

Chapter 4: Wisdom from the Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 2:6–16

Christianity is not merely one account of wisdom amidst a sea of competitors. Rather, Christianity is the only true wisdom, the wisdom of God himself. The wisdom of Christianity is the person and work of Jesus Christ, a wisdom that God determined and established in eternity past. Before any of the work of creation began, God predestined that, in the fullness of time, the Father would send the Son into the world to take to himself a human nature through the incarnation. The Son, in the person of Jesus Christ, would then live a life of humility, obedience, and great suffering, culminating in the cruel cross that Paul has been proclaiming throughout this section of 1 Corinthians. After Christ rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, the Father and the Son would send their Holy Spirit into the world to open blind eyes, deaf ears, and dull hearts to believe the gospel of Christ and him crucified.

This plan served as the foundation and focal point for the creation of the entire world. Everything in creation, as well as in the slow progression of God’s revelation through history, bore witness to this plan, but not in a way that anyone could have ever predicted its full glory until Christ fulfilled everything appointed for him to do from eternity past. While Christ walked the earth, the rulers of this age despised, rejected, and even crucified him. Even now, after Christ has accomplished the fullness of God’s redemptive plan, the world continues to reject Christ crucified as the power of God and the wisdom of God. For this reason, Paul explains, the Holy Spirit must reveal the fullness and glory of God’s wisdom before anyone is able to believe it. Thus, in 1 Corinthians 2:6–16, Paul teaches us that *God sends his Holy Spirit to reveal his hidden wisdom in Christ.*

The Father Concealed Christ in a Mystery (1 Cor. 2:6–9)

After all that Paul has spoken against *wisdom* since 1 Corinthians 1:17, the apostle recognizes that his readers may begin to misunderstand him.¹ It is not that Paul opposes all wisdom, but only the false wisdoms of this age—whether the “wisdom of word” (ESV: “words of eloquent wisdom”; 1 Cor. 1:17) that seeks to convince people by merely human rhetoric, or the more devious worldly wisdom that rejects Christ crucified on the basis of merely human reasoning (1 Cor. 1:22–23).² The problem isn’t with wisdom, but with imposters masquerading as wisdom. Indeed, the Old Testament is filled with true wisdom, and the Scriptures frequently exhort God’s people to seek wisdom at all costs. Paul, then, must differentiate true wisdom from false wisdom in order to offer a positive path forward for believers to seek God’s wisdom. In the same way, Christians must never merely oppose what the world offers, for the world can only offer a pale, twisted shadow of the glorious goodness of God’s original designs for his creation. Rather, like Paul, we must always strive to offer an edifying vision for the true and better good that God offers us in Christ Jesus.

Wisdom for the Mature

Therefore, Paul adamantly maintains that true Christian preachers (“we”) speak wisdom. In Greek, the word “wisdom” is emphatically placed at the very beginning of v. 6 (“*Wisdom* we speak...”) to underscore its importance.³ Moreover, Paul notably uses the verb for “speak” (i.e., “give utterance”; ESV: “impart”) throughout this passage (1 Cor. 2:6, 7, 13), rather than the verb for “say” (a word that usually suggests that the speaker is the source of the message being uttered) because “real preachers of the gospel are only a voice through which God conveys the gospel to men.”⁴ That is, Paul is not merely one more wise man offering his own wisdom for the world; rather, he is a herald who speaks the message of God’s wisdom for the world in Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Paul, then, speaks this wisdom “among the mature” (1 Cor. 2:6). Almost certainly, Paul is contrasting the idea of “maturity” here against the idea of being fleshly “infants” in Christ in 1 Corinthians 3:1: “But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ.”⁵ This contrast, however, raises an important question of interpretation: Does Paul mean to suggest that he spoke a different, higher wisdom among the “mature” at Corinth that he did not address to the many fleshly infants there? In other words, is Paul suggesting that he has preached a multitiered message, to which only a few mature, spiritual elites may progress? While some interpreters have taken Paul this way, this is certainly not what Paul intends to communicate. Paul never makes distinctions between lower and higher levels of doctrine in the way that other religions carefully guard the higher-level secrets from outsiders and even from the lower-level initiates.⁶ Rather, when Paul was in Corinth, he taught one doctrine only: Jesus Christ and him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2).⁷ At one level, then, the *mature* are all those who have believed in this message, since faith in Christ crucified is the evidence of the powerful work of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:5, 10–16).

