SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

1 Corinthians 2

Christ Crucified and the Mind of Christ — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-15 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

A trembling man preached a crucified Savior in the Spirit's power, so that faith would rest on God and not on the messenger. What the world cannot see, the Spirit shows to everyone who loves God — and in Christ we are given His very mind.

00 The Text

1 CORINTHIANS 2 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God.

2 For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

3 I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling,

4 and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

5 so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

6 Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away;

7 but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory;

8 the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;

9 but just as it is written, "THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND which HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."

10 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,

13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

15 But he who is spiritual ⟲ appraises all things, yet he himself is ⟲ appraised by no one.

16 For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But ☆ we have the mind of Christ.

Marked in the text

- **v1** “superiority of speech” — Sin / warning
- **v1** “the testimony of God” — God — His character & actions
- **v2** “I determined” — Command / instruction
- **v2** “Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” — God — His character & actions
- **v3** “in weakness and in fear and in much trembling” — Time / place / contrast
- **v4** “persuasive words of wisdom” — Sin / warning
- **v4** “demonstration of the Spirit and of power” — God — His character & actions
- **v5** “the power of God” — God — His character & actions
- **v6** “who are passing away” — Sin / warning
- **v7** “the hidden wisdom” — God — His character & actions
- **v7** “predestined before the ages to our glory” — Promise / blessing
- **v8** “the Lord of glory” — God — His character & actions
- **v9** “ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM” — Promise / blessing
- **v10** “to us God revealed them through the Spirit” — God — His character & actions
- **v10** “the depths of God” — God — His character & actions
- **v12** “not the spirit of the world” — Time / place / contrast
- **v12** “the Spirit who is from God” — Promise / blessing
- **v12** “freely given to us by God” — Promise / blessing
- **v13** “taught by the Spirit” — God — His character & actions
- **v14** “a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God” — Sin / warning
- **v14** “foolishness to him” — Sin / warning
- **v16** “we have the mind of Christ” — Promise / blessing
- **v1** “wisdom” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v4** “Spirit” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v14** “appraised” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v15** “appraises” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

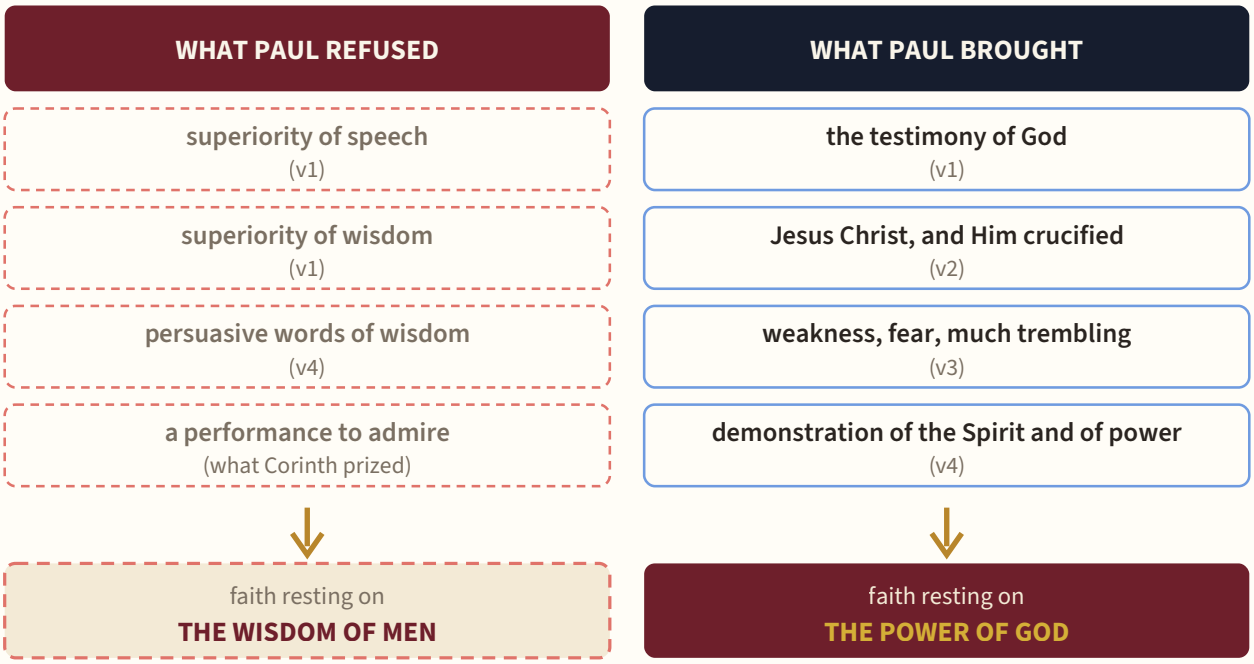
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 2:10

"For to us △God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even △the depths of God."

