisdom. Throughout this overarching section (1:18-2:5), Paul has declared that wisdom is found in “the word of the cross.” Thus, in 2:6-9, Paul can write, **“Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but just as it is written, ‘THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.’”** If you are a Bible student it is worth underlining the word “wisdom.” The word “wisdom” (*sophia*)⁴ is repeated five times in the first three verses.⁵ The apostles (“we”) speak the message of the cross to those who are “mature.”⁶ The “mature” are those believers who recognize and embrace God’s wisdom in the cross. Since Paul does not divulge who among them is “mature,” the readers must decide for themselves whether they qualify or not.⁷ This same principle applies to us today. Are you a mature Christian? If so, how have you arrived at that conclusion? Paul argues that we are only mature if we have the right perspective on the cross. Is the cross your solution to church conflict? Is it the means of unity? Then you are mature. Is the cross your solution to your marriage and family difficulties? Is it the means of reconciliation? Then you are mature. Is the cross your solution to work conflict? Is it the means of getting along with your boss and coworkers? Then you are mature. We never move on from the cross of Christ—only into a more profound understanding of the cross.⁸

Although in the next chapter (3:1-4) Paul will discuss those who are immature and fleshly in their Christian walk, his expectation is that all Christians will live according to the right perspective. We cannot make excuses for ourselves and assume that maturity belongs to the spiritually elite. God’s heart for you is that you press on to a cross-centered life. Will you refuse to settle for stale Christianity?

In these four verses, Paul will tell us three aspects of God's wisdom:

- ***The wisdom of God is eternal (2:6).*** The wisdom that Paul declares is “not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away.” It is not like the wisdom that may come from Oprah, Dr. Phil, or influential political officials. The wisdom they utter is here today and gone tomorrow. However, God's wisdom is eternal. Isaiah the prophet said it best, “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever” (Isa 40:8). Since God's wisdom revealed through His Word is eternal, how can we not invest in it?
- ***The wisdom of God is beneficial (2:7).*** Paul informs us that God's wisdom is a “mystery.” The word “mystery” refers to truth that God had not revealed previously.⁹ The message of the cross is a further unfolding of God's plan and purpose beyond what He had revealed and what people had known previously.¹⁰ Paul makes this clear when he writes that the cross is “the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory.” This stresses the plan and sovereignty of God. It also demonstrates that God has our good in mind—our glorification.
- ***The wisdom of God is supernatural (2:8-9).*** The Jewish and Roman rulers responsible for Jesus' death¹¹ did not understand the purpose and significance of the cross, so they crucified “the Lord of glory.” The phrase “Lord of glory” implies the divine fullness. It also ties in with the saints' glory (2:7). It is through union with Him that we will experience glory.¹² Paul explains that the reason these authorities crucified Christ was because they lacked the supernatural wisdom of the Spirit. Paul then cites Isa 64:4. This passage is not about heaven, although it's often used at funerals. It is clear in the context of Isaiah 64 that it means life, here and now. God wants to reveal these things to us. He has done so out of love. Trusting Him for understanding and cultivating this love relationship with Him means that we will grow in greater and greater understanding of wisdom. Yet, *without the light of God's Spirit, we'll be in the dark.*

[Paul has just said that the right perspective is to recognize that true wisdom is cross-centered. He goes on to share with us the right power in 2:10-16.]

2. True wisdom is Spirit-directed (2:10-16).¹³ Paul will state that it is the Holy Spirit who reveals deep things to Christians. Therefore, if we want to grow to maturity in Christ we must rely upon the Holy Spirit's power. In 2:10-11 Paul writes, **“For to us [the apostles and mature Christians] God revealed them [deep thoughts] through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches¹⁴ all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.”** The wonderful mysteries God has prepared for those who love Him are not knowable only by a select group of Christians. Any and every believer can understand and appreciate them because the indwelling Holy Spirit can enlighten us. However, *without the light of God's Spirit, we'll be in the dark.*

Paul informs us that the Holy Spirit searches the very depths of the heart and mind of God. He can do this because He is God—the third member of the Trinity. Paul's point is that the Holy Spirit functions within the Trinity the way our human spirit functions within us. Our spirit is the innermost part of our being. It's where our deepest, most private thoughts reside. To put it another way, no one knows you better than you! The reason is that you live with you. I don't care how well your spouse knows you or how long you have been married, no one knows you like you do. No one knows your private thoughts and those deep internals struggles you keep hidden. Because we have a spirit, we are usually our own best interpreter. That's why when two people get into an argument, one of them will often say, “Don't try to tell me what I mean. I know what I am saying!”

