

## **Nous**

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I Corinthians 2:10-16

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Has the Bible ever seemed inconceivable to you? I'll be honest with you if you'll be honest with yourself. There was a time in my life when this Bible of ours made absolutely no sense to me. It was nothing more than a jumbled collection of wild stories and meaningless statements. I'd set through Sunday School class while the teacher moved the figures around the flannel graph, still not getting the point behind the story (trust me, you haven't lived until you've helped your mom cut out flannel graph people the night before Sunday School). Even in college, I would set through a Bible Study scratching my head. What we were reading just didn't make sense. And the problem was I knew it should. It was supposed to impact me or change me just like everyone else in the room, but it never did.

So there I was, a young man in college who could not make heads or tails out of the Bible. And I didn't understand why. But something happened at a different Bible Study a few years later that opened my eyes. Somehow we got to talking about dinosaurs, and the leader answered the one question that had been a hindrance of mine for years. The very next time I opened my Bible, it suddenly began to make sense. Things became clear. I was able to finally understand what God was trying to say to us through His word.

There is a big difference between knowing what the Bible says and understanding what it teaches. And the problem is that there are far too many who simply know; far too many who do not understand. I suspect, if you would be honest with yourself, there many of you who merely know what the Bible says. And you rely upon others to help you understand. But you don't have to remain there. You don't have to look around the room and figure you're the only one not getting this. You too can have the same gift I was given, this gift that Paul wanted the Corinthian church to have as well; something he called *Nous*; The Mind of Christ.

As Paul is dealing with the divisions within the Corinthian Church, he first reminds them that God has given us His Word which should unite us and bind us together. We have His teaching that gives us clear direction and purpose in our Christian living. Then he mentions a second gift that God gives us, and that is His

Spirit. (**Read 1 Corinthians 2:10-16**). Paul presents a contrast here between those who only have a physical life and those who have welcomed God Spirit. The natural person cannot understand God's Truth because they lack the revealing power of God's Spirit. Without God's Spirit, the teaching of Scripture and the Words of Christ are inconceivable.

Okay, this is one of the basic foundations of being a Christian. You confess to God that you are a sinful person, and you accept the offer Jesus made when He died upon the cross. Do this, and God promises to give us His Spirit (*And when you believed in Christ, He identified you as His own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom He promised long ago.*<sup>1</sup> - Ephesians 1:13). And it is the Spirit that helps us understand Scripture (*Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.*<sup>2</sup> - Luke 24:45). The Christian's in Corinth needed it, I needed it, and so do you as well. We all need the Holy Spirit to understand God and what He is trying to teach us.

Since that's true, why do you suppose Paul points out this basic teaching to these Christians? Why is this gift of the Spirit part of Paul's solution to the divisions taking place within this church? It appears part of the problem was that people were trying to lead who did not possess the Mind of Christ.

Paul is telling this Church that they cannot lead according to the world's wisdom, and they cannot use their own understanding to explain spiritual ideas and Spiritual truths. To combat their division, Paul is giving them two boundaries that should guide and direct them as a church and as individual Christians; God's Spirit and God's Truth.

As we live out our Christian lives, God has provided us two boundaries that guide and direct us; His Spirit and His truth. Without the Spirit it is impossible to discern God's Truth. Without Truth, we succumb to the folly of human wisdom and human passion. God has granted us these two things to guide us and direct us, but most of all to unite us. And I say that because it is the Spirit that moves us beyond legalism, and it is the Truth that keeps us from thinking too highly of ourselves.

Here is the damage that can occur in a church not guided by the Spirit and the Truth (or God's Word). Notice that the divisions in Corinth stemmed from two

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<sup>1</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>2</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

things; groups who would restrict God to only those who thought just like them (see 1:13), and groups that felt their superior understanding made them more holy and righteous than the others (see 1:29). That's why Paul tells them that to truly be a follower of Christ, these Christians must be guided by these two things. They help keep them closely united as one body under the Lordship of Christ.

Think about it. A person who only focuses upon the Spirit might find themselves believing anything they may fancy. For example, they embrace homosexuality because they have ignored God's truth that convicts. And a person who only embraces Truth will not just hate the sin, but hate the sinner as well. And their absence of Grace will drive a person away from God.

As I watch Christian from all walks of life come together, there always seems to be this either/or mentality. A person is either grounded in the truth or spiritual. And eventually they break apart over their differences of opinion. Truth is, both groups are wrong. They're missing the point. Jesus has said that it is both Spirit and Truth that God desires from us (*But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way.*<sup>3</sup> - John 4:23). A Christian cannot embrace one and ignore the other. All it will do is create divisions.

Well there I go again. talking about the whole division thing. But it is really such a problem today. Seems Christians spend more time dividing than reaching people for Christ. But for you, I want you to know the good news. You do not have to remain clueless. God is ready to grant you the understanding of who He is and what He has said. All you need to do is ask. God is faithful. To those who ask, they will receive. To those who hunger and thirst, He will pour out His Spirit. We are not left to figure these things out on our own. The Advocate will be given, the Spirit will reveal to us the *Nous*; the mind of God. And then, oh my, then you may know the wonderful, glorious things that God has planned; things you could not possibly imagine!

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<sup>3</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.