FIGURE · TWO FOUNDATIONS FOR FAITH



Guzik: "what you draw them with is what you draw them to." — Paul chose the right-hand column on purpose (v5).

Paul set aside everything in the left column on purpose, so that the faith of the Corinthians would rest on the foundation at the bottom right (v5).

Setting. Paul keeps going with the argument of 1:17–31. He has said God saves through the "foolish" message of the cross and calls "foolish" people; now he shows that he *preached* that way too (vv1–5). Then he turns the word "wisdom" around: the gospel *is* wisdom — God's, not the world's — and only the Spirit can open it (vv6–16). Paul had come to Corinth from Athens (Acts 17–18) and stayed a year and a half.

Who: Paul ("when I came to you, brethren," v1); the Corinthians; "those who are mature" (v6); "the rulers of this age" (vv6, 8); the Lord of glory (v8); "those who love Him" (v9); the Spirit of God (vv10–14); the natural man (v14) and the spiritual man (v15).

Structure:

- vv1–5 — **how Paul came:** not with superiority of speech or of wisdom (v1); "I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (v2); in weakness, fear and much trembling (v3); not

persuasive words of wisdom but "demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (v4) — **purpose:** "so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God" (v5).

- vv6–9 — **God's hidden wisdom:** spoken among the mature; not of this age or of its rulers, who are passing away (v6); a mystery predestined before the ages "to our glory" (v7); had the rulers understood it, "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (v8); Isaiah 64:4 paraphrased (v9).
- vv10–13 — **revealed by the Spirit:** God revealed it "through the Spirit," who searches "the depths of God" (v10); only a man's spirit knows his thoughts, only God's Spirit knows God's (v11); we received the Spirit "so that we may know the things freely given to us by God" (v12), and speak in words the Spirit teaches (v13).
- vv14–16 — **two kinds of men:** the natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit; they are foolishness to him (v14); the spiritual man appraises all things (v15); Isaiah 40:13 quoted, then the climax: "But we have the mind of Christ" (v16).

Repeated words, with counts:

- "wisdom" ×9 — vv1, 4, 5, 6 (×2), 7 (×2), 8, 13.
- "Spirit" ×7 — vv4, 10 (×2), 11, 12, 13, 14; plus "spirit" ×2 — v11 ("the spirit of the man"), v12 ("the spirit of the world"). Nine in all (Greek *pneuma*).
- "spiritual / spiritually" ×4 — vv13 (×2), 14, 15.
- "God" ×11 — vv1, 5, 7, 9, 10 (×2), 11 (×2), 12 (×2), 14; plus "God's" v7.
- knowing words ×8 — "know" vv2, 12; "knows" v11 (×2); "understood" v8 (×2); "understand" v14; "known" v16.
- "things" ×6 — vv9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15.
- "age / ages" ×4 — vv6 (×2), 7, 8; "rulers" ×2 — vv6, 8.
- "speech / speak" ×4 — vv1, 6, 7, 13; "words" ×3 — vv4, 13 (×2).
- "appraised / appraises" ×3 — vv14, 15 (×2) (Greek *anakrinō*).
- "man" ×4 — vv9, 11 (×2), 14; "men" ×2 — vv5, 11.
- pairs: "power" vv4, 5; "crucified" vv2, 8; "glory" vv7, 8; "Lord" vv8, 16; "mind" v16 (×2).

Contrasts: wisdom of men ⟷ power of God (v5); persuasive words ⟷ demonstration of the Spirit (v4); wisdom of this age ⟷ God's hidden wisdom (vv6–7); rulers passing away ⟷ "to our glory" (vv6–7); the spirit of the world ⟷ the Spirit who is from God (v12); words taught by human wisdom ⟷ words taught by the Spirit (v13); the natural man ⟷ the spiritual man (vv14–15); who has known the mind of the LORD? ⟷ we have the mind of Christ (v16).

