

Sunday, November 29, 2015—I Corinthians 2:15: He That is Spiritual Judgeth All Things

### Introduction

- Last week we continued our study of I Corinthians 2 by looking at verses 13 and 14. In doing so we considered the following points.
- I Corinthians 2:13—Paul was speaking and teaching about “the things freely given us of God” using the words and the method by which the Holy Ghost teacheth. Thus far, in the context, we have seen that the Holy Spirit is doing at least two different things:
  - Verse 10—searching all things
  - Verse 13—teaching by comparing spiritual things with spiritual things.
- I Corinthians 2:14—asserts that the “natural man” (unsaved man) is not capable of receiving the things of the Spirit of God. The things of the Spirit of God are foolishness unto him and he cannot know them. The natural man’s problem is that he has not received “the spirit which is of God” in verse 12. Therefore, he is incapable of knowing “the things of the Spirit of God” in verse 14 because those things can only be “spiritually discerned” i.e., “distinguished; seen; or discovered.” (*Webster’s 1828*)
  - Our comments on verse 14 included a discussion of the mechanics of how upon belief of Paul’s gospel, God the Holy Spirit brings life to one’s dead spirit, indwells that believer, and establishes a point of connection between God and his word in the believers inner man.
- One cannot know via natural means what is only knowable and discernible through the teaching process and ministry of God the Holy Spirit.
- This morning I want to continue with our exposition of I Corinthians 2 by looking at verse 15.

### I Corinthians 2:15

- **But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.**
- *But he that is spiritual*—the contrast “but” at the beginning of verse 15 establishes a contrast between the “natural man” in verse 14 and “he that is spiritual” in verse 15.
- As we just saw in the introduction, the “natural man” cannot know the things of the Spirit of God because they are “spiritually discerned” and the “natural man” by definition has not receive “the spirit which is of God” in verse 12.

- In contrast, “he that is spiritual” in verse 15 is one who has received “the spirit which is of God” in verse 12, thereby making him a spiritual man and distinguishing him from the “natural man” in verse 14.
- *Judgeth all things*—“he that is spiritual” possess the ability to do what the “natural man” cannot i.e., the spiritual man possess the capacity to judge all things.
- The word translated “judgeth” in verse 15 is the same word translated “discerned” in verse 14. “He that is spiritual” on the basis of the fact that he has received “the spirit which is of God” possess that capacity for spiritual discernment that the natural man does not.
- According to *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* the English word “judge” carries as host of meanings as both a noun and a verb. Please consider the following two:
  - **To discern; to distinguish**; to consider accurately for the purpose of forming an opinion or conclusion.
  - Rightly to understand and **discern**. He that is spiritual, judgeth all things. 1 Cor.2.
- Meanwhile the English word “discern” carries the following meanings:
  - To distinguish; to see the difference between two or more things; to discriminate;
  - To discover by the intellect; to distinguish; hence, to have knowledge of; **to judge**.
  - To see or understand the difference; to make distinction; as, to discern between good and evil, truth and falsehood. (*Webster’s 1828*)
- Hebrews 4:12—the word of God written by the Spirit of God (II Peter 1:21) is a “discerner” of the thoughts and intents of a man’s heart. As a “discerner” the word of God possess the following capacities in your life:
  - One who sees, discovers or distinguishes; an observer.
  - One who knows and **judges**; one who has the power of distinguishing.
  - That which **distinguishes**; or that which causes to understand. The word of God is quick and powerful--a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Hebrews 4. (*Webster’s 1828*)
- I Corinthians 2:15—“he that is spiritual” possess that ability to do what the “natural man” cannot i.e., judge and discern all things. The spiritual man has received “the spirit which is of God” and is in possession of the completed word of God.

