

1 CORINTHIANS

2:1-16 | STUDY GUIDE

Secret Wisdom

1 CORINTHIANS 2:1, "And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom." (ESV)

- Paul's first visit to Corinth is detailed in Acts 18
 - Priscilla & Aquilla: tentmakers, like Paul
- Paul is well educated and can debate persuasively
 - He chooses not to engage this way with the Corinthians

1 CORINTHIANS 2:2-3, "...I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling..." (ESV)

- Some scholars believe he was sick
- Other scholars believe Paul is referring to the weight of persecution
 - Either way, Paul is not projecting an "image" or trying to impress

1 CORINTHIANS 2:4, "...my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." (ESV)

- Acts 17 & 26 give accounts of Paul delivering eloquent and persuasive speeches—they show his capability
 - Acts 17: Paul quotes classical writers in a speech to the Athenians
 - Acts 26: Paul speaks before King Agrippa

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1 CORINTHIANS 2:6-7, "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. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory." (ESV)

- Mature vs Infant
 - Throughout his letter to Corinthians, Paul will use the analogy of a growing human
 - He uses the same analogy in Hebrews 5:12-14
- Secret = ἀποκρύπτω
 - Same word used by Luke in his gospel, recording Jesus: "In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will."

1 CORINTHIANS 2:10, "...these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God." (ESV)

- This is how we attain true wisdom: His Spirit
 - "...no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God." (2:11)
 - Romans 8:26: "For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words."

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- Romans 8:27: "And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."
- The gift of the Holy Spirit is the gift of divine revelation
 - It is the only way to gain true understanding
 - As we mature in Christ, we are better able to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit, and therefore, better able to understand His thoughts

1 CORINTHIANS 2:16, "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ."

- Quoting Isaiah 40:13
- The Corinthians have supplemented the wisdom of the Spirit with human wisdom, and thus, have stunted their spiritual growth

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Craig Keener, 1-2 Corinthians, Bruce W. Winter, After Paul Left Corinth, N.T. Wright, The New Testament in Its World, Zondervan, Archeological Study Bible