Time words: "when I came to you" (v1); "before the ages" (v7); "this age … passing away" (v6).

Terms of purpose / explanation: "so that your faith would not rest" (v5); "for if they had understood it" (v8); "for the Spirit searches all things" (v10); "so that we may know" (v12); "because they are spiritually appraised" (v14).

Shape of the chapter: a descent — from the surface (what the Corinthians saw in Paul, 1–5), to a wisdom hidden beneath (6–9), into the depths of God that only the Spirit searches (10–13), and finally inside the believer, who is given the mind of Christ (14–16). "Wisdom" dominates the first half, "Spirit" the second; by verse 16 they have met.

Chapter theme (my words): God's wisdom is a crucified Christ, preached by a weak man, so that faith rests on God's power. What no eye could see, the Spirit reveals to those who love Him — and He gives them the mind of Christ.

02 Interpretation

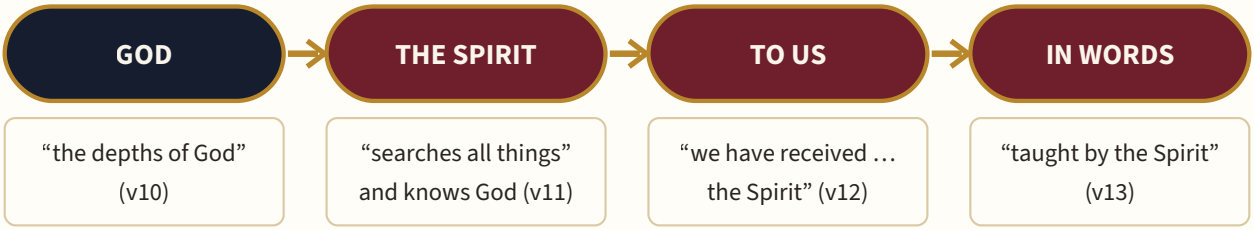
WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 2:14

"But ⚠ a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and ⚠ he cannot understand them, because ◷ they are spiritually appraised."

FIGURE · FROM THE DEPTHS OF GOD TO THE WORDS OF THE APOSTLES

HOW THE DEPTHS OF GOD REACH US · 1 CORINTHIANS 2:10–13



THE ARGUMENT OF VERSE 11 — LIKE IS KNOWN BY LIKE

the thoughts of a man	=	the thoughts of God
known only by "the spirit of the man"		known only by "the Spirit of God"

Not "the spirit of the world" but "the Spirit who is from God" —
"so that we may know the things freely given to us by God" (v12)

Follow the arrows: what no eye saw is known by the Spirit, given to us, and spoken in words He teaches — and verse 11 shows why only He can do it.

FIGURE · THE NATURAL MAN AND THE SPIRITUAL MAN

1 COR 2:14–16	THE NATURAL MAN *psychikos — soul-level only*	THE SPIRITUAL MAN *pneumatikos — Spirit-indwelt*
GOD'S THINGS	"does not accept the things of the Spirit of God" (v14)	has "received … the Spirit who is from God" (v12)
HOW THEY LOOK	"foolishness to him" (v14; compare 1:18)	"the things freely given to us by God" (v12)
ABILITY	"he cannot understand them" — no organ to see with (v14)	"appraises all things" (v15)
UNDER EXAMINATION	judges by what works, the bottom line (Guzik)	"appraised by no one" — no natural standard fits him (v15)
THE MIND	"Who has known the mind of the Lord?" (v16, from Isa 40:13)	"But we have the mind of Christ" (v16)

What moves a man from the left column to the right is not education but new birth.
Spurgeon: "you cannot educate an old nature into a new one."

Paul's two men differ not in intelligence but in the Spirit: one cannot receive God's things, the other has been given the mind of Christ.

How Paul preached (vv1–5). Guzik sets this against Corinth's love of polished rhetoric (Barclay: "Corinth put a premium on the veneer of false rhetoric and thin thinking"). Paul came as a witness, "an ambassador, not a salesman." Sproul calls verse 1 "the first principle of godly ministry and leadership—that we do not assume a posture of superiority." *(A textual note: some early manuscripts read "mystery" instead of "testimony" in v1; the meaning is close either way.)*

"Nothing … except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (v2). Not a refusal of all other knowledge. Fee (in Guzik) calls it a "singular focus"; Sproul calls it hyperbole, "a form of emphasis that uses intentional exaggeration," because "the central point of importance was the cross." Spurgeon's sermon title says it best: Paul was "The Man of One Subject." Paul had just come from Athens (Acts 17); some think he changed approach after Mars Hill, others answer that Acts 17 shows no failure. Either way the resolve is clear, and *ekrina* means a settled decision.

