

SESSION 3

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH HIS HOLY SPIRIT

Leader pages on pp. 110-113

THE POINT:
THE HOLY SPIRIT
GUIDES US IN
KNOWING HIS WILL.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:6-16

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.

MEMORY VERSE

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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.

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¹² Now 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.

KEYWORDS

Mystery (v. 7)—Paul used this term to describe something that was previously unknown but now had been disclosed by revelation.

Depths of God (v. 10)— This expression corresponds to God's hidden wisdom (v. 7a), to what God predestined before the ages (v. 7b), and to what God

has prepared for people who love Him (v. 9).

The mind of Christ (v.16)— Paul quoted Isaiah 40:13 in the Septuagint, a major Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. In context, the expression the mind of Christ is synonymous with God's hidden wisdom.

HOW DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT HELP BELIEVERS UNDERSTAND GOD'S WILL?

Have you ever wished life came with clearer instructions? Maybe you've stood in the middle of a big decision—whether to take a job, repair a relationship, or just figure out how to get through the week—and thought, “I just need to hear from God.” You're not the only one. Surveys show that most adults feel unsure about the “right next step” in daily life, even though we're surrounded by more information and technology than any generation before us. Phones track our habits, watches monitor our sleep, apps guide our diets, and yet people still feel spiritually directionless.

And that's where a deeper question emerges: How is the Holy Spirit superior to any technology we can comprehend? For all our devices can do, none of them can comfort us in grief, convict us of truth, or whisper wisdom into the quiet places of our hearts. In this session, we'll discover how God still speaks today—and why the Holy Spirit offers guidance no technology could ever match.

The Holy Spirit Provides Wisdom // 1 Corinthians 2:6–8

Let us continue the analogy from above. How is the Holy Spirit superior to any technology that we can comprehend? In a world with Artificial Intelligence (AI), many believe that AI might become as powerful and as wise as God. This is impossible due to a basic principle of creation. Nothing created can be better than its creator. Stated differently, everything that is created bears the mark of its creator. The internet can only do what humans created it to do. We can modify it but then it can only do what it has been modified to do. AI is in the same category. It has limits and one worth highlighting is that it cannot contain ultimate wisdom. It might contain all human wisdom, but it will never contain the full depth of the wisdom of God. This is what Paul is getting at when he talks about “God's hidden wisdom.” This wisdom is hidden in God and people can only gain access to it through gaining access to God.

This is not a cop out statement. Paul is not making a circular argument, this would be a misunderstanding of his argument:

- You need God's Spirit to understand God
- So, if you disagree with Paul (or Christianity)
- You must not have God's Spirit

This is only partially true. You do need God's Spirit to understand the truth of Christianity. However, Paul is not trying to dismiss people's concern or desire for true knowledge. Paul is on a quest for knowledge just like every other human being. Instead, he wants to sort through



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the different sources of knowledge. The “wisdom of this age” is focused on whatever humans believe is important during any given generation. This wisdom is not always bad, but it is always limited. During Paul’s lifetime, conventional wisdom taught people to worship many gods as if they were true divine beings, even though they were demons. In the early 19th century, there was a belief that people might suffocate from traveling too fast on railroad trains (above 10 miles an hour). We now know that humans can survive at much higher speeds and suffocation is not a primary concern. Hopefully, you get the point. In every age, we think we have things figured out only to have future generations look back at us and wonder why we were so confident.

Paul described the wisdom of God as a wisdom that belongs to the mature because they have come to recognize the reality of human limitations. Here is Paul’s real argument:

- You need God’s Spirit to understand God.
- People only have limited knowledge.
- Maturity is humbly accepting your limitations and looking to Jesus.
- God’s Spirit works in such people so they might gain true wisdom.

God created us to depend on Him as the ultimate source of wisdom. This limitation is not a detriment to our existence but a benefit. When God’s Spirit enters a believer and supplies them with the wisdom of God, the Holy Spirit also grants them access to a portion of God’s glory. This would be like not only connecting to an online meeting but truly entering the virtual space where the meeting is being conducted. And the longer we are in that space, the more we gain a deeper knowledge of ourselves and of God.

HOW DO YOU DISTINGUISH BETWEEN GOD’S WISDOM AND THE NOISE OF YOUR OWN REASONING AND OUTSIDE INFLUENCES?

