

TXT MSG: What We Believe about the Bible

"ILLUMINATION: TEACHER OF TRUTH"

1 CORINTHIANS 2:10-16

This Week's Core Competency

Authority of the Bible – I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action. 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

Believers have the Holy Spirit and because we do, we can "understand what God has freely given us" (1Co 2:12). We can understand "God's secret wisdom" (v. 7) revealed in the death of Christ through whom we have been justified by faith. Unbeliever's cannot comprehend the wisdom of God; the good news about Christ crucified doesn't make sense to them. According to Paul, it's a "stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1:23, 24). And why is it that we can comprehend what they can't? It's because we have received the Holy Spirit (2:12) who knows the very thoughts of God (v. 11). According to Paul, the Spirit taught him to "express spiritual truths in spiritual words" (v. 13), and the same is true for us for we, too, have the same Spirit.

The Spirit makes the difference because he is the one who enables us to understand God's revealed truth. One theologian writes, "Another aspect of the

The man who can see sees everything which belongs to the blind man, but no blind person can tell what he is doing.

-Chrysostom

Holy Spirit's revealing work is teaching certain things to God's people and illuminating them so that they can understand things. Jesus promised this teaching function especially to his disciples when he said that the Holy Spirit 'will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you' (John 14:26)" (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 645). But there's no reason to believe that Jesus' promise was for the twelve only. In the first place, it was tied to the gift of the Spirit (Ac 1:4) who was received by all when he came (2:16-18). What's more, it's implied by the ministry of the Spirit to believers in general mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament (cf., Eph 1:17-19a; 3:14-19).

As a result of the Spirit's ministry of illumination, Paul can say, "The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment" (1Co 2:15). This simply means that the one with the Holy Spirit is in a position to pass judgment on the foolishness of unbelief; whereas the one without the Holy Spirit is in no position to pass judgment on the wisdom of belief. Too bad, this verse has been so misused over the years by sects who throw it in the face of any who question their wrongheaded interpretations. "Almost every form of spiritual elitism, 'deeper life' movement, and 'second blessing' doctrine has appealed to this text. To receive the Spirit according to their special expression paves the way for people to know 'deeper truths' about God. One special brand of this elitism surfaces among some who have pushed the possibilities of 'faith' to the extreme, and regularly make a 'special revelation' from the Spirit their final court of appeal. Other

can't pg 2

'lesser' brothers and sisters are simply living below their full privileges in Christ. Indeed, some advocates of this form of spirituality bid fair to repeat the Corinthian error in its totality. What is painful about so much of this is not simply the improper use of this passage, but that so often it is accompanied by a toning down of the message of the cross. In fact one is hard pressed to hear the content of 'God's wisdom' ever expounded as the paradigm for truly Christian living.

"Paul's concern needs to be resurrected throughout the church. The gift of the Spirit does not lead to special status among believers; rather, it leads to special status vis-a-vis the world. But it should do so always in terms of the centrality of the message of our crucified/risen Savior. The Spirit should identify God's people in such a way that their values and worldview are radically different from the wisdom of this age. They do know what God is about in Christ; they do live out the life of the future in the present age that is passing away; they are marked by the cross forever. As such they are the people of the Spirit, who stand in bold contrast to those who are merely human and do not understand the scandal of the cross. Being spiritual does not lead to elitism; it leads to a deeper understanding of God's profound mystery-redemption through a crucified Messiah" (Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT, 120)

For Discussion

If the Holy Spirit illumines believers regarding profound spiritual truths, how come there are so many profound spiritual truths—like election and predestination, for example—that we don't understand, and how come believers disagree so widely with regard to what the Bible teaches?