At another level, however, Paul uses the word *mature* not to describe higher levels of knowledge, but of application. Anthony Thiselton puts it this way: “Since the framework of thought remains that of a *crucified* Christ in these chapters, this turns Corinthian notions of maturity as ‘advanced’ spirituality upside down. Once again the *reversals of the cross* operate with incisive and transforming logic.”⁸ When the Corinthians divided themselves into factions, they did so to gain power and position over one another (1 Cor. 1:10–17; 11:18–19). That is, they pursued greatness in God’s kingdom according to the methods of the world, where politics, rivalry, and power reign. Jesus addressed this worldly pursuit of power during his earthly ministry by using a similar metaphor of age:

[24] A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest.
 [25] And he said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. [26] But not so with you. Rather, *let the greatest among you become as the youngest*, and the leader as one who serves. [27] For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves.” (Luke 22:24–27; my emphasis)

According to the world’s wisdom, power and authority is something to exercise *over* other people.

According to God’s wisdom, however, the greatest must become as the *youngest*—that is, as the one who serves, not as the one who exercises authority over anyone else (cf. Luke 9:46–48). Jesus came as “the one who serves” (Luke 22:27), and he ultimately served his people by going so far as to die for them on the cross. This is not the way that a king or a lord behaves toward his people, according to the world’s wisdom!

Still, true Christian maturity goes beyond merely recognizing Christ’s crucifixion as infinitely wise and powerful.⁹ More than that, true Christian maturity follows in Christ’s footsteps by refusing to exercise power *over* other people in order to exercise power *for* other people by serving them (Luke 22:26).¹⁰ Although the Corinthian believers are *mature* at a basic level by virtue of their faith in Jesus Christ, they are nevertheless acting like *infants* by pursuing the world’s wisdom through rivalry rather than God’s wisdom through self-sacrifice.¹¹ There is a double irony in all this. First, Paul has pointed out at length the general principle that the wisdom of God is ironically pursued not by seeking the power of *age*, but the powerlessness of becoming “as the youngest” (Luke 22:26). Second, Paul is arguing specifically that, although the Corinthians are pursuing the power of maturity, they have only succeeded in stunting their growth to become as fleshly infants in the faith (1 Cor. 3:1). The way of the cross may be foolishness to the world’s thinking, but it is the wisdom and power of God, far wiser and stronger than anything the world can offer (1 Cor. 1:24–25). Tragically, while the Corinthians have embraced Christ crucified at some level, they are not living in a manner consistent with their faith.

False Wisdom vs. True Wisdom

Paul goes on to explain the difference between the false wisdom of the world and the true wisdom of God. First, he speaks sharply against the wisdom “of this age or of the rulers of this age” (1 Cor. 2:6). Whether this worldly wisdom manifests itself in the objections of the Jews or the Gentiles, this wisdom invariably opposes the cross of Christ (1 Cor. 1:22–23). Paul insists, though, that the rulers of this age (i.e., those who embrace the wisdom of this age) are being brought to nothing (ESV: “doomed to pass away”; 1 Cor. 2:6). This word for “brought to nothing” was the same word that Paul used in 1 Corinthians 1:28 (“to bring to nothing to things that are”), and Paul will come back to this word at the end of his letter to talk about the final destruction of the world’s kingdoms (“after destroying every rule and every authority and power”; 1 Cor. 15:24). Lenski, observing the repetition of this word at the beginning and end of the letter, writes that these worldly rulers are “‘abolishing themselves’ however proudly they now strut about....People ‘who are abolishing themselves’ have a poor ‘wisdom’ to offer, one that would induce others also to abolish themselves.”¹²

By contrast, Paul writes, “But we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, the hidden [wisdom], which [wisdom] God predestined before the ages, unto our glory” (my translation). God’s wisdom is not obvious to the world because it is a *mystery* (ESV: “secret”). This word *mystery* does not refer to the kind of mystery we find in a Sherlock Holmes novel, where human wisdom eventually discovers the truth by carefully analyzing all the available information. Rather, the “word mystery always means something into which men must be initiated; something undiscoverable by human reason,” whether because the undiscoverable element lies in the future, or because God hides it from our view, or because the content of the mystery goes beyond our comprehension.¹³ More specifically, Paul ordinarily uses the word *mystery* to refer “to something formerly hidden in God from *all* human eyes but now revealed in history through Christ and made understandable to his people through the