Therefore, if you really want to know someone perfectly you would have to tune into his or her spirit. The Holy Spirit is tuned in to the deepest thoughts of God. He has access to the innermost workings of the Godhead. So just as no one knows the deepest thoughts of a person better than his own spirit, no one knows the deepest thoughts of God better than the Holy Spirit.

Two of my next door neighbors just finished getting scuba certified. They wanted to be able to go deep under water to see all that was there. In the same way, the Holy Spirit is like a deep-sea diver who can go down into the depths and find out what's down there. That's why the Bible says that even when you don't know what's going on, the Spirit can help you because He dives down deep. He gets way down there where the action is. He goes "deep-thought" fishing to connect us to the mind of God.¹⁵

Since this is true, are you dependent upon the Holy Spirit in your Bible study? In your prayer life, do you ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you God's wisdom so that you can pray effectively? In your marriage and family, is your prayer, Holy Spirit fill me so that I can be who you want me to be?

In 2:12-13, we learn that God is pleased to reveal His deep thoughts to us.¹⁶ Paul writes, **"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words."** The moment you trusted in Jesus Christ you were given the Holy Spirit as a "pledge" of your salvation (2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:14). One of God's purposes in giving you the Holy Spirit is so that you may know the things He has "freely given"¹⁷ to us. There is no charge attached to the Holy Spirit's ministry of illumination. It has been provided to every believer so we can get God's answers to life realities. We have the Spirit of God, who knows the innermost thoughts of God and can communicate these realities to us. This means we don't need more of the Spirit; the Spirit needs more of us.

In 2:14, Paul explains why some people do not respond to the Holy Spirit: **"But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised."**¹⁸ A "natural man"¹⁹ is a person who does not have a supernatural dimension—he or she is without the Holy Spirit. Their natural values are physical and material. A person like that cannot understand spiritual things. They are controlled by feelings, moods, urges, felt needs, desires...by natural reasoning, logical choices made on the basis of goals centering on this life—success, wealth, power, and pleasure. Such a person does not "accept" the things of God for they are foolishness²⁰ to him." The term "accept" literally means "to welcome." It is a word that was used frequently of the practice of hospitality.²¹ Thus, I think 2:14 can best be translated, "The unbeliever does not *welcome* the things of God."

Paul also states that the unbeliever cannot understand the things of God. There are two different words in Greek that are translated "to understand" in our English Bibles. One means to understand intellectually, while the other is often used to mean understand experientially, or "discern the true nature and importance of something." It is the *latter* word which is used here.²² Paul is not saying that an unbeliever cannot understand the facts of the Bible or that he cannot grasp basic theology or even that he cannot interpret Scripture correctly. Rather, what he is saying is that he cannot know the things of God *experientially*—he can't discern whether those things are true or good or valuable.²³

The best way I know to illustrate Paul's point here is with the concept of radio waves. There are many, many radio waves in this room. But we can't hear them because we don't have receivers to pick them up. Our ears are not tuned to those frequencies. The same thing is true in the spiritual realm. The unbeliever doesn't have the spiritual receiver, the Holy Spirit, to enable him to appreciate God's truth. He is like a deaf critic of Bach or a blind critic of Michelangelo.²⁴

Therefore, we should not get angry when unbelievers act like unbelievers. How else are they supposed to act? The deaf cannot hear, the blind cannot see, the lame cannot walk, the dead cannot move, and the natural man cannot understand the things of God. How sad it is that many Christians castigate unbelievers for sinning when sinning is merely a part of their job description. Yet, we allow believers to live any old kind of life without any rebuke, discipline, or accountability. There seems to be a terrible double standard. We should not become angry, irritated, or impatient with unbelievers. On the contrary, we should have a great empathy and love for them. While we should also have love and empathy for believers, we must stop letting believers live like unbelievers. We've got it all backwards. We need to understand that the only reason we ourselves aren't still living as natural men and women is that God miraculously entered our lives. It is a gift of grace that we can now see reality. So we have nothing to be proud of; we're not superior to natural men and women, just saved. That's the only difference.

Paul gives a contrasting perspective in 2:15: **“But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one.”**²⁵ We hear the term “spiritual” being used a lot today, and often very carelessly.²⁶ People call themselves “spiritual” because they are seeking ultimate answers, whether in the paranormal or in New Age philosophy or in Eastern mysticism or even in their inner self. But the NT uses the term “spiritual” to describe someone who is related to the Spirit of God. Spiritual persons are those Christians in whom the Spirit has really become the fundamental power of life (cf. Gal 6:1).²⁷ Paul is describing people who consistently obey the teaching of the Holy Spirit. As a result of that consistency, they have great potential for being used of God by the power of the Holy Spirit. Verse 15 says, “He who is spiritual appraises all things...”

