



*"The  
Deep  
Things of  
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1 Corinthians 2

## **"The Deep Things of God"**

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**by Pastor Tim Dodson  
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**Chapter 2** *And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. 6 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, 8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we*

*might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. 16 For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.*

The Church at Corinth was facing internal and external challenges that threatened to divide it, and ultimately, to *destroy it*. **Inside the Church** were some who were being consumed by “quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder” (2 Corinthians 12:20). Each quarreling party sought its own... it was effectively “every man for himself.” Then from **outside the Church** came the negative influences and trappings of self-promotion, worldliness and the flesh, and now this “two-front” war threatened to choke the faith of the Corinthian believers. Without a doubt, these were challenging times for the young Church at Corinth. Yet Paul had not surrendered the high ground, for he still refers to this Church as, “The **Church of God** in Corinth” (1 Corinthians 1:2).

In the first chapter of the first letter to the church in Corinth, Paul spoke of how the cross of Christ and all of its implicit ramifications is generally received by this world as foolishness. Such a fact was not reserved solely for the Corinthian intellectual, but is pervasive even throughout our modern culture. Both the residents of Corinth 2000 years ago, as well as seemingly every day that has passed since then, man in the illusion of supreme intelligence and wisdom has tossed aside the reality of God and the obvious need for His oversight. Here in the second chapter Paul reveals the following about human wisdom:

- Human wisdom was characterized by “lofty words and impressive wisdom” (1 Corinthians 2:1) and, “clever and persuasive speeches” (1 Corinthians 2:4).
- Human wisdom boasted of having some unique or mystical knowledge which the apostle Paul warned would lead some of them to “trust in human wisdom” (1 Corinthians 2:5).
- Human wisdom clouded the judgment of rulers or leaders, “None of the rulers of this age understood it” (1 Corinthians 2:8).
- Human wisdom “can’t receive these truths from God’s Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Paul further reveals the following about divine wisdom:

- Divine wisdom was declared in advance, “his plan was made for our ultimate glory ...before the world began.” (1 Corinthians 2:7).
- Divine wisdom could not be comprehended by the rulers, “None of the rulers of this age understood this” (1 Corinthians 2:8).
- Divine wisdom could not be perceived through the natural learning processes of seeing, hearing, and thinking. For, ““No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.”” (1 Corinthians 2:9).
- Divine wisdom is now revealed through the Holy Spirit, “God revealed these things by his Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 2:10).
- Divine wisdom is “freely given us by God” (1 Corinthians 2:12).
- In the real sense, you cannot know God through human wisdom, “Since God in his wisdom saw to it that the world would never know him through human wisdom, he has used our foolish preaching to save those who believe.” (1 Corinthians 1:21).
- Divine wisdom is now a person "Christ... the wisdom of God" (Corinthians 1:24)

**(1-2)** Paul came to his understanding of both Corinth and mankind at large, not merely through scriptural direction, but he, *like all of us over time*, ultimately found it to be true *experientially*. Paul had actually come to Corinth following what could easily be deemed as a failed ministry endeavor in an intellectual venue called Mars Hill...apparently the “coffee house or pub” of that day. Acts 17 details Paul’s attempts to discuss the philosophical attributes of the faith with the intellectuals who daily made the trek there. While little if any headway was gained that day amongst the people, Paul however did learn something for himself from it, and in doing so, seemingly made a commitment to never do that again. That happens to all of us in ministry from time to time! Coming off of that failed mission, he came to Corinth with a new determination to stand strong on the simple gospel: **Jesus Christ and the cross**. He seemed to have made up his mind to no longer pitch to the intelligentsia. He wasn’t going to go out of his way to convince the self-satisfied and the worldly consumer. He took the cross of Christ to the simple, yet lost souls of Corinth.

Today, we have vast numbers of churches and pastors that seek to entertain, console, philosophize, and register voters. Let’s face it, the cross today seems very far away. Not just *His* cross, but **our** share in that cross as well. *His* death seems wholly forgotten, along with the concept of **our** death to this world. The cross and all that it means has been pushed aside for the positive, “feel good” gospel of our day.