Spirit” (Rom. 11:25; 1 Cor. 2:7; 4:1; 14:2; 15:51; Eph. 1:9; 3:3, 4, 9; 5:32; 6:19; Col. 1:26, 27; 2:2; 4:3; 1 Tim. 3:9, 16; cf. 1 Cor. 13:2; 2 Thess. 2:7; 1 Tim. 3:9).¹⁴ Until now, God has hidden Christ from full view of the world, and even now, the only people who believe the mystery of Christ are those to whom the Spirit reveals it.

Predestined for Our Glory

Therefore, part of the reason that the wisdom of this age and the rulers of this age do not acknowledge God’s wisdom is that God’s wisdom falls outside this world’s boundaries of time. That is, Paul explains that God *predestined* (ESV: “decreed”) this wisdom *before the ages* (1 Cor. 2:7). Paul typically uses this word *predestined* to refer to God’s election of his people before the ages (Rom. 8:29, 30; Eph. 1:5, 11), but here he refers to God’s predetermination in eternity past to put forward Christ crucified for the salvation of sinners. Indeed, elsewhere Paul declares that God not only promised to give, but in some sense actually *gave* us, Christ Jesus for our salvation “before the time of the ages” (2 Tim. 1:9; Tit. 1:2). Thus, God’s *predestination* to put forward Christ crucified and his *predestination* to save specific sinners are integrally related concepts. Paul makes this close connection clear here by saying that God *predestined* this wisdom before the ages “for our glory”—that is, “in reference to our glory...for all the benefits of salvation....The idea that the scheme of redemption, which the apostle here calls the wisdom of God, was from eternity formed in the divine mind, far out of the reach of human penetration, and has under the gospel been made known for the salvation of men, is one often presented by the apostle, Rom. 16, 25. 26. Eph. 3, 9.”¹⁵ This statement, therefore, recalls the threefold repetition of the phrase “God chose” only a few verses earlier (1 Cor. 1:27–28).¹⁶ Before the ages began, God *predestined* to send Christ into the world to be crucified, in order that God might save those whom he *predestined* for glory.

They Crucified the Lord of Glory

Thus, the rulers of this age were so arrogantly blinded by their own power and wisdom that they did not recognize the Lord of glory when Christ came into this world. By “Lord of glory,” Paul describes Jesus in terms fitting only for Yahweh himself, echoing the language of Psalm 24:10: “Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the king of glory!”¹⁷ Although their mistake is perhaps understandable, their error was infinitely serious. Not only did they fail to recognize the Lord of glory, but Paul states that they went so far as to crucify him. They could not have committed a more treacherous disgrace against a more glorious person!¹⁸ Whatever the world may claim, Paul exposes the world’s “wisdom” for what it truly is: blind, deaf, hard-hearted rebellion against the Lord of glory himself. We should observe that Paul is not suggesting that this error was a momentary lapse in judgement. Rather, Paul is arguing that crucifying the Lord of glory is the logical consequence of all the world’s wisdom. That is, the crucifixion of Christ was the poisonous fruit that grew up from the original seed of when human beings first pursued wisdom apart from God in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:6). All human wisdom, carried out to its fullest extent, eventually demands to crucify Christ.

No Eye, No Ear, No Heart

To close this section, Paul quotes Scripture (“as it is written...”; 1 Cor. 2:9). This is a tricky verse to understand for two reasons. First, it is difficult to understand the language itself. Literally, the verse is an incomplete sentence: “What no eye saw, and no ear heard, and no heart conceived, what

God has prepared for those who love him—.”¹⁹ *What* exactly has no eye seen, and no ear heard, and no heart conceived? Is that the same thing, or something different, from *what* God has prepared for those who love him? In context, Paul seems to be describing the until-now-hidden mystery of God’s predestined plan to put forward Christ crucified for our glory. No eye saw this plan, no ear heard it, and no heart conceived it—and yet God prepared it unto the glory of those who love him. Thus, both parts of this verse point to the same reality: Jesus Christ and him crucified, the wisdom of God that was hidden as a mystery from before the ages began.

