

Question: What does Paul mean when he writes, “The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one” (1 Corinthians 2:15, ESV)?

1. What It Means to Be “Spiritual”

In 1 Corinthians 2, Paul contrasts the natural person (ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος – “soulish man”) with the spiritual person (πνευματικὸς ἄνθρωπος – “Spirit-led man”).

The natural person relies on human reasoning and is limited to earthly perception. Paul writes: “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14, ESV).

The spiritual person, however, is indwelt and enlightened by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9). He is not spiritual because of visions, dreams, or supernatural gifts, but because he has come to know the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16).

Being “spiritual” is therefore not about having mystical experiences, but about living under the direction and illumination of the Holy Spirit, who

reveals the wisdom of God centered in Christ crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2).

2. The Mystery of God's Wisdom Revealed in Christ

Paul declares that the supreme mystery of God is Jesus Christ Himself. The rulers of this world—both political and spiritual powers—failed to grasp this truth:

None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory

(1 Corinthians 2:8, ESV).

Christ is described as “the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:24) and in Him “are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3, NASB).

Had the rulers understood that the cross was the very plan of God for salvation (Acts 2:23), they would not have carried it out. But God, in His sovereignty, allowed their blindness to accomplish His redemptive

purpose.

3. Why the World Cannot Understand

John confirms this spiritual blindness:

“Though He had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in Him” (John 12:37, ESV).

Isaiah foresaw this when he wrote, “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them” (John 12:40, quoting Isaiah 6:10).

This blindness is not intellectual but spiritual. Without the Spirit, the natural mind is incapable of grasping God’s truth (Romans 8:7-8).

4. How the Spiritual Person Discerns All Things

When Paul says the spiritual person “judges all things,” he does not mean that believers know everything in detail. Rather, by the Spirit, they are given discernment (1 John 2:20, 27).

The Spirit searches the deep things of God and reveals them to us (1 Corinthians 2:10).

The believer can discern between truth and error, light and darkness, righteousness and sin (Hebrews 5:14).

This discernment extends beyond knowledge—it shapes character, decisions, and perspective, aligning the believer's mind with the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5).

Thus, while the world may not understand the believer, the believer, by the Spirit, perceives both the things of God and the reality of the world around him.

5. Why the Spiritual Person Is Not Judged by Others

Paul adds, “He himself is judged by no one” (1 Corinthians 2:15, NKJV). This means that the natural person, who lacks the Spirit, cannot truly evaluate or comprehend the spiritual person's life, motives, or hope.

To the world, Paul was considered insane (Acts 26:24).

John the Baptist was accused of being demon-possessed (Matthew 11:18).

Jesus Himself was misunderstood, mocked, and rejected by the religious leaders (John 7:20, Mark 3:21).

In the same way, those who are led by the Spirit may be misunderstood or even despised by the natural mind. But their true life is hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3), and only God's judgment ultimately matters.

6. The Call to Be Truly Spiritual

Being spiritual begins with surrendering to Christ. Without Him, there is no access to the wisdom of God. Jesus Himself said:

Unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God

(John 3:3, ESV).

If you have never surrendered your life to Christ, or if you once did but have grown cold, now is the time to return. Only then will the Spirit of God open your eyes to the deeper truths of Christ and grant you discernment that the world cannot understand.

Final Word

To be “spiritual” is to live under the illumination of the Holy Spirit, beholding Christ as the wisdom of God. Such a person can discern all things in light of Christ, yet remains a mystery to the world.

But we have the mind of Christ

(1 Corinthians 2:16, ESV).

May the Lord Jesus Christ bless you richly as you seek to walk in the Spirit.

Why Does the Bible Say the Spiritual Person Discerns All Things?

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