



1 CORINTHIANS 2: 6-16

LESSON: POWER TO IMPART WISDOM

November 2, 2025

INTRODUCTION:

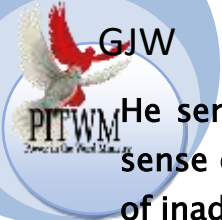
The Corinthians church was deeply divided. Two of the issues dividing it were a dispute over what kind of preacher should fill their pulpit, and which former minister had contributed the most to their church (1 Corinthians 1:11–16). The church desperately needed to understand what preaching really was. One of the strong solutions to division is sound preaching, in other words, the power to impart (Spiritual) Wisdom!

2:1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. This is Paul's personal testimony. The words "I" and "my" are used six times in these five brief verses. Paul stresses a critical fact that when he came to the Corinthians, he didn't come preaching with eloquence or human wisdom or human philosophy. His approach to sound preaching and imparting sound spiritual wisdom was to use plain words. Paul knew that clever words might attract attention to the speaker rather than to the message. This sound preaching and imparting sound spiritual wisdom was to declare the testimony of God! The word "**testimony**" is the mystery or revelation of God, and that is Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

2:2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Sound preaching and imparting sound spiritual wisdom has one great theme—Jesus Christ and Him crucified! Paul's most important message was to know nothing else save preaching the death of Jesus Christ. **It is by the death of Jesus Christ that we are...**

- Cleansed and freed from all sin. • accepted and reconciled to God, having peace with God. • justified. • eternally redeemed. • delivered from death. • reconciled to men. • sinners are saved. • the church of God was purchased (and more).
- delivered from condemnation. • delivered from the curse of the law. • delivered from the judgment of wrath to come. • delivered from this present evil (corruptible and dying) world. • healed. • the great love of God is revealed in us. • that those without strength are saved. • where Satan's power over death and the world is broken.

2:3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. Paul says he came to them in weakness, and afraid, and in much trembling. He sensed a spiritual inadequacy and unworthiness in serving the Lord. He knew that his sufficiency was in the Lord and Lord alone. He knew that whatever was in his own strength, it would fail and not last. When he approached a person or a people to minister to them, he ministered to them in a personal weakness, and reverential fear before the Lord, even to the point of trembling.



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

He sensed a hesitancy, a nervousness, a tension, a trembling, all arising from a deep sense of inadequacy, and of the eminent importance of the work. We must have a sense of inadequacy anytime we minister. No person can deliver men from death, and give them life that is both abundant and eternal! Only God can do that, therefore the minister of God must live before God in weakness, and in fear, and in trembling, always depending upon God's Spirit to equip him for proclaiming the gospel of God!

2:4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:— ¹Paul had come from Athens where he had explained his message in a way that used philosophy. And he referred to Greek writers (Acts 17:22–34), but only a few people had become Christians. Thus, somewhere between Athens and Corinth, Paul had a made-up mind, not to be like someone else, but to be who God called him to be. His speech and his preaching were not to be with enticing (persuasive argumentative) words, nor words of human wisdom and philosophy, He would preach Christ, and Christ alone in the simplest of words, in the demonstration of the Holy Spirit's power, allowing God's power to operate through him, to stir the minds and hearts of the hearers as the Word of God is spoken. The Word itself is the evidence the Spirit uses! Acts 4:20 says, *"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."* Only the Holy Spirit can convict, convince, and convert. Only the Holy Spirit can impart life in a person. There, the minister of God must surrender his life to the Spirit of God. He must be filled with the presence, fullness, and power of the Holy Spirit!

2:5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. This is a crucial point: The wisdom of man cannot save man. Only the power of God can! That was so that, we would not believe, trust in, nor have our faith stand because of clever human ideas, but we would believe, trust in, and our faith would be because of God's power. ²Paul's plain words had results. The Holy Spirit's power convicted people that the message was true. People changed and became Christians. The Holy Spirit also showed His power in the gifts that were given to the Christians at Corinth.

LESSON:

I. 1 CORINTHIANS 2:6-11

2:6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:— Paul clearly says that he spoke wisdom among them who are perfect, and to world leaders (princes; rulers; anyone with influence). However, it was not the wisdom of this world. The word "**Perfect**" means finished, complete, fully developed, grown, and mature. So, **what is the wisdom of the world saying?:**

- There is no God; He does not exist. Man's identity is in his own hands.
- God may exist, but we cannot know for sure. If there happens to be a God, He is so distant and far away, He would expect us to live a life that is lawful, and full as possible.

