



"If we educate a man's mind but not his heart, we have an educated barbarian."

—Theodore Roosevelt

**22-Jan-21**

## **The Same Mind, Judgment, and Speech (Part Two)**

As shown in Part One, more knowledge does not always improve a person's or society's condition if that knowledge is not properly ordered—that is, if it is not conformed to or constrained by the knowledge of [God](#) and all it entails. Additionally, each person has different knowledge and experience and is sure that what he knows is true. However, knowledge can be perilous, for it tends to fill a person with pride, as the apostle Paul tells the Corinthians: "We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but [love](#) edifies" ([1 Corinthians 8:1](#)).

After reading an article or two, watching a video, or receiving an email, we may believe we possess correct knowledge. Yet, if we do not approach what we do with this new-found knowledge with humility—a function of godly knowledge—it will do little good and may well cause harm. If a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, a lot of knowledge may be even more hazardous if not handled with care. An expert on a subject is even more confident he is right than a layperson, making him more susceptible to pride and its damaging effects on relationships. An expert who ignores the human tendency toward pride will likely become an expert who is impossible to live with!

Paul then challenges our carnality: "And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know" ([I Corinthians 8:2](#)). No matter how much we have learned, our knowledge is always imperfect. He returns to this theme in [I Corinthians 13:9](#): "For we know in part and we prophesy in part." Prophesying includes any inspired teaching, not just foretelling the future. Paul's statement is remarkably humble, coming from a man whom [Jesus Christ](#) taught personally! If anybody could boast, he could, yet he admits his knowledge and inspired teaching are only "in part." Even this servant, whom God had blessed with great revelation and used to write much of the New Testament, acknowledges that his inspired speaking—and thus understanding—was incomplete. Much of his message in this epistle centers on the principle that it matters less *what* we know than what we *do* with what we know and *how* we do it. In chapter 13, he declares that without love—which is simply acting as God acts—it is all vanity.

Next, Paul turns our attention to the knowledge that makes a real difference: "But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him" ([I Corinthians 8:3](#)). This verse correlates to [John 17:3](#), where Jesus says that eternal life—that highest manner of living—is to know the Father and the Son. Unlike earthly knowledge, such divine relational knowledge does not breed confusion. The knowledge of God is also the significant exception to the principle of knowledge puffing up because a *true* knowledge of God produces humility. A divine encounter yields a devastating comparison that instantly deflates the human who has such an experience, at least for a while.

Knowing God, and being known by Him, matters more than any of the information flooding our world each day. When consistently attended to, this priceless knowledge provides the means to order and prioritize all other knowledge and the [wisdom](#) to use it properly.

[Ephesians 4:13](#) states our goal of coming to "the knowledge of the Son of God." Similarly, John's epistles contain many statements about things that he insists "we know" ([I John 2:3](#), 5, 18; 3:2, 14, 16, 19, 24; 4:6, 13; 5:2, 15, 18-20). There is knowledge that we can and should trust that has nothing to do with the flood of confusing, secular information that washes over us. Spiritual knowledge—that of God, His Word, and His way—is always true and relevant, while this age's knowledge is uncertain. What is hotly

contested today will be irrelevant in a few years or less. Earthly knowledge has an expiration date, but godly knowledge and understanding how to live are eternal.

The earliest verses of I Corinthians testify to the divisions within that congregation, and Paul pleads with its members, a plea that we also should receive personally:

Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. ([I Corinthians 1:10](#))

His entreaty is a tall order. As Corinth was divided, today's church is similarly riven by disagreements over doctrine, policy, and responses to the culture and current events. Division is not unique to our time, but Paul implies that we should not passively accept it. He admonishes them precisely because they could have done more to address their divided state than they were.

So, how do we put this into practice? The apostle does not simply say, "Here's how you speak the same thing and have the same mind and judgment." Instead, his instruction comprises a theme throughout the rest of the epistle. He provides a major key in [I Corinthians 2:16](#), writing, "But we have the mind of Christ."

The way we can have the same mind is not to try to change everybody's mind according to *our* knowledge—because we may be the one who is wrong! The solution is for everyone, individually, to grow in the same mind and judgment *as Jesus Christ* and to speak *what He would speak*. He is our Standard, and if we have His mind, we will agree with the others who also have Christ's mind.

It sounds simple, but we must keep some realities in mind. Not everyone will pursue what God thinks on a subject to the same degree, so differences will always exist. Also, even though we receive Christ's mind at [baptism](#) through the Holy Spirit, we do not receive its fullness. It takes a lifetime for His mind to become an individual's primary operating principle, so we dare not assume

that every thought that pops into our minds is an expression of the mind of Christ. We must still apply the principles in God's Word—like searching the Scriptures, testing the spirits, seeking counsel, and remembering that our knowledge is *always* incomplete and thus have a continuous need for humility.

God has granted us access to Christ's mind, but we must continue to pursue it—to seek His mind—not only for answers to questions about His Word, but also about *how to respond* when our brethren do not possess the same knowledge we do. There is a way, founded in humility, to correct a brother without breaking things unnecessarily. Likewise, we can zealously contend for the [faith](#) without verbally casting a brother into the Lake of Fire. The mind of Christ teaches us how to apply the principles in God's Word, not just to know them.

- David C. Grabbe

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## From the Archives: Featured Sermon

### [Knowing God](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

In order to one to fulfill his purpose in life, a person needs to be singularly focused on what he wants to accomplish. Divided minds either result in no activity or productivity or, worse yet, devastating and hurtful consequences. Division (especially division within oneself) destroys. In group dynamics (from marriage to larger entities), unity is better than singularity. All of us, to some degree have divided minds- all of us, to some degree, are insane (or unsane). Israel has a proclivity for fickleness and an insatiable desire for variety, totally at variance with the changelessness and steadfastness of God. God desires that we become at one with Him- conformed to His image- constant in our character- living as God lives- (motivated by thankfulness and desire) rather than being conformed to the world.

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## From the Archives: Featured Article

## **Living By Faith and Human Pride**

by John W. Ritenbaugh

II Corinthians 5:7 is clear that God wants us to walk—live our lives—by faith, but our pride and vanity, mirroring the attitude of Satan the Devil, frequently get in the way. John Ritenbaugh delves into the depths of pride and its tragic results for the individual and for all mankind, most of all because it causes us to reject God and His Word.

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