

# Life Group Questions

Oct 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Wisdom of the Spirit** – Pastor Vinh Doan – **2 Corinthians 2:6-16**

## Note from Pastor Jonathan

Hey Life Groups!

Our annual Fall Leader Appreciation Dinner is coming up on November 8. We'll have an announcement with more details to come.

### OPENING QUESTIONS (Pick Any Questions You Like)

1. **What makes someone mature?**
2. **How does the wisdom of the world go against Jesus' crucifixion?**
3. **Have you ever wanted to live in a fictional world? Why?**
4. **Have you ever tried to guess what someone was thinking? How did it go?**
5. **What do world rulers not understand about God's wisdom?**
6. **What are some limitations of trying to figure things out on our own?**

### LET'S DIG IN (Pick Any Questions You Like)

7. **What's the secret and hidden wisdom of God?**
8. **How can we understand the wisdom of God?**
9. **Why do we need to rely on the Holy Spirit?**
10. **How can we rely on the Holy Spirit to let us know what God wants?**

### NOTES

**The Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith on the Holy Spirit**

**Color Coding the Passage**

### **1 Corinthians 2:6–16**

<sup>6</sup> Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. <sup>7</sup> But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. <sup>8</sup> None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. <sup>9</sup> But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him” —

<sup>10</sup> these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit.

For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. <sup>11</sup> For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup> Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. <sup>13</sup> And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

<sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. <sup>16</sup> “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

## OPENING QUESTIONS (Pick Any Questions You Like)

### 1. What makes someone mature?

We usually associate maturity with age, but we've all met mature younger people and immature older people. Besides age, what comes to mind when you think of someone who is mature? Are there character attributes they have or experiences they've gone through? Can you tell if someone's mature by how they look or do you need to dig a little deeper?

In today's passage, Paul points out the Corinthians' spiritual immaturity. No matter where we are, let's grow deeper in spiritual maturity.

### 2. How does the wisdom of the world go against Jesus' crucifixion?

We covered this last week, but it's related to this passage and good to review. Some examples include death as a sign of weakness, crucifixion as evidence of wrongdoing, or self-sacrifice as unpleasant.

Draw on what your classmates or co-workers value, what popular celebrities embody, what advertisements promise, or your tendencies. What contradicts God's wisdom?

In today's passage, Paul tells the Corinthians that they were behaving in a worldly way. Let's see if we're following God's wisdom or our own.

### 3. Have you ever wanted to live in a fictional world? Why?

Would you live in a Korean drama where everyone's beautiful, slow-motion abounds, and heartbreak gets resolved in the rain? Maybe you want to live in a Harry Potter world where you study cool spells and play quidditch. Video game nerds might want to live in Stardew Valley to do some peaceful farming or Animal Crossing to chill with animal friends. How about Demolition Man where crime is almost nonexistent and Taco Bell is the only restaurant to eat at?

Paul writes in today's passage that the life God has prepared for us goes beyond anything we've seen, heard, or even imagined.

### 4. Have you ever tried to guess what someone was thinking? How did it go?

I used to watch lots of crime shows, especially funny ones. The 99<sup>th</sup> Precinct (Brooklyn 99) is full of wacky detectives using unorthodox techniques to find the criminal (<https://youtu.be/HlBYdiXdUa8>). Shawn Spencer (Psych) pretends to be psychic but uses his uncanny abilities of observation and memory to find clues to reveal what happened (<https://youtu.be/nsJu-V7bFQI>). Troy and Abed (Community) use a good cop/bad cop routine to find the truth (<https://youtu.be/U9O2nVgz0Cs>).

Unfortunately, real life isn't that easy! Sometimes we make bad inferences and assumptions. We read signs that aren't there. I'm sure we've all made some pretty bad mistakes.

Thankfully, God gives us the Holy Spirit so we don't have to guess what He's thinking.

## **5. What do world rulers not understand about God's wisdom?**

Election season is coming! We have provincial elections coming up soon. Down south, the US presidential election is coming, too. But I'm not here to start a political debate! What themes do you see that are universal in politics? Where do most, if not all, world rulers fail to heed God's wisdom?

