

# *Spiritual Understanding*

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Colossians 1:9-11 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

- I. Paul's desire for the Colossians was that they might be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

## **Webster's 1828 Dictionary**

WISDOM, n.

1. The right use or exercise of knowledge; the choice of laudable ends, and of the best means to accomplish them.

UNDERSTAND'ING,

1. The faculty of the human mind by which it apprehends the real state of things presented to it, or by which it receives or comprehends the ideas which others express and intend to communicate.

- A. So there are two things involved here – wisdom and understanding.
  1. Understanding is the receiving of knowledge and information.
  2. Wisdom is the right use of that knowledge and information.
- B. There are two kinds of wisdom:

James 3:13-17 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

1. There is the wisdom that comes from God that allows us to rightly use the knowledge we have received about all things, earthly and spiritual.
2. There is the wisdom of this world that is earthly, sensual, and devilish; it is the mere carnal policy of men to promote and secure their temporal interests.
- C. Since the understanding is the receiving of knowledge and information there are two different ways to receive knowledge – spiritually or carnally.
- D. When the Bible speaks of “having understanding” it is always linked to spiritual understanding.
  1. The Word of God makes it clear that to really understand anything earthly or heavenly the Spirit of God must be involved.

1 Corinthians 2:14 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.

2. So the natural man cannot really have understanding other than that of earthly, carnal,, temporal things. He is blind to the things concerning the Spirit of God, his own spirit, the spirits of others, or the spirits of devils.

II. So then, what does it mean to have spiritual understanding?

1 Corinthians 2:1-13 And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. 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. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

- A. Spiritual understanding does not exercise wisdom that is of the world.
- B. Spiritual understanding is when we understand everything in the light of God and his word.
  1. Not in man's wisdom – the way a carnal, unregenerate person would understand it.
- C. Spiritual understanding does not come from pride.
  1. Paul speaks of himself as being in their presence in meekness and fear, and not using excellent speech, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.
  2. It doesn't look to earthly means to teach or impress the hearers – the truth of God with the Spirit's witness is sufficient to get the job done.
- D. Spiritual understanding does not look to other men (princes) or worldly sources.
- E. Spiritual understanding describes what God does for us through his Spirit bearing witness with our spirit to open the eyes of our understanding.

Ephesians 1:17-19 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

- F. Spiritual understanding is when the lights come on in your soul when you are born again.
  1. You see the whole universe in a new light – the light of God.
  2. You understand it all completely different.
  3. There is a grand new dimension to everything in life and in the universe.
  4. There is not a matter or a thing that does not have new depths to look at and examine.
  5. The wonder of life and all things God created is awakened in your spirit and you receive it all with new understanding.

6. It is truly like a man born blind receiving his sight, or born deaf and suddenly being able to hear.

Ephesians 5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

Isaiah 29:18-19 And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness. The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

Luke 24:45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

- G. Spiritual understanding is something that grows and matures in us as we learn and as we obtain wisdom about what to do with all this new light.
  1. This is why Paul said that his desire for them was for them to be filled with the knowledge of God's will through all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

Psalm 119:18 Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

- H. The same God who gives us this new spiritual understanding gives us the wisdom to use it rightly.

James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

- I. David's prayer for his son Solomon was the same as Paul's prayer for the Colossians:

1 Chronicles 22:12 Only the LORD give thee wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Israel, that thou mayest keep the law of the LORD thy God.

- J. We are instructed to seek wisdom and (spiritual) understanding from God.

Proverbs 2:3-6 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

1. Not for a better earthly understanding, but spiritual understanding.
2. To look at the world and all things and situations through the eyes of God instead of a carnal, self-seeking, self-confident perception of everything.

1 Corinthians 2:16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

- K. Spiritual understanding is to look at the vital principle behind all that we see and hear and to realize that the powers that move the universe are not comprehended by our physical senses – only their effects are.