

► God Speaks Through His Holy Spirit

IN FOCUS: *The Holy Spirit guides us in knowing God's will.*



When has an “inner voice” helped you choose between right and wrong?

LOOK AT OUR WORLD

It can be easy to let our emotions lead us, but we can't always trust our feelings. They're subjective at best and biased at worst. Yet we might wonder if there are times when that "inner voice" is right. Can God's Holy Spirit reform our conscience and reorient the course of our thoughts and desires? Yes! The Holy Spirit works within us to help us discern God's voice from other voices competing for our attention. Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as our "Counselor" or our "Comforter" (KJV): "The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you" (John 14:26). God speaks to us through His Holy Spirit. He opens our understanding to the realities of God revealed in the Bible and guides us in an accurate response.

LEARN GOD'S WAY

IN FOCUS: The Holy Spirit guides us in knowing God's _____.

First Corinthians 2 continues Paul's letter to the church in Corinth, focusing on the contrast between human wisdom and wisdom that comes from God. Paul reminded the believers that an understanding of God's truth doesn't come through worldly intellect, but through spiritual discernment—"the mind of Christ" (v. 16). This chapter highlights the role of the Holy Spirit in revealing divine wisdom and guiding believers, encouraging them to rely not on their own reasoning but on God's voice within.

1 Corinthians 2:6-8 ⁶ We do, however, speak a wisdom among the mature, but not a wisdom of this age, or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. ⁷ On the contrary, we speak God's hidden wisdom in a mystery, a wisdom God predestined before the ages for our glory. ⁸ None of the rulers of this age knew this wisdom, because if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

1) We can't comprehend His will by our own _____ or _____.

Paul used "wisdom" in both a bad and a good sense. What's the bad sense? The rulers of the world and their wisdom are rendered completely ineffective (v. 6). These rulers were skilled in their marshaling of human arguments and used their skills to convince their hearers. How did Paul use "wisdom" in a good sense? While we're incapable of understanding God's will on our own, He has revealed His wisdom, will, and ways to His people (v. 7). This is the unique and privileged possession of God's people and an absolute mystery to everyone else.

1 Corinthians 2:9-11 ⁹ But as it is written, What no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human heart has conceived—God has prepared these things for those who love him. ¹⁰ Now God has revealed these things to us by the Spirit, since the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. ¹¹ For who knows a person's thoughts except his spirit within him? In the same way, no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

2) The Holy Spirit reveals the _____ of God.

As humans, we're often confronted with the limits of our abilities. It's tempting to believe the cliché, "You can do anything you set your mind to." But sooner rather than later, we're reminded that there are, in fact, boundaries we're unable to breach. We're both marvelous creations and frail creatures. Our chief limitation is our inability to comprehend the mind of God and His ways. And we're assured by the apostle Paul that this limitation won't improve. But there's good news! What we're incapable of doing for ourselves, God will do for us.

1 Corinthians 2:12-16 ¹² We have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who comes from God, so that we may understand what has been freely given to us by God. ¹³ We also speak these things, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual things to spiritual people. ¹⁴ But the person without the Spirit does not receive what comes from God's Spirit, because it is foolishness to him; he is not able to understand it since it is evaluated spiritually. ¹⁵ The spiritual person, however, can evaluate everything, and yet he himself cannot be evaluated by anyone. ¹⁶ For who has known the Lord's mind, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

3) We must rely on the Holy Spirit to help us _____ Scripture to our lives.

We don't discover God's truth; we only receive it. And the Bible is the vehicle used by the Holy Spirit to make God's revelation plain to us. We're perpetually reliant on the Holy Spirit to help us apply God's Word to our lives. In contrast to the surrounding world, Christians guided by the Holy Spirit draw discerning conclusions about spiritual realities. We're enabled to receive, understand, and convey the true wisdom that comes from God.

ENGAGE

Choose one verse from 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 that's particularly meaningful to you. Read it slowly several times, emphasizing different words each time. Paraphrase it in your own words, and write a short prayer to God using your paraphrase.

LIVE IT OUT

As you read Scripture, ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand and apply what you're reading. Make Psalm 119:18 part of your prayer: "Open my eyes so that I may contemplate wondrous things from your instruction." Choose one or more of the following actions you will take in response to today's study.

- **VIEW OF GOD:** Seek a deeper, Spirit-led understanding of who God is. Each morning this week, pray: *God, help me see You not through the lens of the world, but through the wisdom of Your Spirit.*
- **VIEW OF SELF:** Write a short statement describing who you are when you live led by the Spirit. Allow this statement to help you internalize your spiritual identity and live it out more intentionally.
- **VIEW OF OTHERS:** Affirm someone's spiritual growth, insight, or faith. Let them know that you see the Spirit at work in them.

TALK IT OUT

Want to go a step further? Gather with two or three Christ-followers. Read 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, then use the following summary and questions for a deeper discussion.

In 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, Paul reminds us that there's a kind of wisdom that goes far beyond what the world can offer—one that only comes from God through His Spirit. It's not about being clever or well-educated; it's about being open to what the Holy Spirit wants to reveal. This passage invites us to stop relying solely on our own understanding and instead tune in to the quiet, deep wisdom that God offers to those who seek Him. As believers, we're not left to figure out life on our own—we've been given the "mind of Christ" (v. 16), enabling us to see and understand life from God's perspective.