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

1 Corinthians 2:10b-16

10bThe Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. 11For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. 13This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. 14The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness

to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment:

*16"For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?"
But we have the mind of Christ.*

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Box "even" indicating *emphasis* in v. 10b.
- * Circle "man's spirit" in v. 11.
- * Box "in the same way" indicating *comparison* in v. 11.
- * Draw a line from "except" to "except" in v. 11.
- * Bracket "of the world" in v. 12.
- * Box "but" indicating *contrast* in vv. 12, 13, 15, 16.
- * Box "that" indicating *purpose* in v. 12.
- * Underline "what God has freely given us" in v. 12.
- * Underline "expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words" in v. 13.
- * Circle "man without the Spirit" in v. 14.
- * Box "for" and "because" indicating *reason* in v. 14.
- * Circle "spiritual man" in v. 15.
- * Circle "the Lord" in v. 16.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Verse 10a says "God has revealed it to us." Verse 10b says, "The Spirit searches all things even the deep things of God." To what does "it," "all things," and the "deep things of God" refer? (Hint: read vv. 1-9.)
2. "The Spirit *searches* all things." Doesn't the word "searches" make it sound like the Spirit is trying to *find out* what he doesn't know? Explain.
3. According to one author, Paul's reason (v. 11) for saying what he said about the Spirit (v. 10) is based on the principle "like is known only by like." What do you think that means?
4. Explain the *contrast* in verse 12.
5. For what *purpose* have we received "the Spirit who is from God"?
6. You have a difficult interpretive decision to make. Which do you think best fits the context: "expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words" or "interpreting spiritual truths to spiritual men" (NIV mg.)? Explain.
7. In a nutshell, why can't unbelievers understand profound spiritual truths?
8. Explain the *contrast* in verse 15.
9. **Discussion:** Talk about the relationship of verse 16 to verse 15.

1 Corinthians 2:10b-16 is about the Holy Spirit. In it Paul describes one of the Spirit's ministries to believers and its consequences. His description unfolds more or less like this. In the first place, the Spirit "searches all things, even the deep things of God." In other words, the Holy Spirit comprehends fully "God's secret wisdom" (v. 6) and "what God has prepared for those who love him" (v. 9). Which explains why God has revealed these things to us by his Spirit (v.10a). The Spirit comprehends these profound truths because he knows God's thoughts (v. 11) because he is "from God" (v. 12) and is himself God. No one knows what's on a person's mind except the person himself. Likewise, no one knows what's on God's mind except God himself. One theologian writes, "God is transcendent; he goes beyond our categories of understanding. He can never be fully grasped within our finite concepts or by our human vocabulary. He can be understood, but not comprehensively. Correlated with God's transcendence is man's finiteness. He is a limited being in terms of both his point of origin in time and the extent to which he can grasp information. Consequently, he cannot formulate concepts which are commensurate with the nature of God" (Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1:247). "Only 'like is known by like;' only God can know God" (Fee, 110). It follows that God alone can reveal himself to us.

In the second place, believers have received the Spirit, not "the spirit of the world" but "the Spirit who is from God," so that "we may understand what God has freely given us" (v. 12). And we do! We understand God has manifested his wisdom in the good news about Christ and him crucified (v. 2) and has freely provided us with every spiritual blessing through faith so we say with Paul. "Praise be to the

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ" (Eph 1:3). We understand not because we are exceptionally bright but because we have the Spirit to teach us. When Jesus asked the disciples, "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven" (Mt 16:15-17). Peter didn't figure it out, and neither do we. We are taught these profound spiritual truths by God's Spirit.

Unbelievers, on the other hand, do not understand these things because they do not have the Spirit. Such things do not make sense to them; in their eyes they are foolishness. Their worldly wisdom goes like this. "You don't tug on Superman's cape. You don't spit into the wind. You don't pull the mask off the ol' Lone Ranger. And you don't mess around with Jim." The world's conventional wisdom agrees that "Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die" (Ro 5:7). But it vehemently disagrees that "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (v. 8). That's nuts!

