

**STUDY & REFLECTION** For the near future, our study will focus on a critical topic involving our understanding and life application of what the Apostle Paul describes as the **three classes or categories of people, natural, carnal and spiritual**. Each category defines our relationship to the Holy Spirit, and our ability or lack thereof to perceive, receive, understand and carry out the will of God, and is so doing, pleasing Him.

Our major scriptural reference will be 1 Cor 2:9-3:4. But in order for us to delve into this teaching, we must have the courage and spiritual discipline to ask ourselves *what prompted Paul to write to the church at Corinth in the first place?*

Our devotional passage answers this question and gives us insight into the mind of Paul and of course of the Holy Spirit, under whose inspiration he writes. Paul engages the church at Corinth with some very personal, and important issues. As you study this passage note how he engages them. In the opening of the letter he assures them that they are indeed among those who have been born again, and in fact commends them that they measure up to all other churches, and are rich in spiritual giftedness, preaching, prophecy, and grace (1 Cor 1:1-9).

It is important to know and understand that Paul was certain that this church was legitimate. Their 'status,' was not under question. In other words they were born-again believers, baptized with the Holy Spirit. However, as we study and reflect on the passage, beginning with chap 1 verse 10, through the end of the chapter, we see he was not happy with their 'conduct.'

- ACTION ITEMS**
- What insights did you get as you reflected with our devotional passage?
  - What was the primary message that Paul through the Holy Spirit was conveying to the church at Corinth?
  - Do you see that the issue of their salvation was not in question (spiritual status) but the issue of their day to day thinking and life application (spiritual mind and conduct) was?
  - Our challenge is to honestly see in our own individual lives how well does our spiritual status reflect our day to day spiritual conduct?
  - Where would you rate yourself? *Natural? Carnal? Spiritual?*

**INVOLVING OTHERS** Honestly share your personal observations and assessment with your small group.

**THE PERSON POWER AND MINISTRY  
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT SPIRITUAL STATUS AND  
SPIRITUAL CONDUCT: CONTENTIONS? DIVISIONS?**

Tuesday, December 21, 2021

**SCRIPTURES OF THE DAY**

[1 Corinthians 1:1-2:8; Focus on 1 Corinthians  
1:10-31](#)



**STUDY &  
REFLECTION**

As you study and reflect today's scriptural passage, the theme the apostle is pointing out to us is clear. It is found in verses 10 and 11.

*"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no **divisions** among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*

*For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are **contentions** among you."* (KJV)

The Apostle is disturbed and appalled by reports of certain conditions that were ongoing among the saints at Corinth. He kept getting reports of divisions and contentions among the people of God.

Now exactly what was he referring to? The word **divisions** should be clear. The root word is schism. This word describes splits, or gaps, or tears resulting in a 'wound'. The word **contentions** reveals that the atmosphere among them was dominated by quarreling, wrangling and rivalry. These two conditions are the exact opposite of what God designed relationships within His Church to demonstrate.

Paul through the Word of God reveals to us that these conditions are a direct reflection of the lack of reliance on the Holy Spirit among saved people. As we shall see, this is a sign of 'carnality.' Divisions and contentions are the result of us manifesting and focusing on our personal views and desires and always ready to fight for and defend them. Paul's caution and rebuke is so that the Corinthians realize that as we focus on and learn to rely on the Holy Spirit to guide our thinking and walk in the Lord, we will create conditions of Love, Unity, and Peace.

**ACTION  
ITEMS**

Reflect on your thoughts and actions in relationship to our local assembly and the people of God in general. **Would you say they reflect the spirit and attitude directed by God's Spirit?**

**INVOLVING  
OTHERS**

The assignment is clear. Share your thoughts with your small group. See where your group finds agreement and consensus. Before you get too discouraged, realize that a major ministry of the Holy Spirit is to move us to victory over our carnal tendencies.

**THE PERSON POWER AND MINISTRY  
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT** WHAT CAUSES DIVISIONS,  
CONTENTIONS, AND CARNALITY: RELIANCE ON  
HUMAN WISDOM

Wednesday, December 22, 2021

**SCRIPTURES OF THE DAY**

1 Corinthians 1:18-25; 1 Corinthians 2:1-5



**STUDY &  
REFLECTION**

Our devotional passages are challenging in that they reveal how radically different God sees and values things and the conventional way we human creatures see and analyze the same things.

This does not teach us to neglect or ignore scholarly learning or education. Increasing our depth of education, used correctly, will enlarge our capacity to tap into the things of God. The Lord wants us to be educated. Paul was one of the most learned men of his generation. He was educated in the highest schools of wisdom that existed. Yet he was chosen of God to be a highly anointed vessel.

Here he is not teaching against knowledge and human wisdom. What he is declaring is that human wisdom has no ability to reveal to us Divine truths and their application to our lives. Reliance on human wisdom will lead us to human insights that will ultimately cause us to develop carnal attitudes and thinking, and come to carnal conclusions and utilize carnal life applications.