Weakness, fear and trembling (v3). Guzik: possibly illness, possibly the threat of persecution (Vincent; Calvin) — compare Acts 18:9–10, where the Lord told him not to be afraid. G. Campbell Morgan (in Guzik): "Those are the secrets of strength in all preaching." Henry reads it as humility — Paul "fearful of himself, lest he should mismanage in his trust." Sproul adds a pastor's angle: Paul "was constantly identifying with the weaknesses, fears, and trembling of his people."

The Spirit's demonstration (vv4–5). Guzik: "it is the preacher's job to preach and it is the Holy Spirit's job to demonstrate," and "what you draw them with is what you draw them to." Sproul: Paul's words are powerful only

"insofar as the Spirit of God attends them and uses them and carries them home." Henry: Paul preached plainly "lest it should be said that either rhetoric or logic had made them Christians."

Who are "the mature" (v6)? Guzik gives two readings: believers as opposed to unbelievers, or grown believers as opposed to infants. Since Paul calls the Corinthians "infants in Christ" in 3:1 and uses *teleios* elsewhere for grown believers (Phil 3:15; Eph 4:13; 1 Cor 14:20), the second has strong support. Henry: "those who are well instructed in Christianity."

Who are "the rulers of this age" (vv6, 8)? A real debate, going back to Origen and Chrysostom (Guzik). (1) The human rulers who crucified Jesus — Henry: "The Roman governor, and the guides and rulers of the Jewish church"; Morris (in Guzik): "Paul habitually ascribes power to the demonic forces, but not ignorance." (2) The demonic powers behind them, who did not foresee their own defeat at the cross (Col 2:15). (3) Both together. On any reading they did not understand God's plan — had they, they would never have crucified "the Lord of glory" — and they are passing away.

"The Lord of glory" crucified (v8). Guzik: perhaps the loftiest title Paul gives Jesus, "certain proof that Paul regarded Jesus as God." Henry: "a title much too great for any creature to bear." Sproul (in *The Truth of the Cross*, not on this verse) guards how to say it: the divine nature did not die, but "It's the God-man Who dies."

"Eye has not seen" (v9). Often read at funerals as a description of heaven. Guzik argues that misses the context: verse 10 says God *has revealed* these things, so Paul means the gospel now made known (Clarke agrees). Spurgeon: "the apostle is not talking about heaven at all" — though he then applies the principle to heaven. Henry holds both: things prepared "in a future life," but here especially "the subject-matter of the divine revelation under the gospel." Paul is paraphrasing Isaiah 64:4 (Hodge in Guzik: "To use the language of Scripture").

The Spirit who searches (vv10–12). Only a man's own spirit knows his thoughts; only God's Spirit knows God's. Guzik's picture: you can guess what your dog is thinking, but you won't really know unless it could tell you. Henry draws from these verses "a double argument" for the Spirit's deity. Sproul keeps it anchored: this is not "psychic experience or mystical intuition" — "through the Spirit, God speaks to us in the Scriptures." Guzik is careful: every believer can grasp the gospel's basics, but not every believer has equal wisdom.

Verse 13's last phrase. "Combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words" (NASB), "comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (KJV), or "explaining spiritual things to spiritual persons" (Clarke, cited by Guzik). Henry reads it as comparing "one part of revelation with another," the New Testament with the types and prophecies of the Old. The Greek allows each.

Natural man and spiritual man (vv14–15) — faculty or will? The natural man (*psychikos*) lives on the level of the soul alone — unregenerate (Guzik). Spurgeon puts the problem in the man's equipment: "He lacks the organs, he has no ear of faith, no eye of faith," and "you cannot educate an old nature into a new one." Henry says it a little differently: "Not that the natural faculty of discerning is lost, but evil inclinations and wicked principles render the man unwilling." Both land in the same place: only the Spirit can do it. Guzik adds a warning for believers: we can drift into the natural man's way of judging — "what works," the "bottom line." And verse 15 does not put Christians above correction; it means no natural standard can rightly judge a spiritual man.