All of this leads Paul to conclude that "the spiritual man," any person who has received the Holy Spirit, is equipped to judge the truth concerning spiritual things and his decisions are not subject to the judgment of unbelievers who have not received the Holy Spirit. They on the one hand have not known the mind of the Lord, while believers, on the other, have the mind of Christ.

The Message of this Passage

As a believer you can understand profound spiritual truths that are foolishness to unbelievers because you have received the Holy Spirit who explains spiritual truths to spiritual people.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you through his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James suggests in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Give Yourself Some Good Advice Based on the Message of this Passage.**

- **Pick a verse or verses from the passage to memorize or think about this week.**

- **Relate the message of this passage to any of the following:**
 - o Belonging
 - o Becoming
 - o *going Beyond*

- **Journal your thoughts on the passage.**

- **Home Group Discussion** (for those involved in the deeper connections of a home group)
Talk about the “For Discussion” topic on page 2.

“Illumination: Teacher of Truth”
(Use the space below for Sunday’s message notes)

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 10 **searches** The present tense here called a "general or gnomic present" is used to express customary actions and general truths" (Ernest De Witt Burton, *Moods and Tenses of the New Testament Greek*, 3rd ed., 8). This is what the Spirit does; he "searches," but not in order to know. The term means "to search," 'to penetrate,' "to examine" "to investigate," and in this context signifies that the Holy Spirit "knows" or "comprehends" God's plans and purposes, which implies his omniscience.

v. 10 **deep things** "The deep things of God designates God's essence, then his attributes, volitions, and plans" (F. L. Godet, *Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, 1:148). The term refers to God's secret wisdom (v. 7) or God's thoughts (v. 11) in particular with respect to the good news about the death of Christ for our sins. "The blessings of salvation were prepared by the Father, carried out by the Son, and applied by the Spirit (Eph. 1:3-14) to all believers who as a result love God (1 John 4:19). The only way the Corinthians could know this was by the Spirit, who knows and reveals these deep things of God about salvation" (David K. Lowery, "1 Corinthians," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 510).

v. 11 **the man's spirit** Not a reference to one part of a person—his spirit versus his soul or body—but "the man himself." "Human beings do not on their own possess the quality that would make it possible to know God or God's wisdom. Only 'like is know by like'; only God can know God. Therefore, the Spirit of God becomes the link between God and humanity, the 'quality' from God himself who makes the knowing possible . . . At the human level, I alone know what I am thinking, and no one else, unless I choose to reveal my thoughts in the form of words. So also only God knows what God is about. God's Spirit, therefore, who as God knows the mind of God, becomes the link to our knowing him also, because as v. 12 goes on to affirm: 'we have received the Spirit of God'" (Fee, 110, 12).

v. 12 **of the world** Not that a spirit other than the Holy Spirit exists, but that the Holy Spirit whom we have received is from God and not the world.

v. 12 **what . . . given** Paul's reference to "what God has freely given us" "picks up the motif in v. 9, 'what God has prepared for those who love him,' and gives us a clear glimpse into the content of the wisdom that God has revealed to his people by his Spirit [cf., vv. 6, 7] . . . Paul, in talking about God's wisdom in this passage, is referring to salvation through the crucified one (as in 1:23-24; 2:2). And God's people 'understand' that precisely because they have received the Spirit" (113).

v. 13 **spiritual words** With regard to the meaning of the last phrase in verse 13, did Paul intend, "expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words" (NIV; cf., NLT, NJB), "interpreting spiritual truths to spiritual men" (NIV mg.; cf., the NET Bible, HCSB, NRSV, TEV, ESV), or the least likely "comparing spiritual things with spiritual (NKJV). The question is whether the Greek word *pneumatikois* alludes to the just mentioned "words taught by the Spirit" and therefore means "spiritual words" or to its antithesis unspiritual people ("man without the Spirit") in verse 14 and therefore means "spiritual men." The grammar favors slightly the first option (115; cf., C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, HNTC, 76). "Most likely therefore he intended something like 'explaining the things of the Spirit [as described in v. 12] by means of the words taught by the Spirit,' that is, as Holladay (p. 47) suggests, 'in language appropriate to the message, not with human wisdom'" (115). The context is seen by others to favor the second option (Lowery, 510).

