

Sunday, December 6, 2015—I Corinthians 2:16: We Have the Mind of Christ

### 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. 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—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."
- *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 is that believers are to be responsible for themselves.

### **I Corinthians 2:16**

- **For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.**
- *For who hath known the mind of the Lord*—is an allusion to Isaiah 40:13-14. Paul uses it in this context as a rhetorical question.
- The obvious answer is that no man has perfectly known the mind of the Lord, and no one shall be able to instruct him. This verse reminds me of the exchange between God and Job in the book of Job.
  - Job 38:1-8—this type of questioning goes for all of chapters 38 and 39.
  - Job 40:1-5—God pauses his questioning of Job for a moment.
  - Job 42:1-6—Job admits that the he uttered things that he did not understand.
- I Corinthians 2:16—according to verse 15 believers have the capacity to judge and discern all things. Verse 16 serves a reminder least we become “wise in our conceits” (Rom. 12:16) that we are still finite and imperfect in terms of really knowing the mind of the Lord. We should never be so arrogant to presume that we can instruct the Lord.

- *But we have the mind of Christ*—the contrast “but” establishes a contrast with what was just said. We are not capable of instructing the Lord “but” he has granted us access to the mind of Christ as one of the things “freely given us of God” in verse 12.
- Note the present tense on the verb “we have.” In Greek the verb translated “we have” in your King James Bible is in the present tense and indicative mood which means that it asserts something to be true while the speaker is making the statement. Paul is telling the Corinthians and by extension us that we have the mind of Christ as a present reality.
- Our possession of the mind of Christ is based upon the following two realities: 1) we have received “the spirit which is of God” in verse 12, 2) we have the complete word of God.
- Paul’s statement that “we have the mind of Christ” should not be taken to mean that we are perfect in our thinking as He is perfect. For we all know that is not the case. If it were the case then we would be capable of instructing the Lord.
- Positionally, in Christ, we have the attributes of Christ, including His mind, but practically speaking, our minds need to continually be renewed. In other words, do not always think or apply the mind of Christ.
- Romans 12:1-2—our minds need to be renewed daily.
- Ephesians 4:23—we need to be renewed in the spirit of our minds. Carnal and fleshly thinking is our default setting.
- II Corinthians 10:4-5—we already know that the battlefield is in the mind. Through the written word of God and the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit we have been granted access to the mind of Christ.
- Philippians 2:1-4—Paul’s joy for the saints is that they would be likeminded i.e., that they would all function with the mind of Christ.
- Philippians 2:5—as believers we are going to have to make the faith choice to “let this mind be in you.” Paul’s instructions to “let this mind be in you” are in the imperative mood. The imperative mood is used to express a command.
- Functioning with the mind of Christ is something that we are going to have to choose to do by faith. It is not something that is going to come naturally.
- I Corinthians 2:16—we know from Philippians 2 what the mind of Christ looks like. Fundamentally it is a humble mind that values and esteems others as better than one’s self. We have this mind as a present possession no questions asked. The question is, are we using it?