The second difficulty has to do with identifying the exact passage Paul is quoting, for nothing in the Old Testament follows this word order precisely. Most commentators suggest that Paul may be combining Isaiah 64:4 (“From of old *no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen* a God besides you, who acts *for those who wait for him*”; my emphasis) and 65:17 (“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered *or come into mind*”; my emphasis).²⁰ Still, Paul does not even quote these combined passages verbatim. How, then, do we make sense of this passage? I would offer two suggestions to help work through Paul’s complicated quotation.

First, although the phrase “it is written” does indeed signal Paul’s intention to cite the Old Testament Scriptures, it does not necessarily mean that Paul means to quote those Scriptures word for word. We do the same thing when we say, “The Bible says...” or “The Bible teaches....” While we often go on to quote some specific verse, we sometimes paraphrase what the Bible says in one or multiple locations. Thus, we might say, “The Bible teaches that Jesus died to save all those who trust in him.” While that statement accurately reflects the teaching of the Bible, there is no verse that contains those exact words. It seems that Paul is doing something similar here, without any intention to quote any single passage, but to summarize the truth of the whole witness of the Scriptures.²¹

Second, there are a few other passages that combine the ideas of blind eyes, deaf ears, and dull hearts with the concept that God sometimes veils his revelation. So, Moses declares to the Israelites, “But to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear” (Deut. 29:4). Then at the end of that same chapter, he declares, “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law” (Deut. 29:29). Second, the prophet Isaiah receives instructions to teach the word of the Lord openly, but with the knowledge that the people will not believe: “And he said, ‘Go, and say to this people: “Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.” Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears; and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed”’ (Isa. 6:9–10). Third, the prophet Jeremiah prophesies these words of the Lord: “Hear this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes, but see not, who have ears, but hear not...But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart; they have turned aside and gone away” (Jer. 5:21, 23). Then, later in that passage he speaks not of the Lord’s veiling his revelation from his people, but of his people’s willing embrace of false revelation that blinds them to the word of the Lord: “An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule at their direction; my people love to have it so, but what will you do when the end comes?” (Jer. 5:30–31). Fourth, and perhaps most intriguingly, Job 28 offers an extended reflection on the hiddenness of God’s wisdom: “From where, then, does wisdom come? And where is the place of understanding? It is *hidden from the eyes* of all living and *concealed* from the birds of the air. Abaddon

and Death say, ‘We have *heard a rumor of it with our ears.*’ God understands the way to it, and he knows its place” (Job 28:20–23).

Thus, the entire Old Testament bears witness to the fact that God is working out his wise plan, even though the details of that plan are hidden until he reveals it in its entirety. Creation itself, in addition to God’s promises, prophecies, patterns, and covenants, all bear witness to this wisdom, but no human being would be able to reason from the Old Testament to predict the great climax of God’s wisdom: Jesus Christ and him crucified. So, Paul is attempting to summarize all of these passages (in addition to Isaiah 64:4 and 65:17), the general idea of what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 2:9 lines up well with the overall context of the passage: What God has predestined for the glory of his people (who love him), no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor heart understood. This is a mystery that has been hidden until now, and, even though Christ has been revealed, the world has rejected him.

The Apostle Peter gets at a similar idea elsewhere: “Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look” (1 Pet. 1:10–12). Not only was this idea veiled from the world, but from Old Testament believers and even from God’s angels themselves.

Furthermore, this idea connects well with the section that follows by raising an important question: If no eye has seen this revelation, no ear heard it, and no heart imagined it, then how do God’s people actually come to believe in (love) Christ? Paul’s answer, as we will see next, has to do with the revelation of Christ that God makes through the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 2:4–5).

The Holy Spirit Reveals Christ through Preaching (1 Cor. 2:10–13)

Paul attributes this differentiation between the faith of God’s people and the world’s blind eyes, deaf ears, and dull hearts to the Holy Spirit: “these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:10). Paul emphasizes the word “to us” more strongly in the Greek by pulling that word to the beginning of his sentence: “For *to us* God has made revelation by the Spirit...” (my translation). No one comes to faith in Christ because of their own wisdom, goodness, or spiritual sensitivity. The only way anyone can receive this wisdom is by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Searching Spirit