v. 14 **man without** Lit., the "natural man" (NASB, HCSB, NJB). The "natural person" (ESV) is an unbeliever, one who has not received the Holy Spirit (v. 12), one who knows only "the wisdom of the age" (v. 6); cf., "The unbeliever does not receive the things of the Spirit of God" (the NET Bible). "The natural man is most easily defined negatively: he is a man who has not received the Holy Spirit. His natural resources, for example his intellectual resources, are, or may be, complete; his is not in any ordinary sense a 'bad man', or a foolish man, or an irreligious man. But lacking the Spirit of God he cannot apprehend spiritual truths" (Barrett, 77).

v. 15 **spiritual man** I.e., a person who has the Spirit, any believer—not just those who have "become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:13).

v. 15 **but** "The person lacking the Spirit cannot discern what God is doing; the one with the Spirit is able to do so because of the Spirit; therefore, the one without the Spirit cannot 'examine,' or 'make judgments' on, the person with the Spirit. In its first instance this simply means that the person who belongs to this age [i.e., doesn't have the Spirit] is not in a position to judge as 'foolish' the person who belongs to the age to come [the one who does have the Spirit]" (Fee, 118). Chrysostom wrote, "The man who can see sees everything which belongs to the blind man, but no blind person can tell what he is doing. Likewise, we who believe can understand both our own affairs and those of unbelievers, but they are helpless when it comes to trying to understand us" (Gerald Bray, ed., *1-2 Corinthians*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, 26).

v. 16 **mind of Christ** The implied answer to the rhetorical question, "who has known the mind of the Lord" (God) is "no one"—at least until now. But now that we have the Holy Spirit, we have the "mind of Christ" and therefore understand what he thinks (vv. 11, 12).

Connect the **FAMILY**. During this series, Bible stories appropriate for children will be used that complement the adult teaching.

Experience it!

Experience scripture through the activity-based learning exercise. Dinner is a perfect time to engage the family.

Read Acts 8:26-35. The story describes Phillip as "running up to the chariot" and then "he told him the good news about Jesus." Pretend you are Phillip and one of your family members is the eunuch. Role play and explain the good news about Jesus. It's great to practice sharing the story, but look for an opportunity this week to really tell someone the story of Jesus!



Pray it!

Help your child use scriptures to guide their prayers. Explain to them God is always pleased with their prayers when they use his words from the Bible.

God give me understanding and I will keep your law and obey it with all my heart. Ps 119:34

Post it!

Post the kid-friendly Core Competency and the memory verse throughout the house. Lead your children to interact with them as they memorize.

Authority of the Bible – I believe the Bible is God's book that tells me what to believe and do.

Memory verse – "All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2Ti 3:16, 17

Discuss it!

Discover biblical truth by discussing the scripture. Reflective questions are great with older kids.

- *How did Phillip know he should go near the eunuch's chariot?
- *Why do you think Philip "ran" to the chariot?
- *How come the eunuch could not understand what he was reading?
- *If you were Phillip how would you have explained the verses in Isaiah?

Live it!

Live out the Core Competency and build deeper relationships by doing this activity.

Can you believe we will be in The Connection on Sunday? There are so many exciting elements to the building, but the very best is knowing kids of all ages will be hearing stories from the Bible! Just like the eunuch needed Phillip to tell him about Jesus, all the friends of Pantego kids need someone to tell them about Jesus, too! Invite friends to join your family at the Grand Opening this Sunday.



Challenge

Kids preschool through sixth grade receive a prize for completing a Connect the Family activity.

My family completed at least one Connect the Family activity this week.

Child's name _____ Parent's signature _____

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians*

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.