**(2:3-5)** As any faithful minister, Paul wasn’t just preaching a philosophical ideal. Indeed he was preaching the biblical instruction, but he was also doing so through the lens of his own experience. It was not merely *theory*; he actually **lived out** what he preached! What he wrote and preached concerning a life of simplicity, humility, and service was being carried out in his own life and ministry. He had come to understand that clarity and understanding is not found in the wisdom of men, but living in the Spirit of God.

Paul writes the entirety of this letter, including this chapter, not to the wider outside world, but to those who are, at least physically, in the family of God. Yet the church in Corinth, like many today, was plagued with carnal attributes. There was strife, divisions, and a host of fleshly manifestations. There was conflict and spiritual defeat, worldliness and fruitlessness. It’s therefore easy to wonder, like the Corinth church, why so little of God’s life is produced in us, and so much of the natural *us* still remains! Paul however had arrived at a point of clarity: he wrote in Romans 8:9 “*Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.*”

We often set aside a very clear and direct truth of Christianity; God calls us to bring forth fruit, *permanent* fruit, from our lives. He desires a “fruit that lasts.” John 15:16 says “*You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.*” Yet the fact remains that many of us struggle on the actual manifest and practice of such. How do we do that? Paul goes on there in Romans to speak of a level of surrender to God, which is a place where most fear to tread. Romans 12:1 “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice...*”

**(2:6-8)** There was and is yet today a vast section of the body of Christ who, as Paul later elaborates on, have never matured to the level of spiritual and scriptural “meat.” Days have turned to months, months have turned to years, and they have never been weaned from the “milk” of the spiritual life. In some cases, sadly, this was because they did not understand such, but most often they do not simply because they are *unwilling*. Their love and commitment to their Creator and Father is small and limited; like children, their allegiance is constantly in question. There is always “one foot in the door.” 1Corinthians 3:2 “*I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able...*” Hebrews 5:12 “*For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.*”

The world today has a loose, pop-psychology term which describes a man who is physically a man, but remains socially a child in his thinking and actions: This is referred to as the “Peter Pan complex.” We have addressed this condition in length in the past, because in the greater church today the Christian world has many such individuals who are *spiritual* Peter Pans. These are people who are entrenched in their childlike attitudes and interactions with Christ and scripture. They are perpetual children in their Christian living. They can sit week after week in church and simply stare at the pastor who is attempting to serve a balanced spiritual meal. They drink the milk, things like love, grace, and eternal life, but they “pass” on the meat and veggies; things like service, purity, holiness, discipline, consistency, loyalty and a faithful lifestyle.

These folks generally *vocalize* a love for Christ, but they have yet to truly experience that love as Christ expresses it, nor do they accept Christ into the ruling position of their lives, especially as it may present a discomfort or difficulty. They effectively play Christian like children play house. And as soon as someone comes along with a different game that is perceived as more exciting or more centered upon them in the starring roll, they depart to play the new game. And play is what they do. They depart to play with sex, but they do not know real love. They play at relationships, careers, parenting, and even church, but they never know the success or the fulfillment of any of these things because they are yet children. It is the spiritual child who rewrites scripture to say what he wants it to say and reinvents the nature of God to provide for his or her actions and activities. 1John 2:19 *“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.”*

This phenomena has existed from the beginning. Even in the time of Christ there were those who played along, but when the going got tough, they ran away. They hunkered down in some perceived corner of safety. Pilate, Judas, and those who hailed Him King on the road to Jerusalem only to later cry, “Crucify Him, crucify Him,”...*they all ran away like children*. They *knew* the truth, but they were unwilling to accept it as practical manifest in their living. For Peter Pans, it is only a children’s game...