We might ask, though: What makes the Spirit qualified to reveal God’s wisdom to us? Paul explains that the Spirit “searches” all things. This word *searches* means “explores, accurately and thoroughly knows. The word does not express the process of investigation, but rather its results, viz., profound knowledge.”²² If the phrase “all things” were not sufficient to capture the breadth of the Spirit’s knowledge, Paul goes on to insist that the Spirit’s investigation has even plumbed the “depths of God.” This is a remarkable statement, since no mere creature could possibly know the fullness of the depths of God’s wisdom.²³ This simple phrase reveals something extraordinary about the Holy Spirit: “This passage proves at once the personality and divinity of the Holy Ghost. His

personality, because intelligent activity is ascribed to him; he *searches*; his divinity, because omniscience is ascribed to him; he knows all that God knows.”²⁴ Just as the phrase “Lord of glory” (1 Cor. 2:8) proves that Christ is God along with God the Father, so this verse proves that the Holy Spirit is God alongside the Father and the Son. Our one God (1 Cor. 8:4) exists in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Paul further clarifies the divine nature of the Holy Spirit in the next verse: “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” (1 Cor. 2:11). Just as our secret thoughts are known only to our spirits, and are not visible to others, so the deepest, innermost thoughts of God himself are known only by his own Spirit.²⁵ This statement carries two important ideas with it: (1) that we cannot know the wisdom of God apart from the Holy Spirit, who reveals God’s thoughts to us, and (2) when the Holy Spirit reveals to us God’s thoughts, we have an infallible, trustworthy witness to guide our faith and practice.²⁶ We have not received the fallible, foolish spirit of this world, but the Spirit who is from God himself, so that we may come to understand what God has given us in Christ crucified (1 Cor. 2:12).

Speaking Spiritual Truths in Spiritual Words

For a third time in this passage, Paul describes what he “speaks” (ESV: “impart”; 1 Cor. 2:13). By this point, it is clear why Paul would not want to rely on words taught by human wisdom; however, Paul also states positively how he *does* teach these spiritual truths that have been revealed by the Holy Spirit. Literally, he *combines* (ESV: “interpreting”; 1 Cor. 2:13) these spiritual truths with spiritual *words*. As Leon Morris points out in his commentary, Paul is either talking about combining these spiritual truths with spiritual *words* or spiritual *men*, and since Paul is referring to “speaking,” it seems better to understand this as a reference to spiritual *words*.²⁷ Of course, Paul has already described the nature of these spiritual words: “And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom...” (1 Cor. 2:3–4a). That is, these spiritual words are the plain, simple, unadorned preaching of Jesus Christ and him crucified. Only by this plain preaching does the Holy Spirit powerfully demonstrate the truth of this message to save sinners by faith (1 Cor. 2:4b–5).

We Receive Christ by the Holy Spirit Alone (1 Cor. 2:14–16)

Now that Paul has described how believers come to faith in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, he reinforces his argument that no one can come to faith apart from the Holy Spirit. In v. 14, Paul speaks of the “natural person,” using a word that translates the Hebrew word *nephesh*, meaning “humanity in its natural, physical existence.”²⁸ In this natural existence, apart from the Holy Spirit, no one can receive the spiritual preaching of the cross. Apart from the Holy Spirit, the spiritual preaching of the cross is folly (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18). It is not that the natural person needs to cultivate his intellect a little more to grasp these spiritual truths, for the natural person does not have the capacity to understand the truths of Christ crucified “because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14). As Paul Barnett puts it, the natural people are “like the tone deaf unable to hear the beauty of the music of Mozart, or is like the colour blind unable to appreciate the artistry of Monet.”²⁹ They must be renewed spiritually (that is, by the Holy Spirit) in order to gain the faculties to understand,

appreciate, and believe the gospel of Jesus Christ crucified.³⁰ Thus, we must not think of the gospel as a general offer to all humanity, for apart from the Holy Spirit's work, no one would *ever* come to believe this gospel.³¹ Rather, God has predestined, chosen, and called only some to salvation through faith in Christ, for their glory.