For example, politicians from all parties often pick their views based on what's popular to their base instead of starting with Biblical principles and working towards that. Many try to pass self-serving policies that get them funding or help them personally instead of being self-sacrificial like Jesus. Bending the truth and flat-out lies are sadly common because many politicians think it's necessary to win, instead of trusting in God. There's lots of hate and name-calling everywhere, but Jesus calls us to love our enemies. What do you see?

As we'll see in this week's passage, God's wisdom isn't naturally accessible. We need the Holy Spirit to help us understand and follow God's wisdom.

## **6. What are some limitations of trying to figure things out on our own?**

Limitations might include resources. I can't figure out what's at the bottom of the ocean or on other planets, because I don't have a submarine or a big enough telescope. Maybe experience, because I can't go back in time to experience the past or die and come back to tell people what happens after death. I can't read minds, so I can only guess what people are thinking unless they tell me truthfully.

In today's passage, Paul writes about the limitations of learning about God's thinking and plans on our own. We need someone else (the Holy Spirit) to let us know what God's thinking.

LET'S DIG IN (Pick Any Questions You Like)

## 7. What's the secret and hidden wisdom of God?

**About Jesus.** The Jewish religious rulers (Pharisees, Sadducees, Sanhedrin) and Roman political rulers (Pilate, Herod) didn't understand who Jesus was and what He came to do. They thought He was some rabble-rouser, trying to upset the religious and political world to further an earthly agenda. If they did understand, they would never have crucified Jesus. Even though Jesus was dying on the cross, He prayed for their forgiveness because He knew they didn't know what they were doing (Luke 23:34).

**Decreed before the ages.** This was nothing new. God's plan came way before Jesus was born on earth (Ephesians 1:3-5). God sent tons of messages about Jesus through prophets (<https://www.gotquestions.org/prophesies-of-Jesus.html>). Roughly 2,000 years before Jesus' birth, God promised He would bless the world through a couple named Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 12:3). Even before that, He promised the first mom (Eve) that her descendant would crush evil (Genesis 3:14-15). God made his plan way before He created the earth and was progressively revealing His plan.

**For our glory.** We all break God's good laws and deserve God's punishment. Despite that, God still loved us so much that He sent Jesus (John 3:16). Jesus fulfilled all of God's laws so He deserved God's reward and blessing. Instead of enjoying a comfortable life, He sacrificed Himself by letting the religious and political leaders kill Him on the cross. He sacrificed Himself to pay the penalty for our sins so we wouldn't have to face God's punishment.

Jesus also gives us the rewards that He earned for His perfect life. Jesus is the Lord of Glory. Glory refers to "the condition of being bright or shining, brightness, splendor, radiance" (BDAG). Jesus lets us shine like Him and be with Him forever (John 17:3). What will that be like? Paul tells us that nobody has any idea how amazing our future with God will be. Think of every depiction of heaven or the afterlife you've ever seen or heard of. Read John's vision in Revelation (Revelation 21-22). Whatever you thought of is nothing close to what God has in store.

## 8. How can we understand the wisdom of God?

Here are two terms: General and Special Revelation (<https://www.gotquestions.org/general-special-revelation.html>).

**General Revelation** is how God reveals Himself through His creation. People can learn about God by looking at and experiencing the world. What can you learn from God's creation?

We know God is an amazing Creator and unbelievably powerful (Psalm 19:1-2). Check out how big (and tiny) the universe is: <https://youtu.be/8Are9dDbW24>. In most of human history, we had no clue that 99% of that existed.

Did you know there are over 15,000 types of ants (<https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2201550119>)? Ants! He could have just made 100, but He loves to be creative. If you've traveled (or watched travel shows), you've seen how incredibly beautiful the world is ([https://youtu.be/Cl\\_kXbhTi8k](https://youtu.be/Cl_kXbhTi8k)) and how diverse the world is (<https://youtu.be/T3OfWBxWRhE>). We can see that God's creativity goes beyond our comprehension.