- 🕒 **Read 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 slowly. Identify a word or phrase that stands out. Share it with the group, along with the reason it resonated with you.**
- ❓ **How can we create more space in our week to listen for the Holy Spirit's guidance?**
- ❓ **What's one practical step we can take this week to live more in tune with the "mind of Christ"?**

DAY 1: The Holy Spirit reveals God's truth.

Read 1 Corinthians 2:6-8.

Our society insists on entertainment and resists critical thinking and hard-fought personal growth. We're a culture addicted to amusement. The word *amuse* is fitting. To *muse* about something is to consider it thoughtfully. When the prefix *a-* is added to a word, it negates or modifies its meaning. So *amuse* quite literally means we're engaged in activities or pursuits that are decidedly not being thoughtfully considered.

The amount of time we spend on amusements threatens to stifle our growth. God wants us to grow spiritually so we become mature in our faith. But in a world that constantly pulls us toward entertainment and distraction, it's easy to stay stuck in the basics and never go deeper. Paul reminds us that God's plan is for every believer to grow in spiritual maturity, and He gave us the Holy Spirit to guide us on that journey.

We often try to understand God's will using our own reasoning, but this simply doesn't work. On our own, we're not capable of grasping spiritual truth—it's only revealed by the Holy Spirit. God's wisdom isn't for us to figure out; it's something He gives us. The Spirit takes what God has spoken through His Word and helps us understand it, opening our hearts and minds to what we could never master on our own.

Whether we're reading Scripture, making decisions, or simply going through our day, God is actively working to reveal His truth to us—if we're willing to listen. God has a plan for every believer to grow deeper in wisdom and understanding, and He gave us the Holy Spirit to help us do just that.

- ❓ **Are you making space for spiritual growth or settling for spiritual comfort? This week, take time to quiet the noise around you and invite the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts, decisions, and understanding.**
- 🕉️ **Meditate on and memorize 1 Corinthians 2:9 this week as a reminder that God's plans and blessings aren't limited to what we can perceive with our senses or reason.**

MEMORIZE

**"But as it is written,
What no eye has seen,
no ear has heard, and
no human heart has
conceived—God has
prepared these things
for those who love him."**

1 CORINTHIANS 2:9

DAY 2: Spiritual growth isn't optional for believers.

Read 1 Corinthians 2:6-8.

I remember when each of our children entered kindergarten. Their careers as students had begun. Soon, they would master basic reading, writing, and math competencies. With each successive year, they progressed through school grades until they graduated from high school and moved on to college. With the movement from one grade to the next came corresponding growth in their capacities. The elementary activity centers that were so enjoyable for a six-year-old became inappropriate for a sixteen-year-old. Growth is assumed. Maturity is expected. As with schooling, so it is with our spiritual lives. We aren't meant to remain in spiritual kindergarten. We're meant to progress. And the Holy Spirit is the one who moves us along in our spiritual formation.

Believers humbly gather each week to worship the God of all true wisdom. As we worship Him, we're reoriented to Him. As we're reoriented to Him, we grow in Him. Far more than being the recipients of spiritual facts, we're people who have been shown the meaning of profound spiritual realities. How could we be content with the basics when we should be progressing toward maturity?

Spiritual growth isn't optional for believers—it's essential. Just as children are expected to grow and mature in school, we're called to grow in our understanding of God's truth. The wisdom of God isn't shallow or surface-level; it's deep, rich, and life-changing. And through the Holy Spirit, we're invited to move beyond spiritual basics and into a fuller, more mature relationship with God. He is always leading us deeper into His wisdom and grace.

🎯 Using the space in the margin or in your journal, answer this question: *Where am I in my spiritual growth journey?* Consider whether you're still holding on to spiritual basics or moving toward a deeper understanding of God.

DAY 3: The Holy Spirit opens our eyes.

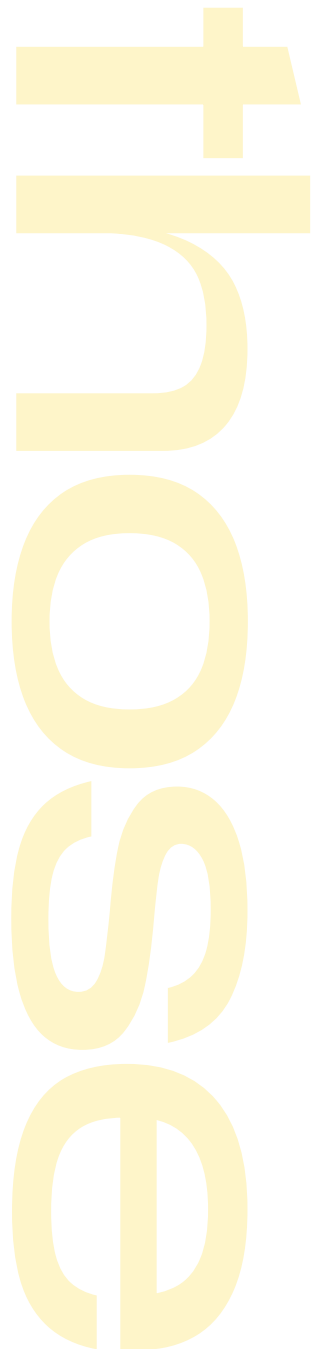
Read 1 Corinthians 2:9-11.

