



"YOU CAN PERCEIVE MY INSIGHT"

EPHESIANS 3:1-7, PART 2

The badge of 'A Servant of Christ':

1 CORINTHIANS 4:1

This is how one should regard us, as *servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.*

2 CORINTHIANS 4:5

For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, *with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.*

COLOSSIANS 1:23, 25

...which I, Paul, became a *minister*...[For the sake of the Church] of which I became a *minister* according to the *stewardship* from God that was given to me for you, *to make the word of God fully known...*

ACTS 26:15-16

And I said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, *to appoint you as a servant...*

The humility-power connection;

1 CORINTHIANS 15:10

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, *I worked harder* than any of them, though it was not I, but *the grace of God that is with me.*

JAMES 4:6

...Therefore it says, "*God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.*"

2 CORINTHIANS 12:7

So to keep me from becoming conceited *because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations*, a thorn was given me in the flesh...

The grace was given to Paul to steward,

ROMANS 1:14-15

I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish...

All Christian gifting shares the same purpose: for use in the Body;

1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-7

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. *To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*

ROMANS 12:4-6

For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *let us use them...*

1 PETER 4:10 (see also Ephesians 4:10-13)

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:

1 CORINTHIANS 13:2

And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge...but have not love, I am nothing.

The Ephesians have an important role in the supernatural oneness of the Body—the faithful exercising of their gifts

Everything in the letter rests on the comprehension, acceptance, and belief in Paul's teaching;

Oneness in the church is not based on a tolerance of divergent thought, it is rooted in a unity of mind grounded in the right understanding of doctrine;

PHILIPPIANS 1:27-28

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.

PHILIPPIANS 2:2

...complete my joy by *being of the same mind*, having the same love, being *in full accord and of one mind*.

Scripture has only one right and true understanding;

2 PETER 1:20-21

...no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation...

2 TIMOTHY 2:15

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, *rightly handling the word of truth*.

1 THESSALONIANS 2:13

And we also thank God constantly for this, *that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God*, which is at work in you believers.

ACTS 17:11-12

...[the Bereans] received the word with all eagerness, *examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so*. Many of them therefore believed...

How can we know for certain what is the right and true understanding?

What the Spirit does and does not do:

The Spirit does not teach us the meaning of Scripture;

JOHN 14:26

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, *he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you*.

JOHN 16:13

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, *and he will declare to you the things that are to come*.

The Spirit does not bypass the hard work of comprehension;

2 PETER 1:5-6

For this very reason, make *every effort* to supplement your faith with...knowledge...

God gifts men to rightly preach the Scriptures;

EZRA 7:9-10

For...the good hand of his God was on him. For Ezra had set his heart to *study* the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to *teach* his statutes and rules in Israel.

NEHEMIAH 8:1-8

¹ And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the LORD had commanded Israel. ² So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and *all who could understand what they heard...* ³ And he read from it...from early morning until midday...And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law... ⁵ And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people... And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. ⁷ Also Jeshua...Pelaiah, the Levites, *helped the people to understand the Law*, while the people remained in their places. ⁸ They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and *they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading*.

How the Spirit teaches us truth (His work of illumination);

1 CORINTHIANS 2:12-16

¹² Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, *that we might understand the things freely given us by God.* ¹³ And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. ¹⁴ *The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.* ¹⁵ The spiritual person *judges* all things, but is himself to be *judged* by no one...

JUDE 1:19

It is these who cause divisions, *worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.*

The Spirit teaches us;

1. To judge the right truth value
2. To judge the right moral value

Paul desires his readers to not be discouraged by his suffering on their behalf;

PHILIPPIANS 2:26

...for [Ephraim] has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill.

God uses evil for good purposes, but the kingdom of evil seeks to do the opposite;

GENESIS 50:20

As for you, *you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good*, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

Questions for Midweek

Reflect on the truth that *all spiritual gifts are given for the benefit of the Body. No spiritual gifts are ever given for the benefit of the individual.*

How does this change your understanding of spiritual gifting?

How can this aid in our understanding of how the Spirit gifts us?

Understanding the role and work of the Spirit of Truth in the life of the Christian, how are you better equipped to think of;

The work of understanding/comprehending the Scriptures?

The centrality of preaching to the kingdom of God?

The claim of "that's your interpretation?"

The valuing of gospel truth?

Paul pleads with his readers to not lose heart (be discouraged) by his suffering—even as it is suffering on their behalf. Reflect on times in which you have (helplessly) watched loved ones suffer.

Consider the common sentiment that you would—if you could—certainly bring their suffering to an end. How do we understand this sentiment through the lens of a perfectly loving and wise God?

How can we prevent the enemy from using good for evil purposes in our life?