We enjoy joy through joyous occasions, so we know God loves joy. People naturally desire love, so we know that God cares about love. Although our ability to determine right from wrong is imperfect, the fact that we have an inherent sense of morality points to a God who also cares about right and wrong (Romans 1:18-23).

**Special Revelation.** There is so much more to God that we can't figure out on our own. It's hard enough to guess or infer what other people are thinking, even though they are humans like us. We don't even have body language or subtle cues to help us know what's going on in God's mind. And God's mind is a gazillion times more advanced than ours (Isaiah 55:8-9). God must let us know what He's thinking, so He used dreams, visions, angels, and the prophets. Ultimately, He sent Jesus to tell us.

So, Paul writes that the Spirit of God has to pass on knowledge to us.

## 9. Why do we need to rely on the Holy Spirit?

Here are two big reasons.

**Revealing.** We believe the Bible is more than just a great book written by smart authors. All the prophecies were given by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). All our Bible is "breathed out by God" (2 Timothy 3:16), meaning He worked through the many authors to write down His message. That's why the Bible is our primary source of wisdom. Christian authors can write good stuff, but the Bible is authoritative and what we use to check because that's God's revelation.

**Understanding.** The Holy Spirit enables us to understand God's truth and wisdom. Lots of people read the Bible but don't believe in Jesus because it's foolishness to the world (see last week's sermon). In Jesus' day, the Pharisees were religious scholars who knew God's prophecies and law inside out. God was pointing people to Jesus (Luke 24:44-47), but the Pharisees used the law to make themselves look super religious and better than other people. The apostle Paul was a perfect example. He needed God to show him the truth.

Millions of people from other religions also know the Bible. Ironically, there are Bible scholars who don't believe the Bible. Many Muslims, Mormons, atheists, and more have read the Bible but continue to believe what they believe. They need the Holy Spirit to enable them to understand.

## 10. How can we rely on the Holy Spirit to let us know what God wants?

**Understanding.** It's important to learn Bible study techniques (e.g., understanding the historical and biblical context of a passage) and use the brains God has given to us to read the Bible. But are we relying on those alone to understand what God is saying? We should ask the Holy Spirit to help us understand what He wants us to know.

Without the Spirit's help, we may end up with the wrong application. Lots of preachers and teachers interpret the Bible their own way, including prosperity preachers, cult leaders, and more. Instead of seeking what God wants them to know, they use the Bible to justify their thinking.

For example, when I read the Bible, I used to always think about who *else* needed to hear this stuff. Who is doing it wrong and needs to change? The Holy Spirit showed me that I needed to hear God's Word first for myself. He's also been showing me areas that He wants me to grow.

**Testing.** We hear lots of opinions and ideas everywhere we go. From our schools, co-workers, the news, and random people we may meet. But who is speaking God's truth? If we're not careful, we might end up believing the wrong things.

## NOTES

### THE HOLY SPIRIT

MB Confession -- The Holy Spirit, the Counsellor, is the creative power, presence, and wisdom of God. The Spirit convicts people of sin, gives them new life, and guides them into all truth. By the Spirit, believers are baptized into one body. The indwelling Spirit testifies that they are God's children, distributes gifts for ministry, empowers for witness, and produces the fruit of righteousness. As Comforter, the Holy Spirit helps God's children in their weakness, intercedes for them according to God's will, and assures them of eternal life.

### COLOR-CODED

1 Corinthians 2:6–16

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<sup>10</sup> these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. <sup>11</sup> For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup> Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. <sup>13</sup> And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

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I like to color code when I look at a passage with lots of patterns.

The focus of this passage is about wisdom. On one side there's the wisdom that's of this age and of the rulers of this age. It's given by the spirit of the world. But people can't find God's wisdom, because it's secret and hidden. None of the rulers of this age understood and no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined. This kind of wisdom is not taught by human wisdom and the natural person is not able to understand.

So, we need the Spirit of God to reveal it to us, especially since only He knows the thoughts/mind of God. He not only teaches this wisdom but also interprets spiritual truths.