The verb “appraise” means to appraise the worth of something. In the art world, there are certain people who are fulltime art appraisers. They can look at a painting and say, “That’s a forgery. It’s worthless.” Or “That’s worth \$5,000 at auction.” Or “That’s a Rembrandt. It will fetch at least \$7 million.” These appraisers are well paid because they have the ability to spot the real value of a painting. Paul says that because we have the Holy Spirit, we can properly appraise the real value of things.²⁸

Contextually, this phrase doesn’t really mean “*all* things;” it means “*all spiritual* things.”²⁹ Being a Christian doesn’t give one any special advantage in understanding calculus or in learning German. (I’m living proof of this.) A person’s I.Q. doesn’t automatically change when he gets saved, but his spiritual “I will” certainly does. The mature believer has a receiver for spiritual radio waves and his receiver is tuned in. He can therefore discern, appreciate, and understand the essence of spiritual truth. That means that we really can exercise moral judgment, because we have thoroughly studied the mind of the Lord in the Old and New Testaments. We have prayed about difficult issues and have examined them from every side; we have put them through the grid of biblical absolutes. Therefore, we have the courage to take a position on values and issues that the natural world is totally confused about. We have the courage to speak out on the wrongness of abortion, the destructiveness of the homosexual lifestyle, and the sins of materialism, racial bigotry, and oppression of the poor and needy.

There is another clause that follows immediately in 2:15: “...yet he himself is appraised by no man.” This phrase has been terribly misunderstood by some Christians. Some have suggested that this verse teaches that the Christian should not be judged by anyone. Yet, later in this very letter Paul will command believers to judge the flagrantly disobedient in their midst (5:3-5), to evaluate those who claim to bring words from the Lord (14:29), and to examine themselves to see if they are behaving appropriately enough to take the Lord’s Supper (11:27-32). Here, therefore, he is thinking primarily of being unjustly evaluated by non-Christians (or by Christians employing worldly standards), who have no authority to criticize believers for their misbehavior, since they themselves do not accept the standards they employ in making their judgments.³⁰

In reality, the natural world can't figure us out. We are an enigma. They can't understand why someone would volunteer for children's ministry or youth ministry year after year, or give 10% of their income to the Lord's work. They can't appreciate why someone would want to talk about Jesus. Our lifestyle appears strange to the people of this world. We will hold convictions that other people don't, based on a different set of absolutes. We will be kind and compassionate at times when others are cruel. We will be intolerant when other people are very tolerant. It's all because we have insight into the mind of God.³¹

Paul closes out this section in 2:16 with these dramatic words: **“For WHO HAS KNOWN³² THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ.”** Here Paul quotes Isa 40:13 to remind us that we can't know the mind of God apart from the Holy Spirit. *For without the light of God's Spirit, we'll be in the dark.* Fortunately, Paul writes that “we have the mind of Christ.” Going back to 1 Cor 1:10, Paul urges us to be of the same mind. This means to share the mind of Christ, which is focused on unity and community life (see John 17).

In his epistle to the Philippians, Paul urged his readers to adopt the mind of Christ (Phil 2:5).³³ He then spoke of the death of Christ.³⁴ To have the mind of Christ is to participate in the pattern of the cross.³⁵ God's heart is that we put to death our selfish ambitions and humble ourselves before one another.³⁶

In the old television detective series, *Columbo*, viewers were always told at the beginning of each show who had carried out the crime. Then the fun began as Columbo set about finding the criminal, unearthing information that the viewers already possessed. Watching Columbo was different from the experience of watching other mystery shows. If truth has already been made available to you, that necessarily affects your life experience and the choices and decisions you will make. As Christians, we have the opportunity to live life having been told ahead of time about truths that are hidden from the world. What we believe about life essentially informs and influences how we live and how we make decisions. The information we have about life is the basis on which we make our way in life.³⁷

Paul has declared that true wisdom is cross-centered and Spirit-directed. It is available to you today if you will merely adopt the right perspective and the right power.

