# HOW TO ACCESS THE WISDOM OF GOD

***2*** *[6]We do, however, speak wisdom to the mature; but not a wisdom that belongs to this [present] age, nor to the rulers of this age who are passing away. [7]On the contrary, we speak God's secret wisdom, the wisdom that has been hidden, which God ordained before the ages for our glory. [8][It is] a wisdom that none of the rulers of this age have known; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. [9]But this is in accordance with what has been written, "Things that the eye has not seen and the ear has not heard and that have not entered into the heart of man, these are the things God has prepared for those who love him." [10]But God has revealed these things to us by the Spirit; for the Spirit fathoms all things, even the deep things of God. [11]Who among men knows the thoughts of [another] man, except that man's [own] spirit that is within him? In the same way, no one knows the things of God, except the Spirit of God. [12]Now we did not receive the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God; so that we might know the things that have been graciously given to us by God. [13]We also speak these things; [although we do] not [use] words taught by human wisdom, rather, [we use words] taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual things with spiritual [words]. [14]Now the natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, because they are foolishness to him; indeed, he cannot know them, because they require spiritual comprehension. [15]But he who is spiritual comprehends all things, yet he himself is not comprehended by anyone. [16][Just as it is written,] "Who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.*

***3*** *Yet, brothers, I was not able to address you as spiritual [men]; [I had to address you] as worldly [men], as infants in Christ. [2]I fed you with milk, not with solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, you are still not able [to receive it]; [3]for you are still worldly. Since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly and are you not [living] like men? [4]When one says, I belong to Paul; and another says, I belong to Apollos; are you not [worldly] men?* (1 Cor. 2:6-3:4)

## Introduction

One of the themes of the movie *Mission Impossible* was the effort of the U.S. government agent to break the code and gain access to the terrorists' computer files. Not only in the movies, but also in everyday life, computer technology holds a vast reservoir of valuable information, but it is only available to you if you know how to access it.

Likewise, God desires to impart His wisdom to us, but it will remain inaccessible to us so long as we are operating on a natural level like the men of the world. Because the wisdom of God is spiritual in nature and is not of this world, we can only access that wisdom by spiritual means.

**I. In Order to Access the Wisdom of God, You Must Develop Spiritual Maturity (2:6; 3:1-4)**

In 1 Corinthians 2 verse 6 the Apostle Paul assures the Corinthians—especially those who were enamored with the wisdom of this world—that he also speaks wisdom. However, the wisdom the apostle speaks is *"not of this [present] age."* It is not the type of wisdom found in this world and taught by the intellectuals of this world. The basic premise of their wisdom taught that "man is the measure (or, the center) of all things." Such was the explicit teaching of the Greek philosophers. But in contrast to this view, consider the biblical view as presented by the Apostle Paul in Romans 11:36. Speaking of the Lord God, Paul declares, *"from him and through him and unto him are all things; to him be the glory forever. Amen."*

The wisdom Paul speaks is *"God's wisdom"* (vs. 7.) This divine wisdom is *"secret,"* or *"mysterious."* Because it relates to the kingdom of God it is mysterious to us as we still live in this present earthly realm, it is not fully clear and completely comprehensible to us in our present state, note 1 Corinthians 13:12, *"At present we see an obscure image in a mirror, but then [we will see] face to face. At present I know [things] partially; but then I will know fully, just as I am fully known."* This divine spiritual wisdom has been and continues to be "*hidden,"* or, *"stored away,"* as is indicated by the use of the perfect tense of the Greek verb ἀπόκειμαι)—this is a wisdom that is hidden from the world and inaccessible to the world (note vs. 8-9.) The Apostle Paul is speaking about a wisdom that is so awesome—belonging to a different, higher realm—that it can only be comprehended and appreciated by those who are spiritually mature: *"we … speak wisdom to the mature"* (vs. 6a.)

What are the characteristics of spiritual maturity, which is needed if one is to comprehend the wisdom of God? The apostle presents those necessary characteristics in1 Corinthians 3:1-4. Paul begins by informing the Corinthians that on an earlier occasion he could not address them as spiritually mature Christians, he had to address them as *"worldly men, as infants in Christ."* They were spiritually immature; they were still "*worldly,"* (literally, "fleshly," the Greek term used here is σάρκινος.) In verse 3 Paul laments the fact that the Corinthians are *"still worldly,"* (literally, "of the flesh," the Greek term used this time is σαρκικός.) Since the time they were exposed to the gospel and initially put their faith in Christ, the Corinthians have not been maturing and growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ. The evidence of their spiritual immaturity—the evidence of the fact that they are *"still worldly,"* (that they are still "of the flesh")—is their attitude and conduct towards one another. Their lives were filled with "*jealousy and quarreling*," which created factions among them (vs. 4.) Such attitudes are listed among "the works of the flesh"—the works of the sinful human nature—and are contrary to the fruit produced by the Holy Spirit, note Galatians 5:19-23a,

> *Now the works of the sinful nature* [literally, *the works of the flesh*] *are obvious: fornication, moral impurity, wantonness,* [20]*idolatry, witchcraft, hatred,* ***quarreling***, ***jealousies***, *fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions,* [21]*envy, drunkenness, orgies, and [other] such things. I warn you, as I did before, that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* [22]*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,* [23]*meekness, self-control.* (Gal. 5:19-23a)

The Word of God defines spiritual maturity not in terms of biblical and theological knowledge, but in terms of Christ-like character.