- Note the present tense on the phrase “judgeth all things.” The spiritual man is supposed to be actively and continuously judging or discerning all things.
- I Corinthians 2:13—“comparing spiritual things with spiritual” extends beyond just comparing verse with verse when we study our Bibles. In the context it includes that ability to do something we did not possess in our fallen state, namely the ability to discern the difference between “the spirit of world” and “the things freely given to us of God” in verse 12.
- Ephesians 2:1-3—as believers we now possess the ability to judge the difference between the world’s system and spirit and God’s system and spirit.
- Galatians 5:19-23—we now possess the ability to discern the difference between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the spirit.
- I Corinthians 2:15—as believers we are instructed to constantly be judging and discerning things in our lives.
  - Matthew 7:1-6—if an unbeliever knows anything about the Bible they probably know these verses.
- I Corinthians 2:15—Paul’s instructions to the body of Christ is that we are supposed to be actively judging and discerning “all things.”
- *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* defines discernment as “the act of discerning; also, the power or faculty of the mind, by which it distinguishes one thing from another, as truth from falsehood, virtue from vice; acuteness of judgment; power of perceiving differences of things or ideas, and their relations and tendencies. The errors of youth often proceed from the want of discernment.”
- As believer’s we are to be actively and continuous exercising discernment in how we deal with ALL the situations and circumstances in life. As we will see later in our study of I Corinthians this is particularly true in the local assembly amongst the saints.
- Ephesians 4:29-31—one area where discernment is a constant necessity is in the area of our speech. This was the text verse for a series of studies I did in 2009 titled “*The Weight of Our Words*”
- James 3:1-8—an unchecked tongue has the capacity to ruin any endeavor.
- I Timothy 5:13—there are two types of malicious speech that the Scriptures identify
  - Idle Chatter/Gossip—speech that is demeaning to another’s integrity and reputation.
  - Slander—this category includes the intentional, malicious communication of bad reports.

- Proverbs 11:13—the word talebearer in this verse is a translation of a compound Hebrew word.
  - The first word literally means to walk about.
  - The second word literally means one who carries tales.
  - *Webster's 1828 Dictionary* offers the following definition of talebearer: “A person who officiously tells tales; one who impertinently communicates intelligence or anecdotes, and makes mischief in society by his officiousness.”
- Proverbs 20:19—a person who gossips is to be avoided. Hearing gossip adds unneeded information to our mental notebooks. These negative thoughts give Satan a foothold in our lives.
- Proverbs 16:28—a second Hebrew word presents the concept of whispering that is damaging. Whispering is in a negative context. The word denotes confidential communication, of non-public information, exclusive, secretive behavior, and shame. In the Bible, whispering becomes a figurative expression for the sin of gossip, which unfortunately is not always done in a whisper.
- I Timothy 5:19—if you have a complaint or accusation against an elder you need to deal with those things in the appropriate way. Speaking to anyone and everyone other than the elder or elders you have a problem with is not following the Pauline pattern for how matter within a local church are supposed to be dealt with.
- Galatians 5:13-15— if we don't eliminate gossip and slander for our conversations, we become like social cannibals who devour one another.
- Ephesians 4:29—before we speak we need to ask ourselves one simple question. Does what I am about to say minister grace?
- Ephesians 4:32—what if you have been the victim of gossip or slander? What if you have been the talebearer or whisper? Apply the cross and move on.
- I Corinthians 2:15—as believers we are to be actively and continuously judging all things in our own lives.
- *Yet he himself is judged of no man*—the English conjunction “yet” carries the basic meaning of nevertheless; notwithstanding; or however.
- The Greek word translated “judged” in the second half of the verse is the same word translated “judgeth” in the first half of verse 15 and “discerned” in verse 14.
- What exactly Paul means by this phrase in the second half of verse 15 is the subject of some disagreement amongst Biblical commentators. Does Paul mean:

- No natural man is capable of judging a spiritual man, hence “he himself is judged of no man.”
  - The spiritual man belongs to the Lord therefore no one has the right judge him except the Lord.
  - If a spiritual man will do all due diligence in judging/discerning all things for himself, he will have no need to be judged by another believer
- Option 1—clearly in the context, a “natural” is not capable is judging a spiritual man on account of the fact that a natural man cannot know the things of the Spirit of God in verse 14 because they are “spiritually discerned.”
  - Option 2—the spiritual man clearly does belong to the Lord and will therefore be judged by the Lord at the JSC (I Cor. 4:4).
  - Option 3—if a spiritual man will judge himself before the Lord he will not have any need to be judged by another believer (Gal. 6:1).
  - There is a sense in which all three options are correct. The bottom line here this morning is be responsible for yourself as a believer.