If we are serious about knowing God and having access to genuine spiritual thoughts, attitudes and actions, that will lead to a church community that reflects the spirit and mind of Jesus, **we must be ready to be re-educated in the Power and Person of the Holy Spirit.**

Notice Paul's specific testimony: 1 Cor 2:4-5

*And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:*

*That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. (KJV)*

**ACTION  
ITEMS**

Acknowledging the dormant presence of our old nature, and surrounded by the conditions of this world and being targets of a real enemy, Satan, it is not difficult to rely on human wisdom and practices. **Ask yourself, do you consciously, deliberately, and on a daily basis ask the Lord to help you rely on and submit to the Spirit of God as you go about your daily life?**

**INVOLVING  
OTHERS**

Discuss your reflections with your small group.

**THE PERSON POWER AND MINISTRY  
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT THE THREE CATEGORIES AS  
PERSONAL PRISM: THE NATURAL MAN**

Thursday, December 23, 2021

**SCRIPTURES OF THE DAY**

1 Corinthians 2:9-14



**STUDY &  
REFLECTION**

As we enter deeper into our awareness of the Person, Power, and Ministry of the Holy Spirit, let us empty our minds of preconceived ideas, and ask the Lord to help us gain insight and understandings that only His Spirit can reveal unto us. **Our first consideration will be what Paul calls the ‘Natural Man.’**

The **natural man** refers to all of us, descended from Adam, fallen and corrupted, alienated from the fellowship of God. This is the condition of all of mankind without exception. This is the condition of anyone who has not taken advantage of the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and does not know Jesus as Savior. This individual has not been ‘born-again!’

Anyone who has not been born-again does not have the capacity to know or please God. All those in this category are limited to “*man’s wisdom.*” The natural man has no access to Divine truths. This person can be intellectually brilliant, knowledgeable, kind, and respectful...but unable to receive or perceive spiritual truths. They may know and practice moral principles and religious teachings. They may be eloquent and able to ‘preach and teach,’ but lack spiritual insight or embrace genuine faith in God. To the natural man, the reality of God, the God of the Bible, the Deep Things of God, are foolishness to him or her.

**This is the condition of the ‘natural man,’ according to the Word of God:**

*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 1 Cor 2:14*

*For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. 1 Cor 1:18*

*But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. 2 Cor 4:3-4*

**ACTION  
ITEMS**

Consider your condition before you were born-again. You had no capacity to come into the knowledge of God. For each of us, the Lord had to extend to us Saving GRACE or we would never have come to Him! **This should provoke us to 2 commitments:**

1. We should without being pushed thank and give God glory every day of our lives!
2. We should become inspired, informed and sold out, to win souls to the Kingdom!

**INVOLVING  
OTHERS**

Discuss with your small group the ‘natural man,’ and commit to loving the unsaved and winning them to the Kingdom!

THE PERSON POWER AND MINISTRY  
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT THE THREE CATEGORIES AS  
PERSONAL PRISM: THE CARNAL MAN

Friday, December 24, 2021  
SCRIPTURES OF THE DAY



1 Corinthians 3:1-4

STUDY &  
REFLECTION

Note, there are no spiritual divisions or classifications among those who are unsaved. There are however two classifications among those who are 'saved.' The 'spiritual man,' or person is the ideal. In fact, the spiritual man is the normal, if not the usual (OUCH!).

**However uncomfortable, we must consider the 'carnal' man:**

*And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*

*For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?*

1 Cor 3:1-4 (KJV)

Paul' first issue of comparison in regards to the 'carnal' man is the quality of the 'diet of the Word,' that he had to give them to consume. Paul calls the 'carnal' man a 'babe in Christ.' The word 'babe' here does not describe a healthy newborn. It connotes someone who has been born-again,' but has not grown and developed in Christ at the rate and manner that God expects. In other words, this person is a Christian who is immature. Milk is a perfect food for a newborn babe. However, as a child grows, if milk remains the major part of their diet their growth and development will be stunted, jeopardizing their maturity and overall health.

The 'carnal' Christian is one who has placed very little time or focus on spiritual things. The carnal mind is focused and preoccupied with what he or she wants and on what is pleasing to the flesh. As we learned previously from Gal 5:17, "*for the flesh lusteth against (fights) the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh...these are always contrary the one to the other!*"

Once a person has been born of the Spirit of God, the real battle begins. **The flesh, which reflects the spirit of Adam, is a REBELLIOUS spirit.** The Holy Spirit comes to be the only power that can control and dominate the flesh. To enjoy this victory, a child of God must learn to yield themselves to the Spirit, ignoring and objectively and deliberately, 'crucifying' the flesh. The flesh will Never learn to behave. If we yield to the spirit of the flesh we will walk or live as if we were never born-again.

**We must learn to yield to the Holy Spirit, if we ever want to Please God.**

ACTION  
ITEMS

Be prayerful and reflective regarding the course of your own life in Christ. We must have the courage and moral integrity to let the light of truth into the dark areas of our lives. Can you identify and "call out" times when you have not yielded to the Holy Spirit. **Will you sincerely ask God to help you yield to the Spirit?**

INVOLVING  
OTHERS

The power to overcome and grow in Christ is often found in our ability and willingness to include others into difficult personal spaces. *Are you willing?*

**IT'S CHRISTMAS.**

JOY TO THE WORLD!!  
CHRIST THE SAVIOR IS BORN!!

**BE THANKFUL AND REFLECTIVE  
AND ENJOY THE DAY!**