The Holy Spirit Reveals the Mind of God

// 1 Corinthians 2:9–11

Paul mentions Jesus Christ and His crucifixion twice in this section of 1 Corinthians, the first time is in verse 2. Paul wrote that he decided to know nothing among the Corinthians “except Jesus Christ and him crucified.” Paul is not saying that all he wanted to explain to the Corinthians was who Jesus was, how He fulfilled the role of the promised Christ, by dying on the cross. We know this because Paul wrote about many other topics in his letters to the Corinthians. Instead, Paul’s point is that he wanted



DIGGING DEEPER GOD REVEALS TRUE KNOWLEDGE

Within this section of 1 Corinthians, Paul alludes to Daniel 2 twice. This is the famous chapter where Daniel explains an unrevealed dream to King Nebuchadnezzar. Everyone around the King made it very clear that they could not tell the King the content of his dream. The Chaldeans were trained in worldly techniques of dream interpretation according to specific manuals and traditions. Nebuchadnezzar knew this and he knew that they would tell him what he wanted to hear to preserve their own lives and livelihood. Daniel showed up and did what the worldly trained magicians were unable to do. He acted according to the wisdom of God, not the wisdom of the Chaldeans. Paul alludes to this story because through the Holy Spirit we gain God’s wisdom just like Daniel did. We must humble ourselves before God knowing that He will supply us with all the knowledge we need.

When has God’s Spirit supplied you with knowledge right when you needed it?



the Corinthians, and every other Christian, to understand how all of life is connected to Jesus being the solution. Knowledge of how Jesus Christ and His death fit into your life and circumstances is the only knowledge that brings purpose to your present situation. Only the Holy Spirit can reveal how a person should combine their life with the knowledge of Jesus.

CAN YOU NAME A FACT ABOUT YOURSELF THAT MAKES MORE SENSE BECAUSE OF JESUS?

The second time that Paul mentions Jesus and his crucifixion is in verse 8. Paul explains that if the rulers of this age had understood God's wisdom they would not have "crucified the Lord of glory." There is a contrast here between the nature of power in this world (represented by the "rulers of this age") and the power of God (represented by the crucifixion of Jesus who is the "Lord of glory"). Jesus came into the world and proclaimed that the kingdom of God was at hand. However, Jesus did not exert physical force to maintain this kingdom, which is what every worldly kingdom does. The rulers of this age must disseminate knowledge to people in ways that keep them in charge.

The average person cannot just approach a human authority without going through the proper channels. In contrast to this, Jesus allows everyone to have access to him and does not keep the knowledge of salvation to himself. God sends out His knowledge to the world by filling people with the Holy Spirit and allowing Scripture to be

disseminated in any language. This means that all Christians have equal access to the mind of God. The Holy Spirit awakens us to be able to see what is truly important to God.

The Holy Spirit Transforms Our Thinking // 1 Corinthians 2:12-16

Within 1 Corinthians 1, Paul contrasts the themes of wisdom and foolishness. He explains that the foolishness of God is better than the wisdom of men (1:25) and that God chose the foolish things of this world to shame the wise (1:27). This is because the ways of God seem as if they are powerless in the eyes of the world. Loving your enemy means doing things for your enemy that are beneficial for them. However, if your enemy continues to prosper while they are behaving badly won't they continue to act badly? Jesus came to lay down His life for the kingdom of God. How can a king rule over a kingdom if he is dead?

Both questions are foolish to those who think about getting justice and power according to the design of the world. They would argue that the following is true. You should report your enemy to the authorities so that he or she can be punished. Then they will behave correctly. Jesus should have summoned a legion of angels to destroy the Roman Empire. Then everyone would have believed in him.

Paul understood that it takes a spiritual mind to be able to understand spiritual things. This is his way of referring to Christian discipleship. Once Christians have the Holy Spirit they have access to the mind of God. However, having access is just the beginning. For this access to be meaningful, we have to take advantage of what has been offered. We need to spend time with God and follow the Spirit's leading as the Spirit explores the "depths of God." In other words, we need discipleship to know what is truly important to God.

Let's return to the two questions I posed before. Loving one's enemy means doing things that are beneficial for them including highlighting how their behavior had negative effects on yourself, themselves, and on God's design for society. Christians should do this in a way that is not about seeking worldly justice but spiritual restoration.

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Jesus died and rules the kingdom of God because this kingdom is a resurrected kingdom. A kingdom that brings life out of death. It is not like the worldly kingdoms that hold on to life until it can no longer do so.

This is why only the spiritual person can understand spiritual things. God is not hiding wisdom from the world. Instead, His wisdom appears to be mysterious, hidden, and foolish because it requires sacrifice, time, and thoughtfulness before it can be implemented.

Every Christian is up for this task since we “have the mind of Christ.” When we want to engage in an online meeting, all we can do is connect our lifeless devices to a lifeless internet modem and facilitate a conversation through lifeless software. When God wants to engage in a meeting with us, He connects us to Himself by His Spirit within us as we read through His Word that “is living and active” (Hebrews 4:12).

When the Holy Spirit awakens us to the things of God, it is a simultaneous invitation to join Him in His activity. Our eyes are opened for us to make spiritual progress.