"We have the mind of Christ" (v16). Isaiah 40:13 asks who has directed the Spirit (Greek OT: the mind) of the LORD — Yahweh. Paul answers with Christ. Guzik: "because Jesus is Yahweh!" Henry: "the mind of Christ is the mind of God." Sproul: leaders must help God's people "reflect the mind of Christ and not the mind of the secular community in which we live."

Word study (Greek):

- **determined — *krinō* (G2919):** to judge, decide; a settled verdict (v2).
- **crucified — *stauroō* (G4717):** perfect participle in v2 — crucified and remaining the Crucified One (vv2, 8).
- **superiority / excellency — *hyperochē* (G5247):** a rising above; eminence (v1).
- **testimony — *martyrion* (G3142):** witness, evidence (v1).
- **weakness — *astheneia* (G769):** frailty, lack of strength, sometimes sickness (v3; 2 Cor 12:9).
- **trembling — *tromos* (G5156):** a quaking; with *phobos* (G5401), "fear and trembling" (v3).
- **persuasive — *peithos* (G3981):** enticing, persuasive; found nowhere else in the NT (v4).
- **demonstration — *apodeixis* (G585):** proof, a showing-forth; also only here (v4).
- **power — *dynamis* (G1411):** might, ability; the power of God on which faith rests (vv4, 5).
- **mature / perfect — *teleios* (G5046):** complete, full-grown (v6).
- **rulers / princes — *archōn* (G758):** a chief, a ruler (vv6, 8).
- **passing away — *katargeō* (G2673):** to make idle, nullify, abolish (v6; 1:28; 15:24, 26).
- **mystery — *mystērion* (G3466):** a secret now revealed by God, not a puzzle (v7).
- **hidden — *apokryptō* (G613):** to hide away; perfect participle, "having been hidden" (v7).
- **predestined — *proorizō* (G4309):** to mark out beforehand (v7; Rom 8:29).
- **glory — *doxa* (G1391):** honor, splendor — "to our glory," "the Lord of glory" (vv7, 8).
- **searches — *eraunaō* (G2045):** to examine closely, investigate (v10; Rom 8:27).
- **depths — *bathos* (G899):** the deep things (v10; Rom 11:33).
- **freely given — *charizomai* (G5483):** to give as a grace-gift (v12; Rom 8:32).
- **combining — *synkrinō* (G4793):** to combine, compare, interpret (v13; 2 Cor 10:12).
- **natural — *psychikos* (G5591):** soulish; of the natural life only (v14; 15:44–46; Jude 19).
- **accept — *dechomai* (G1209):** to receive, welcome (v14).
- **foolishness — *mōria* (G3472):** folly (v14; 1:18, 21, 23).
- **spiritual — *pneumatikos* (G4152):** of, from, or governed by the Spirit (vv13, 15).
- **appraise / discern — *anakrinō* (G350):** to examine and judge; ten of its sixteen NT uses are in 1 Corinthians (vv14, 15 ×2; Acts 17:11).
- **mind — *nous* (G3563):** understanding, way of thinking (v16; Rom 12:2).
- **instruct — *symbibazō* (G4822):** to bring together, teach (v16).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **The cross was a decision, not a default** — *ekrina*, "I determined" (v2).
2. **Still the Crucified One** — the perfect participle; the gospel never graduates from the cross.
3. **What you draw them with is what you draw them to** (Guzik on v5).
4. **Weakness is the preacher's credential,** not his embarrassment (Sproul; 2 Cor 12:9).
5. **Verse 9 is about the gospel before it is about heaven** — verse 10 governs it (Guzik, Spurgeon).
6. **The Lord of glory was crucified** — a title "much too great for any creature to bear" (Henry).
7. **Like is known only by like** — only God's Spirit knows God's thoughts (v11).

8. **Illumination, not new revelation** — the Spirit speaks in the Scriptures (Sproul).
9. **Faculty or will?** Spurgeon and Henry put it differently; both say only the Spirit gives new life.
10. **Paul puts Christ where Isaiah put the LORD** (v16; Isa 40:13).