**(2:9)** The Peter Pans of the spiritual world never come to the knowledge of what “God has prepared for those who love Him.” These things are reserved for His faithful. For those who have “grown up.” Colossians 1:26-27a *“...the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory...”* No, the grand riches of His glory are never known by these children. They keep coming to church hoping to find them there. They come for prayer repeatedly for the same issues, yet they never take the counsel given to them; they never step out of their play world into the real, obedient faith of adult spirituality.

There have always been those in any generation that desire all of the blessings, but at the same time they refuse to leave their old world. Their “old man” is alive and well and calling all the shots. Sadly, most of these folks will *never* give the control of their lives totally over to Christ. They may have changed their *minds*, but not their *hearts*; thus, their actual and practical lives never change either. You see, the answer is not in a church, a pastor, a creed, or an ideal. The answer is that you must be truly born again. You must die to this life...this path, this world, and all of its ideals and passions. To truly experience the Christian dynamic, the old life **must** pass away, and there **must** be a maturing embrace of the life of Christ. This means *all* of one’s life. There are no shortcuts, loopholes, or exemptions.

**(2:10-11)** The reason that such folks cannot find these things is that they are using the wrong methods. These cannot be found with one’s eyes and ears, those are merely human ends. It is only by entering into His Spirit that one can find all He has for those who love Him. This is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the infilling possession by the Spirit of God. It is our commitment to Him and His Word which first opens our hearts to His

guidance and leadership. It is then the Spirit of God who, if allowed to consume our very existence, goes on to “search the deep things of God” and sweeps us along with Him in that journey.

It is the Spirit of God who knows and is the deliverer of the grand things God has prepared for those who love Him. He knows our *true* hearts, not just what we show in public. He knows the true me, the one who can only be searched by the Holy Spirit. He knows the truth of what is really in our hearts. He knows whether Christ is *really* first in our lives. He knows if we *truly* love God and how much! There is no hiding from that. His presence and control is the direct reflection of our hearts and souls. He reports it all to the Father, and communicates God’s reply and His wishes back to us. John 16:13 "*However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.*"

**(2:12)** When one is truly born again, the Holy Spirit is made available to us. We then however, must move in participation with that fact, and surrender daily our living to that Spirit. When we are then actually controlled by that Spirit, we can “know,” or the word can also be translated *see*. We can see with our eyes and our senses, and we can discover the *things that God has freely given us*. Suddenly there is a level of clarity that has not been known to us before. And therefore, if we are **not** actually a possessor of that Spirit, if we are not *filled with that very Spirit of God*, we **will** not, **cannot** know “*the things that have been freely given to us by God.*” This is factually why so many people struggle after years of playing church and even walking in the midst of believers.

You see, holiness is not an issue of *osmosis*, but rather of *possession*. Not us possessing Him, but **Him** possessing **us**. This is not some sort of magical occurrence or simply learning enough scripture. It is simply and plainly the surrender of our lives to His control. Again, even *that* is not a mystical event; it is our dying to this world and to our own wishes and plans. It is the “picking up of *our* cross and following him...wherever He leads...”

**(2:13-15)** Paul takes a moment in verses 13-15, to reiterate that what he is saying is not some high intellectual thinking from the mind of man. It is, in reality, what the Holy Spirit has said concerning Himself. Paul was merely expounding upon what God and His Word already said concerning His Spirit. But the “natural man,” the unredeemed, and even many who are not truly born again even though they are living in the religious world, will not receive this message. To them it is all just foolishness, or merely an ideal to aspire to, or “something special” reserved for a select few of “elite” souls on God’s “speed dial.” But let us understand this one simple premise today: without the Spirit, one cannot *know* the Spirit. I can tell you, just as Paul has today, all about the critical role the Spirit plays in a successful walk of faith. But unless one personally knows and has received Him (and all that His presence means in a life), you will go on in your blindness and failures.

**(2:16)** So what is the bottom line today? How can I know what God wants of me? What is His plans for me? Where am I going? Who knows these things? The answer is inexplicably **we do**. Those of us filled and possessed by the Holy Spirit of God know these answers for ourselves. How can I come to know the “deep things of God?” You must realize that for this it is not *what you know*. It is *who you know*...