HOW HAS THE HOLY SPIRIT TRANSFORMED YOUR MIND AND IN TURN CHANGED YOUR LIFE?

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1 Corinthians 2:16, Paul cites from Isaiah 40:13. He does this for two reasons. First, he wants us to understand that God contains the highest form of intelligence in the universe. God does not need to take counsel with anyone because He has all information. Second, Paul wants to encourage us to grow in our knowledge of God so that we can understand the mind of God better. The beginning of Isaiah 40 highlights that everyone will see the glory of God on an even playing field. While this should lead everyone to repent and trust in God, only those who are spiritual will respond properly to encountering God. We do not need to be able to answer everyone’s questions about God. Instead, we should focus on responding well to what we do know. This is why Paul says that the spiritual person cannot be evaluated by anyone (1 Corinthians 2:15).

Biblical Truth: God has the answer to every question in our lives.

How can you move from doubt to trust in God’s knowledge of all things?

LIVE IT

Is the Holy Spirit speaking or am I hearing my own thoughts?

We can be confident about two main facts. First, Scripture is God’s voice written down. Every verse of Scripture helps us understand the mind of God better. Second, the Holy Spirit never speaks in a way that contradicts Scripture. When these two statements are combined, we can navigate our thoughts with confidence. The more we understand about God’s Word the better we will be able to identify the voice of God’s Spirit.

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- **Pray.** Ask for the Holy Spirit to reveal a topic that you can learn more about. Trust that God will speak to you if you have asked in humility.
- **Study.** Once this topic has been revealed, study what Scripture has to say about it. Use a Bible Concordance, if needed.
- **Discuss.** Bring this topic up with members of your church, a close friend, or your pastor. Remember, Paul says that we have the mind of Christ. Spiritual matters were always meant to be explored in community (see 1 Corinthians 6:1–4).

DAILY READINGS

1. THE LIGHT LEADS// PSALM 119:105

Have you ever had to get up in the middle of the night and navigate to the bathroom in the dark? It's not as difficult in your own home as it is when you are in a strange place. When in a location you are not familiar with you are more likely to bump into things or hurt yourself. The same way we know our homes intimately, God's Word should be familiar. We should be intimately acquainted with it. This is accomplished when we read and meditate on His Word daily. This passage of Scripture encourages us that God's Word leads us through the darkness of this world and illuminates the path that God has for us. Allow God's Word to draw you closer to Him.

Lord, please help us to continually be led by the light of Your Word.

2. ACCOMPLISHED WORD // ISAIAH 55:11

Even with our best intentions, sometimes we make promises we don't keep. People are counting on us to fulfill them and we let them down. Isaiah encouraged Israel that God isn't like man, He will keep all the promises He made. Isaiah 55:11 lets us know that God's Word is powerful, effective, and always accomplishes His will. We must trust God's promises, even when circumstances seem hopeless, because His Word never fails. God's Word will prosper and bring good fruit into believers' lives. This verse reminds us of God's faithfulness and the unstoppable power of His promises to fulfill His good plans for His people. We can count on God's Word to accomplish every promise He's given us.

Lord, help us to trust that Your promises are true.

3. DIVINE MESSAGES// 1 THESSALONIANS 2:13

As disciples of Jesus, we must be spreading the Gospel message, so all people come to know Him. It's important that the message we give is the unchanged, pure Word of God. People must be clear that the message we bring to them is

from God's Word and not us. In order for us to deliver God's message we must know His Word so it's important for us to study His Word. 1 Thessalonians 2:13 lets us know that Paul delivered the message about God to the Thessalonian church and it was God's Word that works powerfully in them because they believe. There's power in God's Word and we must share It.

Father, allow us to boldly share Your Word with others so they come to believe.

4. IT'S FOR YOUR GOOD// ROMANS 8:28

When you are going through things it's difficult to trust that things will work out. Have you ever heard the phrase "when it rains, it pours?" This phrase means that when one bad thing happens many other problems quickly follow. Romans 8:28 encourages us that whether we are going through good or bad circumstances they will always work together for our good. This promise is for those of us who love God and are called according to His purpose. It is important for us to maintain faith in God no matter what we experience because we love Him and He has a purpose for us.

God, help us trust that no matter what happens, You will work things out for our good.

5. FAITH THROUGH FIRE// JAMES 1:2-3

This is a new take on trials. James is not telling us to just "grin and bear it," he tells us to "count it all joy" when we go through various trials. Each trial should be thought of as something to be genuinely glad about, finding joy rooted in Christ rather than fleeting circumstances. Instead of focusing on the trials, we must keep our focus on Christ because He never changes and we can count on Him. James 1:2 doesn't say we might but that we will go through various trials in this life. Trials are designed to test our faith, build our inner strength, and increase our ability to endure. Praise God through every trial, He's building your faith.