Paul uses two distinct words to describe the past and the present spiritual immaturity of these Corinthian Christians. In verse 1 he uses the term, σάρκινος, which we might translate, "fleshly,"or "worldly in thinking"—he is here describing what we might call the natural immaturity of a young Christian, something he must grow out of as he develops spiritually. In verse 3 he uses the term, σαρκικός, which we might translate, "of the flesh," or "worldly minded"—here the apostle is describing what we might call the unnatural immaturity or inconsistency of an older Christian, something of which he must repent. These verses are contrasting the old mentality that still clings to a newly converted Christian (vs. 1) with an older Christian who is still clinging to the old mentality of this world (vs. 3.) **Note:** There is actually little or no difference in the meaning of these two Greek words (σάρκινος and σαρκικός); it is the context in which they are used that determines their significance.

In order to access the wisdom of God, we must develop spiritual maturity. To continue in a state of spiritual immaturity is not only debilitating, it is also dangerous to the well-being of the spiritual life. By way of illustration, it is like being on board the ship of Christ's salvation, but reaching overboard and still holding on to the dock of this worldly life with its mentality—as the ship hoists anchor, you must let go of the dock or else you will be pulled out of the ship. Let us take careful note of such a passage as Colossians 3:5-9,12-15,

> *Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.* [6]*Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming.* [7]*You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.* [8]*But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.* [9]*Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices …* [12]*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.* [13]*Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.* [14]*And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.* [15]*Let the peace of Christ rule in your*

*hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.* (Col. 3:5-9, 12-15)

## II. In Order to Access the Wisdom of God, You Must Rely upon the Holy Spirit (2:7-16)

In verse 9 Paul is alluding to several Old Testament Scriptures:

> *Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, [the One] who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.* (Isa. 64:4)
>
> *Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.* (Isa. 65:17)
>
> *How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow … on those who take refuge in you.* (Psl. 31:19)

He alludes to these passages in order to emphasize the fact that the things of God, though inaccessible to the world, have been prepared for those who love God.

According to verse 10, the things God has prepared for His people He also reveals to His people—and He reveals these things to us by His Holy Spirit (vs. 10b-12.) Just as no one but the individual himself knows the thoughts of his heart, so only the Spirit of God knows the mind of God (vs. 11.) Because God wants to share His heart and plans with His people, He has given us the Holy Spirit to communicate the things of God to us (vs. 12.)

By means of the writings of the prophets and the apostles, the Holy Spirit imparts the things of God to church (vs. 13-16.) The natural man—the unconverted man who belongs to this world with its outlook and mentality—does not receive the things imparted by the Spirit of God: they are foolishness to him because they are outside and beyond the scope of his natural, earthly comprehension (vs. 14.) By way of illustration, you cannot appreciate the values of a foreign culture unless you learn the language and live among the people. But the spiritual man—the Christian, and in particular, the spiritually mature Christian—*"comprehends all things;"* that is to say, he has insight into and some degree of understanding with regard to the things of God (vs. 15.)

But the spiritual man himself is comprehended, or understood, by no one (vs. 15b.) That is to say, the more deeply you become connected to the life of Christ and the things of God, the more of an enigma you will become to the people of this world. Note, for example, the commentary offered by the Apostle Peter. Speaking of the pagans' view of the Christian's moral abstinence, he writes, *"They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of*

*dissipation, and they heap abuse on you"* (1 Pet. 4:4.) Our Lord Jesus declared, "*The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone who has been born by the Spirit"* (Jn. 3:8.) What makes the Christian an enigma to the world is the fact that "*we have the mind of Christ"* (vs. 16.) We know and share in the thoughts and plans and purposes of Christ our Savior, note John 15:15, where the Lord Jesus informs His disciples, *"I no longer call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father."*

In verse 7 we are given a glimpse into the wisdom of God imparted to us by Christ and revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. The apostle here speaks about *"the wisdom that God ordained … for our glory."* Perhaps a better rendering of the Greek preposition, εἰς, in this context would be *"concerning."* Thus, Paul is speaking about *"the wisdom that God ordained … concerning our glory."* The wisdom of God to which the Apostle Paul has been referring is God's plan to bring His people into His own divine glory. With regard to our future state, the Lord Jesus Christ testifies, *"On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you"* (Jn. 14:20.) Consider, too, the promise the Lord makes to His people in Revelation 3:21, *"To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne."* The physical reality of this future state with Christ is beyond our present comprehension. But the moral reality is even more awesome: it is the promise of sharing in the very glory and dominion of God, and doing so in a moral state that is totally purged of sinful pride and the sinful lust to exalt ourselves above others.

In order to access the wisdom of God, we must rely upon the Holy Spirit. We must rely upon Him to give us greater enlightenment and understanding. We must rely upon Him to increase our ability to receive and appreciate the things of God. We must rely upon Him to transform us more and more into conformity with the life and purpose of God.

**Conclusion**

God desires to impart His wisdom to us, but that wisdom will be inaccessible to us so long as we are operating on a natural level like the men of this world.

Because the wisdom of God is spiritual in nature and not of this world, we can only access that divine wisdom by spiritual means; namely, by means of the Holy Spirit imparting to us the mind of God and changing us more and more into the likeness of Christ.