Cross-references: Isa 40:13; 64:4; Luke 23:34; John 5:39; 12:31; 14:26; 16:13–15; Acts 14:12; 17:11, 16–34; 18:1–11; Rom 8:5–9, 27, 32; 11:33–34; 12:2; 16:25–26; 1 Cor 1:17–31; 3:1–3; 4:20; 14:20; 15:24–26, 44–46; 2 Cor 4:5–7; 10:10; 12:9–10; Gal 6:14; Eph 3:3–7; 4:13; Phil 2:12; 3:15; Col 1:26–27; 2:15; 1 Thess 1:5; Jude 19.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 2:5

"so that your faith would not rest on ⚠the wisdom of men, but on △the power of God."

Example to follow — one subject. "I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (v2). Corinth wanted a performer. Paul gave them a cross. When I sit across from a man coming off a binge, or a man counting down to his release date, or someone who just heard the word "cancer," I don't need to be clever. I need to keep bringing him back to Jesus and what He did on that cross. That is a decision I make before I walk in the room.

Promise to trust — weakness is not disqualification. Paul came "in weakness and in fear and in much trembling" (v3). That is a comfort to me. I don't have to feel strong to be used; I have to be willing. The Spirit does the demonstrating, "so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God" (v5). If a man is helped, it should be obvious it wasn't me. And I can sit *with* a man in his fear, the way Paul did, instead of talking down to him from somewhere above it.

Warning to heed — what I draw them with. Guzik is right: what you draw a man with is what you draw him to. If I win a man with my personality, the next personality can win him away. I want the men I serve leaning on Christ, not on me — which means I keep pointing past myself.

For the men I walk with — you're not on your own to figure it out. The things of God aren't learned by being smart; they are revealed "through the Spirit" (v10). A man with a GED and the Holy Spirit will understand the cross better than a scholar without Him — Sproul says sixteen Ph.D.s won't get a man into the depths of God. Don't let anyone tell you the Bible is too hard for you. Ask the Author to teach you, and open it every day. Be a Berean: examine the Scriptures (Acts 17:11 uses the same word as v15).

Promise to trust — what God has prepared. "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard … all that God has prepared for those who love Him" (v9). Paul says God has already begun to show us these things now, by His Spirit. For the one who has lost hope, or is facing a hard diagnosis: what God has prepared is bigger than you can picture, it is already in motion, and some of it He wants you to see today.

Sin to confess — thinking like a natural man. It's possible to know Christ and still judge everything by what the world calls success: numbers, money, what works. I confess the times I have measured my life and my ministry the world's way. I need to ask the Spirit to search me where I've started thinking like the natural man.

Command to obey — use the mind you've been given. "But we have the mind of Christ" (v16). Addiction trains a man's thinking in deep ruts: "I need it," "I deserve it," "no one will know." In Christ there is a different mind available. Renewing it (Rom 12:2) is a daily choice to think His thoughts after Him — in the Word, in prayer, with brothers who will call out the old thinking.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. If someone listened to me talk about my faith for a week, what would they say my one subject is? (2:2; Gal 6:14) *Paul determined to know nothing but Christ crucified — a decision, not a default.*
2. Where do I hide my weakness when I try to help another man — and what would change if I let it show? (2:3; 2 Cor 12:9) *Sproul: Paul identified with the weaknesses, fears and trembling of his people.*
3. What first drew me to Christ or to church? Is my faith resting on a person, a program, or the power of God? (2:4–5) *Guzik: what you draw them with is what you draw them to.*
4. What has the Spirit shown me in Scripture that I could never have figured out on my own? (2:10–12; John 16:13) *Only the Spirit knows the thoughts of God — and He has given them to us.*
5. Where am I still thinking like a natural man — judging my life by what works, the money, the bottom line? (2:14–15) *Guzik: believers can slip into the natural man's way of judging.*
6. Name one old rut of thinking I need to trade for the mind of Christ this week. Who will help me? (2:16; Rom 12:2) *The mind of Christ is a gift to receive and a way of thinking to practice.*

Worship. The Lord of glory let Himself be crucified by men who did not know who He was. The Spirit who searches the depths of God has opened those depths to people like me. No one can instruct the LORD — and yet He has given me the mind of His Son. Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

Prayer. Holy Spirit, You search the depths of God and You know me through and through. Keep me fixed on Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Use my weakness so that no one's faith rests on me. Open the eyes of the men I serve to what You have freely given them, and renew our minds until we think the thoughts of Christ. Amen.

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