Thank You Lord for strengthening us through every trial.



God Speaks Through His Word

DR. DOROTHEA JOHNSON JAMES

There is a difference between knowing about God and knowing God. Many of us grow up well-versed in religious language. We know Scripture fragments, church rhythms, and moral expectations, yet never quite realize that the living God is speaking directly to us. For some, the Bible becomes background noise, revered, quoted, even defended, but not truly heard. And yet Scripture insists that God is not silent. He speaks clearly, lovingly, and authoritatively through His Word.

The witness of Scripture affirms this truth. Hebrews reminds us, “Long ago God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways” (Heb. 1:1). That same God continues to speak today through the written Word. The Bible is not merely a record of past encounters with God. It is a living means by which God addresses His people now.

God’s Word Becomes Personal

For many believers, there comes a moment when Scripture moves from general truth

to personal address. What once felt distant suddenly feels deliberate. What once seemed abstract becomes piercingly specific. I lived for years with an awareness of God, an inherited faith, and a respectful distance, but without a surrendered relationship. I knew of God, but I did not yet know God.

That changed during a season of crisis when clarity felt impossible and direction elusive. Unsure where to turn, I stepped into a church near my home, not expecting transformation, simply hoping God would fix my problems. What I encountered instead was the unmistakable voice of God through His Word. The Scripture that confronted me was Isaiah 45:5: “I am the Lord, and there is no other; there is no God but me. I will strengthen you, though you do not know me.”

That verse did not argue with me. It declared. It did not negotiate. It revealed. In a single sentence, God dismantled every competing authority in my life and named Himself as the

only true source of guidance, hope, and salvation. That was not a coincidence, it was God speaking through Scripture into the confusion of a human heart. Scripture has a way of doing that. It meets us where we are, but it never leaves us there.

God's Word is His Primary Voice

God may use many means to guide His people. Whether prayer, wise counsel, and circumstances, Scripture remains His primary and authoritative voice. The Bible is not one option among many. It is the measuring rod by which all other impressions are tested. Any guidance that contradicts Scripture is not from God, no matter how compelling it feels.

The authority of the Bible rests not in human endorsement but in divine origin. Scripture does not merely inform. It forms, shapes discernment, disciplines desire, and trains believers to recognize God's will. This authority also means Scripture calls for obedience. God does not speak simply to satisfy curiosity or affirm preference. When God speaks, He requires a response.

God's Word Redirects Our Lives

Later in that same season of crisis, I found myself contemplating divorce. The weight of relational strain, spiritual isolation, and emotional exhaustion made leaving seem like the most reasonable option. Once again, God did not speak through an internal voice or a dramatic sign, but through the preached Word. The passage was 1 Corinthians 7:12-16.

That Scripture did not minimize pain or deny complexity. Instead, it reframed the situation through the lens of God's redemptive purposes. It revealed that faithfulness itself could be a witness; that obedience could become a means of grace; and that God was present even in unresolved tension. That Word redirected my steps. It did not promise ease, but it offered peace. It did not remove responsibility, but it clarified calling—thirty-six years and counting.

One of the profound gifts of Scripture is its ability to give direction when emotions cloud judgment and anchor us when circumstances feel unstable. God's Word does not merely affirm what we already want to do, it often challenges us

to become who God is calling us to be—a living display of Christ and the Church.

God's Word Transforms

Hearing God through Scripture is not reserved for crisis moments alone. It is cultivated through consistent, attentive engagement with the Word of God. Scripture is not meant to be skimmed for inspiration but dwelt in for transformation. The psalmist declares, "I have chosen the way of truth; I have set your ordinances before me" (Ps. 119:30).

Time spent reading and meditating on Scripture tunes the heart to God's voice. Over time, believers learn not only what God says but how God speaks through His holiness, mercy, patience, and justice. Meditation on Scripture is not passive reflection, it is active listening. When approached with humility and expectancy, Scripture becomes a living conversation between God and His people.

God's Word Speaks and Requires a Response

In a culture that questions authority and elevates relative truth, Scripture remains trustworthy. It does not shift with cultural trends or personal preference. Jesus Himself affirmed the authority of Scripture, quoting, obeying, and submitting to it. If the incarnate Word trusted the written Word, how much more should His followers?

When God speaks through His Word, response is not optional. Sometimes the response is repentance. Other times it is endurance or the courage to take the next step before the full path is visible. The question is not whether God is speaking, but whether we are listening.

The promise remains: "So my word that comes from my mouth will not return to me empty, but it will accomplish what I please..." (Isa. 55:11). The invitation is simple, though never shallow. Open the Word, listen with expectancy, and respond in obedience. God speaks, and His people live by every word that comes from Him.

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