While the natural person has limited faculties, the spiritual person gains a sixth sense: a spiritual sense. Thus, spiritual people are able to judge all things, and no one may judge them (1 Cor. 2:15). The idea in verse 15 is first that the natural, fleshly people are incapable of examining and appreciating spiritual things in the way that the spiritual person can.³² It is as though the whole world were blind, but the Holy Spirit has given sight to a few. Those who remain in their blindness are still incapable of judging visual beauty in the world in the way that those with sight can. For this reason, the second meaning of this verse is that the spiritually blind cannot pass judgment on those with spiritual sight.³³ When believers speak of the beauty of Christ crucified, the judgment of unbelievers to the contrary does not carry any validity, since unbelievers are unable to see that beauty for themselves.

In v. 16, Paul quotes Isaiah 40:13, asking rhetorically which human beings could claim that they have understood the mind of the Lord to give the Lord counsel. Paul says this first as a closing reminder that what believers have is not anything that they have discovered for themselves by their own intellect, but is rather offered by the revelation of the Holy Spirit.³⁴ Then, Paul reveals a second thought: "But we have the mind of Christ." In this second thought, Paul reminds us of the blessings of the gospel, in that believers have received the revelation of the wisdom of God in Christ.³⁵ All of this was predestined before the ages unto our salvation, and for our glory (1 Cor. 2:7).

Discussion Questions

- 1) What precisely is Paul talking about when he refers to God's wisdom? Why was the world unable to anticipate the person and work of Christ before Christ entered the world? What kept the rulers of this age from recognizing him, and what led them to crucify the Lord of glory (1 Cor. 2:8)? What keeps the world from appreciating Christ as the wisdom and power of God today?
- 2) Why would God have hidden the wisdom of his plan prepared from eternity past (1 Cor. 2:7)? What did God have to hide? What does God accomplish that would have been impossible if he had revealed the mystery of Christ from the beginning? Beyond hiding this wisdom from the world, why did God veil his wisdom from Old Testament believers and even his angels (1 Pet. 1:10–12)?
- 3) By whom does God reveal his wisdom of Jesus Christ and him crucified? That is, who does the revealing? To whom does God reveal his wisdom? By what method does God reveal his wisdom? Do you approach preaching with prayer, asking that God would give you eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to understand the full wisdom of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ and him crucified?
- 4) Why are human beings not able to believe the gospel apart from the work of the Holy Spirit? How should this principle inform the way that we evangelize our family, friends, and neighbors? Why should this principle make us patient and long-suffering as we share the gospel? Why should this principle inspire us to long-term faithfulness in proclaiming the gospel? How should this lead us to pray?

Notes

1. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 33.
2. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 67–68.
3. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 41.
4. R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 94–95.
5. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 109.
6. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 33–34.
7. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 92.
8. Thiselton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary*, 54.
9. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 93.
10. Thiselton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary*, 43.
11. “The gospel of the crucified Messiah is wisdom all right, he affirms, but not of the kind they are now pursuing. True wisdom is indeed for those who are ‘spiritual,’ meaning for those who have the Spirit, who has revealed what God has really accomplished in Christ. Because they do have the Spirit, and thus the mind of Christ, they should have seen the cross for what it is—God’s wisdom—and thereby have been able to make true judgments. But by pursuing [wisdom], they are acting just like those without the Spirit, who are likewise pursuing wisdom but see the cross as foolishness. The net result—and the irony—is that they are ‘spiritual,’ yet ‘unspiritual’; they are pursuing ‘wisdom,’ yet missing the very wisdom of God.” (Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 104–05.)
12. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 97.
13. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 35.
14. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 112.
15. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 35–36.
16. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 98.
17. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 36–37.
18. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 99–100.
19. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 37.
20. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 116.
21. “A third explanation of this difficulty is, that the apostle did not intend to quote any one passage of scripture, but to appeal to its authority for a clearly revealed truth. It is certainly taught in the Old Testament that the human mind cannot penetrate into the counsels of God; his purposes can only be known by a supernatural revelation. This is the truth for which the apostle cites the authority of the Old Testament. There is, therefore, not the slightest ground for imputing failure of memory, or an erroneous interpretation to the inspired apostle.” (Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 38.)
22. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 39.
23. Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 61.
24. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 39.
25. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 107.
26. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 111. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39.ix.iv.html>>
27. Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 60–61.
28. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 124.

29. Barnett, *1 Corinthians: Holiness and Hope of a Rescued People*, 50.
30. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 44.
31. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 117. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39.ix.v.html>>
32. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 117–18. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39.ix.v.html>>
33. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 45.
34. Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 86.
35. Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 65.