



Man's Spiritual Quest

1 Corinthians gives us the history of the soul and fore-telling prophecy of what is yet to come regarding the soul. The new birth marks the celebrated defining line between the natural man and the spiritual man. Man's highest quest never fails to end in search of spirit and spiritual things, ultimately, the very Spirit of God. Yet, when man is presented with the opportunity to reach into the spiritual realm via holy spirit, he seldom accepts. Why is this? Because the things of God appear completely simple and foolish to his mind, a mind that sent him on his spiritual quest to begin with.

Finding and navigating this bold



line in humanity presents man with his greatest turmoils, his greatest battles, and his greatest successes. Man is forever balancing, not on this line, but on one side or the other of what seems an entirely illusive balancing act. But is it illusive? No, certainly not, as Corinthians will show us.

Man's Spiritual Quest has its beginnings deep within the breath of man, but it should be designed

to take him far beyond such a mechanical act. Who attains this

noteworthy achievement? Only

those who receive God's free gift! Let's begin in Corinthians with the natural man.

The natural man

(1 Cor 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.

What is this "natural" man? The natural man is a man of body and soul. He has no spirit of God within him. When man enters into the worldly realm, he is born as a two-part being, body and soul. This natural man has absolutely no connection with God. It is interesting to note

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that, due to man's celebrated spiritual quests, journeys hopeful of attaining spirituality, *man is forever pining spiritual attributes on this proverbial natural "donkey"* in hopes of making him look somewhat spiritual. You can witness this in how he dresses, eats, talks, and behaves among others. You can see this in individuals, groups, or even entire cultures and nations. But, the truth remains intact, in that no man can attain spirituality without the spirit of God being in him. Spiritually, as defined by man, and "the things of the Spirit of God" are two entirely different things!

The word "natural" comes from the Greek word psuchikos. This word carries with it a very sensual, almost animalistic air. It refers to a soul-creature, but one who is completely separated from the things of the Spirit of

God due to his complete lack of ability to discern the spiritual things of God. The one thing that keeps man in this earth-bound state is the complete lack of having God's spirit within. This is the only thing that causes this. No other situation, event, or life-function can cause this. Eating the right foods or not eating the right foods won't cause this state. Wearing the right clothes or not wearing the right clothes won't cause this. Adopting or not adopting a certain vocabulary won't cause this. Acting out in various religious ways or not doing so won't cause this. Nothing has the ability to cause, change or otherwise alter the natural air of humanity except for one simple, monumental act – becoming filled with the sweet breath of God!

Inward Reception

All things of God are first

received within man. Then, if man chooses, he can release those things for others to see. How do we know this? Because of the very special word used for "receive" in verse 14. This Greek word, dechomai, means, "to receive subjectively or inwardly – as opposed "to receiving objectively or outwardly". The natural, isolated-from-God man, cannot receive the inward things of the Spirit of God. God can't talk to him. God can't give him spiritual gifts (inward gifts). God doesn't reveal mysteries and heavenly secrets and heavenly treasures to him. This natural man's communication link with God has never been established and is completely dysfunctional. He is cut off from receiving any inward and spiritual thing from God. All inward and spiritual things from the Spirit of God are recognized by the mind, and benefit the body and soul of man. But, none of these inward and

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spiritual things from the Spirit of God can be received by a man without him having the gift of holy spirit.

Please note that this is not to say that the natural man isn't blessed by God outwardly. Certainly he is! Every man enjoys the abundant riches of the earth, and those who work will enjoy those even more. Every man can bask in the light of the sun, day in and day out. He can celebrate the rain, wind, and seasons. He can plant seeds, watch them grow, as well as partake of the harvests, year in and year out. He can explore, wander, and hike throughout the hills and valleys of man's special earth, a unique and magnificent gift to mankind by God. He can sail the mighty seas and vast oceans, as well as glide through the unending expanses of the heavens. He can become educated, experienced, and then excel at the most novel

and intellectual professions known to man. He can eat, sleep, and live as a highly intelligent, functional, and even loving being – all without the ability to inwardly receive the things of the Spirit of God. The two-part man of body and soul is truly a blessed creature; *the three-part man of body, soul and spirit exceeds and accelerates far past him with unimaginable speed,* understanding and abilities. Why, because he became a creation of God Himself!

Foolishness

How does this natural man learn of the things of the Spirit of God? Quite simply, through preaching. Preaching is the God-chosen medium by which the Word of God is released into the World. Why was Paul sent among the natural men of his

day and time?

(1 Cor 1:17) For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

Not to baptize, but to preach the good news of the gospel of Christ. But this preaching was not with man's intellectually laced words. It was through the wisdom of God. Preaching seems harmless enough. That's why God choose it, I'm sure. But then, why won't man hear and believe?

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

The natural man is a man who is perishing. *In his dismal state of mind, his awesome and powerful intellect*

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registers preaching as something foolish. In no way does he see any power in it, certainly no spirituality. He does not equate his own personal spiritual quest as something that could benefit by listening to preaching.

(1 Cor 1:21) For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

God won't change his medium of preaching even if no one believes. Why? Because He gave natural man the ability to listen, ponder, choose, and finally, to become born again. God can't interfere with man's free will, not in any way at all.

(1 Cor 1:23-29) But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the

Greeks foolishness; {24} But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. {25} Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. {26} For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: {27} But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; {28} And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: {29} That no flesh should glory in his presence.

It takes a very special man and woman to

believe. God knows who will believe. Those are the ones who are called. That's what "predestined" means. God chose you because He knew that you'd choose Him. It's as simple as that! As for the rest of mankind, they live nice lives without any access at all to the things of the Spirit of God.

(1 Cor 3:19) For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

What man calls wise, God's calls foolish. Man's wisdom may seem pretty awesome, but God considers it silly, if not absurd. But, if he can't understand God and the things of God, he cannot experience them either.

Experiential Knowledge

(1 Cor 2:14) But the natural man receiveth not the things of

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the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Realization and experiential knowledge are two completely separate experiences. It is the later which is the far more significant concerning the inward reception of the things of the Spirit of God.

Man does not have the power to experience the things of the Spirit of God when he is in the natural state. That's exactly what "neither can he know them" means! God places extreme emphasis upon living, experiencing His lifestyle of heavenly perspectives and perceptions. Man is linked with this unique ability of living Godly only when he is born again, only when he has within him the spirit of God.

(1 Cor 1:20-21) Where is the

wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? {21} For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

There is no worldly wisdom whereby man can know God experientially. The world offers absolutely nothing AT ALL whereby man can seek, find, or otherwise experience the inward things of the Spirit of God – *Absolutely Nothing AT ALL!* God gave only one avenue of learning – preaching – whereby man could come to know Him. This has not changed since thousands of years, and it will not change in our lifetimes. If you want to experience God, you must endure preaching. All men are required to bow to this

heavenly rule! It is through preaching that men are saved. It is through preaching that the natural man learns of God's gifts. And it is through preaching that man reaches his highest quest – of finding the very Spirit of God.

Much Love in Christ!

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