Paul's words were different from those of the wise people or rulers in this age. Their wisdom

¹<https://www.easyenglish.bible/bible-commentary/1-corinthians-lbw.htm>

² <https://www.easyenglish.bible/bible-commentary/1-corinthians-lbw.htm>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>





PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

will not succeed. But Paul could teach more about God's wise plans to those whose faith was strong in the Lord. Some people thought that they were wise. But Paul was not talking about their kind of wisdom, for their wisdom would come to nought; having no results.

Romans 1:22 says *"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."*

1 Corinthians 1:19 (AMP) *"For it is written and forever remains written, 'I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE [the philosophy of the philosophers], AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER [who do not know Me] I WILL NULLIFY.'"*

2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:— Paul says we speak God's wisdom. The wisdom proclaimed by Paul and others is in a mystery. This does not mean that God's wisdom is strange and mysterious, but rather that it involves facts/truths that cannot be known by man's natural reasoning. This mystery can never be known unless God reveals it. God's wisdom (the hidden wisdom) has to be revealed by God Himself. **What is the wisdom of God?** God had a plan and this hidden wisdom, and truth was foreordained; predestined; planned to save His people before the world began for our glory (eternal life), was foreordained; predestined; planned to save His people before the world began for our glory (eternal life). This hidden wisdom referred to His plan of Salvation through Jesus Christ which was not fully revealed until the New Testament era.

2:8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Proof 1: The leaders of the world do not know the wisdom of God. These leaders are the High Priest, King Herod, Pilate, the Pharisees, and Sadducees. They crucified Jesus. If they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; the Lord whose attribute is glory. They did not understand that Jesus was the Lord. So, they crucified Him. Isaiah 53:3 says *"He is despised and rejected of men..."*

2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. Proof 2: The leaders of the world have never seen nor heard the truth—in this sense the Spirit of Truth had never entered their hearts, for as it is written, their eyes could not see the spiritual world, and their ears could not hear the spiritual truth. Even Pilate asked Jesus what is truth. And TRUTH was standing there in front of him. Only humble people can understand what God has shown us by Jesus. God loved us so much that He had prepared it for those who love Him!

2:10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. We see here that God's wisdom is revealed only by God's Spirit! The Holy Spirit understands all things. He understands even the thoughts of God that are most difficult to understand, for He searches the deep things of God.

2:11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. The one thing that



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

man must remember is that we cannot penetrate the spiritual world except the spirit of man living within him. Is there anyone who can understand his own thoughts except his own inner spirit? Well, in the same way, no one can know the thoughts of God except God's Spirit. This is Paul's argument: He contrasts our finite (limited) human wisdom with God's infinite (unlimited) Omniscient Wisdom. There is no comparison to God's Wisdom!

II. 1 CORINTHIANS 2:12-16

2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. We have not received the spirit of the world, but we have received the Holy Spirit from God Himself. This means a glorious thing: The Holy Spirit freely gives spiritual things with spiritual people, and He freely gives spiritual things with spiritual things. The Holy Spirit helps us understand how generous God has been to us. These blessings and gifts God has bestowed upon us include salvation, grace, and spiritual wisdom.

2:13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. In NLT Paul says *"When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come from human wisdom. Instead, we speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths."* Paul was firm in what he said: *'This is not words that man's wisdom teaches, but words the Holy Spirit teaches.'* Paul compared the natural wisdom of man with spiritual wisdom of God. At the end of this, Paul used spiritual words to teach spiritual truths. The Holy Spirit keeps us from all error as we follow His leadership!

2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. The word **"But"** causes us to look at the verse before, and this one. There is a difference in how Paul received, and how the natural man receives. Paul receives of the Spirit, but the natural man receives nothing of the Spirit and counts it as foolishness.

- The natural man is the soulish, sensuous and animal part of man (the mere life of his lower understanding).

He has gotten no farther than the flesh, no farther than the animal life. He has never progressed to the level of the spiritual. His mind and life, energy and effort are all focused upon:

- The physical—what can be seen.
- The world—what can be heard.
- The natural—what can be felt.
- The material—what can be touched.
- The flesh—what can be tasted.
- The human—what can be possessed.
- Also, the natural man is the Adamic man, the man who has fallen from the perfection of his creation.
- The natural man is the morally corrupt man, the man whose spirit is dead to God. He does not believe, obey, or live for Christ!



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

- The natural man considers the things of God as foolishness (absurd). If it doesn't look good, feel good, taste good or sound good, it's not for him. It's like foolishness to him.
- The natural man cannot know spiritual things. Why? Because they are spiritually discerned.