Paul left no doubt. There's absolutely no method of comprehension available to us (not our eyes, ears, or understanding) that can give us the slightest idea of the wonderful things God has prepared exclusively "for those who love him" (v. 9). His point was that our natural eyes, ears, and heart lack the capacity to discover and comprehend the wisdom of God. We're entirely dependent on Him to work out His plan for us. We can read the Bible, but it's the Holy Spirit who opens our eyes to see its truth. The Holy Spirit will show us wonderful spiritual realities from God's Word. He will guard us from error, never telling us anything that is contrary to Scripture. He will draw us near to the heart of God.

When God speaks, it will be in a way we can understand. God's people know what they know because God has revealed it to them, not because they possess any special skill or wisdom of their own. The Holy Spirit penetrates all things. Nothing is beyond His knowledge. He knows "even the depths of God" (v. 10). Put another way, the only person capable of telling us about God is the very Spirit of God.

The Holy Spirit has broken into our closed minds, invaded our confined thoughts, and shown us God. He is the beautiful agent of the Trinity, transmitting and communicating to us. What an inheritance we have! This is what Jesus promised: "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. For he will not speak on His own, but he will speak whatever he hears. He will also declare to you what is to come" (John 16:13).

- 🎯 **Grab coffee with a trusted Christian friend and talk about areas of your lives where you feel stuck, confused, or uncertain. Pray together, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal God's truth that you're unable to see on your own.**



DAY 4: We're no longer shaped by the wisdom of this world.

Read 1 Corinthians 2:12-16.

I wasn't raised around tornado sirens. Not until I moved to Texas as a young man did I hear their clarion call for the first time. In the early hours of a stormy spring morning, a siren near my home was activated. The eerie drone immediately interrupted my sleep, and I was wide awake. My heart was racing. I was ready for action. Whatever plans I had for the day were forgotten in that moment. Whatever I had been dreaming about dissipated. My thoughts were consumed by what adjustments I needed to make to ensure my safety. In 1 Corinthians 2, Paul sounded a spiritual call akin to a tornado siren, and it's meant to wake us up.

Paul's concern needs to resound through every generation. If it's not kept current and compelling, we'll quickly become disoriented to the ways of God. Rather than recognizing the work of the Holy Spirit as the source of our special status in contrast to the world, we may mistakenly assume His work gives us special status in comparison with one another within the church. We could use knowledge as a means to impress each other (spiritual pride), rather than as an impetus to join Christ in His mission to a lost, broken, hurting, and alienated world (spiritual mission). We will stray from an obedient, humble posture and assume a presumptuous, arrogant posture toward God and others.

If we have any understanding, any insight, any spiritual victory, it's only because of the gracious generosity of the Holy Spirit. The hallmark of His work is that we're radically distinct from "human wisdom" (v. 13) in our fundamental convictions, values, and worldview. We're no longer shaped by the wisdom of this world, but by the truth God reveals to us.

? What are some areas in your life where you need spiritual wisdom right now? How can you invite the Spirit to guide you? Journal your thoughts in the margin.

WAKE UP!



DAY 5: Through the Holy Spirit, we've been given "the mind of Christ."

Read 1 Corinthians 2:12-16.

We live in a world that often values intellect, achievement, and appearance above all else. But Scripture reminds us that true understanding—especially of spiritual things—doesn't come from human wisdom. It comes from the Holy Spirit. Paul explained that those who belong to Christ have received the Holy Spirit, who enables us to grasp the deeper realities of God's truth. This spiritual insight transforms how we see ourselves, others, and the world around us. Without the Spirit, we're limited in what we can perceive on our own.

The person outside of Christ has no understanding of life beyond the physical.

- To the one who elevates social image above all else, secret acts of service are meaningless.
- To the one who elevates sexual attractiveness and behaviors above all else, modesty and chastity are meaningless.
- To the one who elevates money and fame above all else, charity and generosity are meaningless.
- To the one who elevates momentary pleasures above all else, the eternal things of God are meaningless.

For these people, there's no capacity to understand the mysteries of God. The things of God look like mere foolishness to them. Tragically, the more we become enamored with the world, the more we will look like it and the less we will look like Christ.

We're desperate to have the Holy Spirit safeguard in us "the mind of Christ" (v. 16). That's our antidote against the infectious blindness of the world. It's our gateway into the deep things of God. When the Holy Spirit awakens us to the things of God, it's a simultaneous invitation to join Him in His activity. Through the Spirit, we're invited into a deeper awareness of God's truth, wisdom, and purpose.

"The mind that is alive chooses the spiritual rather than the fleshly"

T. W. HUNT

- 🕒 **Spend some extended time in prayer today, asking the Spirit to deepen your understanding, shape your thinking, and help you live with "the mind of Christ."**