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Scripture Reference

1 Corinthians 2:6-16
Isaiah 40:13; 64:4; 65:16
2 Corinthians 12:9-10
John 16:7-11
Philippians 3:1-11
1 Peter 2:1-3
2 Peter 1:16-21

Study Questions

1. Throughout this entire section (1:18-2:16), Paul has emphasized “wisdom” (see especially 2:6-8). How would I define “wisdom” as Paul has presented it? How can I exemplify this wisdom in my own life? Have I correctly understood how Paul has defined wisdom? If so, how will my life be surrendered to Christ and His cross in the weeks to come?
2. How does “the word of the cross” (i.e., the wisdom and power of God) impact my life and my conversations (2:6-10a)? How frequently do I reflect on the saving and sustaining power of the cross? When others seek my counsel how do I naturally bring up the cross in conversation? In all honesty, is the cross of Christ my only hope and source of confidence, or do I trust in other things (e.g., gifts, resources, experience)?
3. How have I neglected the person and work of the Holy Spirit (2:10b-13)? Have I sought comprehension and insight from the Holy Spirit in my Bible study? Have I asked the Holy Spirit to reveal His will for my vocation and family life? What has happened when I have obediently pursued God through the Holy Spirit? What has He shown me from His Word? How has He directed me in my personal circumstances?
4. Why am I prone to judge unbelievers (2:14)? When will I realize the absolute necessity of the Holy Spirit to work in the lives of unbelievers? Why do I feel the need to inappropriately cut believers all the slack in the world in the name of “grace and compassion?” How can I release unbelievers from my Christian convictions and hold believers accountable to fulfill their Christian responsibilities?
5. While I will never know the mind of God, I have been given “the mind of Christ” (2:16). How can I cultivate this? Read Philippians 2:5ff. In what ways do I need to grow in exemplifying Jesus Christ? Where am I proving myself faithful? Where do I struggle? Who can help me progress to the next level of spiritual maturity?

Notes

¹ Dr. J. Kent Edwards of Talbot School of Theology has drilled this truth into me.

² Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 120.

³ A striking feature of Paul's exposition is his use of the first person, both in pronominal form (2:7, 10, 12 [twice], 16), and as the subject of his verbs (2:6, 7, 12 [twice], 13). This use of first-person plural verbs is sandwiched between two sections where Paul talks about himself and in his ministry. Each of these sections (2:1-5; 3:1-9) begins with an emphatic *kago* ("and I"). Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians: Sacra Pagina* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), 122-123.

⁴ The Greek word *sophia* ("wisdom") is the first word in this sentence for emphasis.

⁵ "In the tradition of Proverbs this [wisdom] denotes habits of judgment applicable to life. It concerns the formation of a Christian mind, which issues in a right action...Paul associates the use of the term at Corinth with what amounts to a self-centered, at times childish, attempt to manipulate things to one's own advantage. True wisdom from God, however, is sought by those who are sufficiently adult (*teleios*) to exercise it responsibly for the good of all." Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 230.

⁶ Paul recognizes that not all Christians have full understanding. There are "babes" among them (3:1), but the wisdom of which he speaks is appreciated by those who are mature in faith. To them he can impart "all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). Leon Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, [1958] 1990), 53. Thiselton thinks *teleios* is used by Paul to mean those who are "spiritual adults" as opposed to those who behave as spiritual children. "Spiritual adulthood entails perceiving that wisdom comes from God as a gift in Christ (1:30) which enables the self to live responsibly and wisely for others and for the good of the whole community." Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 231. Carson writes, "All Christians are 'mature' in the sense that they have come to terms with the message of the cross, while all others, by definition, have not." D.A. Carson, *The Cross & Christian Ministry: Leadership Lessons from 1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 47. See also Michael Eaton, *Preaching Through the Bible: 1 Corinthians 1-9* (Kent, England, 1998), 34-35.

⁷ David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 92-93.

⁸ David Prior, *Message of 1 Corinthians: Life in the Local Church*. Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1985), 51.

⁹ "It does not signify a puzzle which man finds difficult to solve. It signifies a secret which man is wholly unable to penetrate. But it is a secret which God has now revealed." Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, 54. God's wisdom is Christ crucified (2:7b-8). It stands apart from all human wisdom and is unattainable by unassisted human reason.

¹⁰ Paul expounded on the fact that God had decreed this mystery from before creation in Eph 3:2-12.

¹¹ The leaders of the Sadducees, Pharisees, teachers of the Law, and Herod Antipas, as well as the Romans represented by Pilate and his soldiers (Acts 4:25-28). Harold W. Mare, *1 Corinthians*. The Expositor's Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976 [2001]): Electronic Ed.

¹² Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on 1 Corinthians": <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/1corinthians.pdf>, 2005, 24.

¹³ "'Verses 10-16...make up his [Paul's] first sustained reflection on the Spirit,' (Collins) especially as the source of revelation. This section sets a framework for later reflection on the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12-14 as well as in the resurrection chapter (15:42-57; cf. 15:12-28, 38-41). In all these passages the work of the Spirit remains inseparable from the work of God as revealed in Christ. By contrast, a wedge was driven by some at Corinth between 'spirituality' and Christ crucified." Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 256.