A person who does not have the Holy Spirit cannot believe the spiritual things that come from God's Holy Spirit. They are so set upon their own way of thinking, till it's like talking to a brick wall. And he does not want to receive Jesus as Savior, nor hear His Name. He cannot discern, meaning understand. Spiritual discernment is a gift from God, enabling believers to understand and apply His truths. Matthew 7:16 says *"You will know them by their fruit."*

2:15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. The word **"But"** causes us to look at the verse before and this one. There is a contrast in that of the *"natural man"* and the *"spiritual man."* The natural man cannot know spiritual things because he cannot spiritually discern. But he that is spiritual meaning the mature spiritual man has the ability to discern spiritual things (judge all things), but he himself is discerned by no one. The ability to **"judge all things"** implies discernment and understanding that comes from the Spirit, allowing the believer to evaluate, and understand spiritual truths. The spiritual man has been exposed to God's revelation, has received it, and founded his faith upon it. This is what the spiritual man looks like:

- He is born again. • He minds the things of God, not of the flesh. • He is in the Spirit and the Spirit dwells in him. • The Spirit imparts life to him. • The Spirit quickens his mortal body. • He can kill the sinful deeds of his body only by the Spirit! • The presence of the Spirit's leadership in the man's life proves that he is a child of God.

He can judge; discern both earthly and heavenly things— all things. And with the Holy Spirit's help, he can understand how to make decisions about right and wrong actions. He can understand what is wicked. Yet the spiritual man is not subject to the natural man's judgment (discernment). The person without the Holy Spirit cannot judge the person who has the Holy Spirit. He will not understand the way a spiritual person thinks.

2:16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. Paul puts a question before the Corinthian Christians: *"...Who has known the mind (understood or the purposes) of the Lord to instruct Him?"* And Paul's assurance to them: *"But we have the mind of Christ."* We can never know what is in the Lord's mind. We didn't teach Him, nor advise Him. But we have the mind of Christ. It is by God's Spirit that He teaches us and guides us as we read, we listen, and we meditate on God's Word! The **"mind of Christ"** implies a transformation and renewal of thought; a spiritual insight.

SUMMARY:



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

6 Paul's words were different from those of the wise people or rulers in this age. Their wisdom will come to nought and will not succeed, but Paul could teach more about God's wise plans to those whose faith was strong in the Lord. **7** Paul says we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory. **8** The leaders of the world did not know the wisdom of God, for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; the Lord whose attribute is glory. **9** As it is written, their eyes could not see the spiritual world, and their ears could not hear the spiritual truth that God had prepared for those who love Him. **10** God's wisdom is revealed only by God's Spirit! The Holy Spirit understands all things, for He even searches the deep things of God. **11** We can only know the things of a man except it be revealed by the spirit of man within him. It's the same way, no one can know the thoughts of God except by the Spirit of God. It is only as the Spirit shines His light on His truth that we can see and understand His truths (**2:6-11**).

12 We have not received the spirit of the world, but we have received the Holy Spirit from God Himself that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

We can see the contrast between the natural and the spiritual man (vv. **13-16**).

13 Paul compared the natural wisdom of man with the spiritual wisdom of God. He used spiritual words to teach spiritual truths. **14** There is a difference in how Paul received, and how the natural man receives. Paul receives of the Spirit, but the natural man receives nothing of the Spirit, but counts it as foolishness. **15** There is a contrast in that of the "*natural man*" and the "*spiritual man*." The natural man cannot know spiritual things because he cannot spiritually discern them. But he that is spiritual meaning the mature spiritual man has the ability to discern spiritual things (judge all things), but he himself is discerned by no one. **16** Paul puts a question before the Corinthian Christians: "*...Who has known the mind* (understood or the purposes) *of the Lord to instruct Him?*" And Paul's assurance to them: "*But we have the mind of Christ.*" It is by God's Spirit that He teaches us and guides us as we read, we listen, and we meditate on His Word! (**2:12-16**).

³The unsaved man cannot understand the things of God because he does not have the Spirit of God living within. The saved person can understand because the Holy Spirit lives within and teaches him. The Holy Spirit helps us see things as they really are. It does not make sense to an unsaved person when you decide to follow Christ. Just as a tone-deaf person cannot understand good music, the person who rejects God cannot understand God's message. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, believers can begin to have the mind of Christ, and begin to know Him. An intimate relationship with Christ comes only from spending time with Him and in His Word.