¹⁴ "The...activity ascribed to God's Spirit by means of the verb *eraunao* (third present indicative *eraunaa*, the Alexandrian spelling of the classical *eraunao*, *erauna*) does not mean searching to discover here, but the activity of exploring God's purposes thoroughly in order to reveal them." Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 257. The present tense of the verb *eraunao* indicates the continual and effective ministry of the Spirit in his all-pervading infallible guidance of the writers of Scripture (2 Pet 1:21) and in his effective work in the lives of believers (Eph 1:17-19; 3:16-19).

¹⁵ Tony Evans, *The Promise: Experiencing God's Greatest Gift the Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody, 1996), 118.

¹⁶ Evans, *The Promise*, 117.

¹⁷ “Freely given” is the Greek word *charizomai*. The word also means “to forgive” (Luke 7:42; Col 3:13).

¹⁸ How can an unbeliever believe the gospel? Witherington writes, “Probably Paul would say that the only way the nonbeliever understands enough to accept the gospel in the first place before receiving the Spirit is that the Spirit has already been working unnoticed.” Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 128.

¹⁹ The word in Greek is *psuchikos*, from the word meaning “soul.” We get many English words from this root, such as psychology or psychiatry which refer to the soul or the immaterial part of man. Everyone who is alive has a soul—that’s natural—but not everyone has the Holy Spirit—that’s supernatural.

²⁰ The word “foolishness” is the Greek word *moris* that is used in 1 Cor 1:18, 21, and 23.

²¹ In Luke 16:4 the unjust steward uses this very word when he says, “I know what I’ll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.”

²² The “understanding” described in 2:14b is not primarily cognitive but volitional. Craig L. Blomberg, *1 Corinthians: NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 64.

²³ The Athenians deemed Paul a “babbling” (Acts 17:18) and scoffed at his preaching of the resurrection (17:32). Gallio regarded the dispute between Paul and the Jews as silly talk (18:15) and Festus thought Paul to be insane (26:24).

²⁴ Michael P. Andrus, “Four Kinds of People: Which One Are You?” (1 Cor 2:14-3:4): Unpublished sermon.

²⁵ BDAG gives three separate options for the meaning of *sunkrinom*: “to bring together, combine,” “to compare” (the meaning in 2 Cor 10:12, the only other NT verse that has this verb), and “to explain, interpret.” BDAG s.v. Electronic Ed. The NET Bible translates 1 Cor 2:15 in this way: “The one who is spiritual discerns all things, yet he himself is understood by no one.” This seems to be a more helpful rendering.

²⁶ The Greek word for the spiritual person in 2:15 (*pneumatikos*) is one that should be recognizable to many, for we have several English words which are derived from it, like pneumatic and pneumonia. A pneumatic drill is one which uses air pressure while pneumonia is a disease of the lungs. The root word has to do with air or spirit. In fact, the Greek word for the Holy Spirit is *pneuma*. So a *pneumatikos* is a person of the Spirit, and in that sense, a spiritual person. He has a soul, like the unbeliever, but in addition he has the “Spirit,” which the unbeliever does not have.

²⁷ Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 99.

²⁸ Ray Pritchard, “The Great Divide” (1 Cor 2:14-16):

http://www.calvarymemorial.com/pastors/sermons/read_sermon.asp?id=398

²⁹ Most likely this “all things” (*panta*) relates back to the same word in v.10b, where it is further defined by the epexegetic *kai* (“even”) as “the deep things of God.” In other words, Paul is not saying that believers in Jesus are the only ones who can understand anything at all about God’s created universe, but they are the only ones who understand the inscripturated word and its theological implications. Verlyn D. Verbrugge, “1 Corinthians” in the *Revised Expositors Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, awaiting publication), 73.

³⁰ But Paul may also be anticipating his argument in 4:3–5 that even evaluation by fellow believers is provisional; the only judge who ultimately counts is God. Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 65.

³¹ Doug Goins, “A Crisis of Trusting Their Own Wisdom” (1 Cor 2:6-16):

<http://www.pbc.org/library/files/html/4512.html>.

³² Note that the verb “knows” in 1 Cor 2:11 is the same as the verb “known” here in 2:16 (*ginosko*).

³³ Paul particularly appeals to the mind of Christ when the community is split by divisions (Phil 2:2-5; 4:2).

³⁴ Constable, “Notes on 1 Corinthians,” 27.

³⁵ Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians: Interpretation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 47.

³⁶ Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 102.

³⁷ Steve Zeisler, “A Secret and Hidden Wisdom” (1 Cor 2:6-16): <http://www.pbc.org/library/files/html/4061.html>.