**The reason why the things of the Spirit have been hidden from the “wise and prudent,” but revealed unto “babes” (cf.** [**Matthew 11:25**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+11.25&t=NKJV)**). Certain Christian intelligentsia of the present dispensation, even though saved and in a position to understand the Word of God, too often seek spiritual discernment in the light of worldly wisdom rather than through comparing Scripture with Scripture and looking to the indwelling Spirit to lead them “into all truth” (**[**John 16:13**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+16.13&t=NKJV)**;** [**1 Corinthians 2:9-13**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.9-13&t=NKJV)**).**

**Soulical, Spiritual or Carnal Man**  
**By Arlen Chitwood of** [**Lamp Broadcast**](http://lampbroadcast.org/)

According to the Word of God, every man can be categorized as being either soulical, spiritual, or carnal. The word “soulical” pertains to all non-Christians, and the words “spiritual” and “carnal” pertain to two classes of Christians.

A) SOULICAL

But the natural man [the “soulical” man] does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. ([1 Corinthians 2:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.14&t=NKJV))

The Greek word translated “soul” throughout the New Testament is psuche. This word has to do with “the natural life” of the individual. The soul is the seat of a person’s emotions, feelings, and desires pertaining to his man-conscious existence.

The Greek word translated “natural” in [1 Corinthians 2:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.14&t=NKJV) is psuchikos, a form of the word psuche. Psuchikos is the “natural” or “soulical” life (self-life) that man has in common with the animal kingdom.

The soulical man is dominated or ruled by his soul, which includes all the experiences, desires, emotions, sensations, likes, and dislikes within the personal, natural life of the individual. Such likes, dislikes, etc. will vary from individual to individual, but all emanate from the soul-life of man. The soulical man is alienated from God and, thus, possesses no way to grasp spiritual truth. A man must be born from above — made alive spiritually — before he can possess spiritual discernment.

B) SPIRITUAL

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual . . . . ([1 Corinthians 3:1a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.1a&t=NKJV))

The Greek word translated “spirit” throughout the New Testament is pneuma. This word is used in the New Testament referring to the Holy Spirit, man’s spirit, angels (both fallen and un-fallen), a state of mind or disposition, wind, and breath. Examples in Scripture of the last four are [Luke 8:55](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+8.55&t=NKJV); [John 3:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.8&t=NKJV); [1 Corinthians 4:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+4.21&t=NKJV); [2 Timothy 1:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+1.7&t=NKJV); [Hebrews 1:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+1.7&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 3:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+3.19&t=NKJV).

Man’s spirit is the seat of the higher divine life pertaining to his God-conscious existence. The Greek word translated “spiritual” in [1 Corinthians 3:1a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.1a&t=NKJV) is pneumatikos, a form of the word pneuma. The spiritual man is one who is controlled by the Spirit of God acting through his own spirit (through a spirit made alive by the birth from above).

The spiritual man, unlike the soulical man, controls his emotions, feelings, and desires pertaining to his still-present, man-conscious existence. He brings his unredeemed body under subjection and exerts control over the soulical man. This, of course, is not performed within his own power, but within the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. This is an experience open to redeemed man alone, to an individual who has been made alive spiritually.

Unredeemed man, on the other hand, although a trichotomous being, fails to rise above the dichotomous animal kingdom in his natural or soulical existence. He lacks a redeemed spirit with the accompanying, indwelling Holy Spirit. He, with an inanimate spirit, is spiritually dead. And, consequently, he remains alienated from God. Thus, an existence outside the soulical (natural) for unredeemed man is not possible.

An individual allowing the Spirit of God to impart spiritual truth into and control his life through his own spirit progressively grows from immaturity to maturity. He progressively grows into a spiritually mature Christian. Growing in this manner, he exerts control over his emotions, feelings, and desires pertaining to his man-conscious (soulical) existence. And, by this means, he will ultimately come into a realization of the salvation of his soul (life).

On the other hand, an individual who refuses to allow the Spirit of God to impart spiritual truth into and control his life in the preceding manner can only remain a carnally immature Christian. Apart from the assimilation of spiritual truth, resulting in spiritual growth, he cannot help but be controlled by his emotions, feelings, and desires pertaining to his man-conscious (soulical) existence. And, accordingly, such a person will ultimately suffer the loss of his soul (life), which can have no bearing whatsoever on his eternal salvation (for that is a past, finished matter which has already been dealt with).

C) CARNAL

. . . but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. ([1 Corinthians 3:1b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.1b&t=NKJV))

The Greek word translated “carnal” is sarkikos. This is a form of the word sarx, which means “flesh.” Sarkikos (fleshly) is the opposite of pneumatikos (spiritual). The carnal Christian is, thus, “fleshly” as opposed to “spiritual.” He is one who allows himself to be controlled by his soul rather than by the indwelling Holy Spirit. He, as the soulical man (the unsaved man), follows his personal emotions, feelings, and desires.

He, however, unlike the soulical man, has been born from above and is capable of grasping spiritual truth. But, unlike the spiritual man, this truth is not being received. Thus, the carnal Christian, without an impartation of spiritual truth flowing into his saved human spirit, remains immature and fleshly, following the fleshly impulses of the soul.

(The use of “flesh” or “fleshly” in the preceding respect would be a direct allusion back to that which occurred in Eden at the time of the fall. Man, following his fall, possessed a body that was no longer enswathed in a covering of Glory, with the exposed flesh openly demonstrating this fact. This is what is meant by Christ coming “in the likeness of sinful flesh” [[Romans 8:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.3&t=NKJV)]. Christ came to earth in a body not enswathed in the Glory of God.

This was the crux of the ignominy and shame surrounding the events of Calvary. Not only was Christ’s body of flesh [apart from the covering of Glory] arrayed in a mock regal manner [with a robe and a crown of thorns], but He hung on the cross without even His Own garments to cover His body, for all to behold that which had been wrought by sin 4,000 years earlier — nakedness, and death [[Matthew 27:27-36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+27.27-36&t=NKJV)].

There though is nothing wrong with “flesh” per se. Man was created in a body of flesh, Christ presently has a body of flesh, and both God’s Son and man will live in bodies of flesh forever.

But, though there is nothing wrong with a body of “flesh,” there is something wrong with a body of flesh that is not enswathed in the Glory of God.)

Within the scope of that which God reveals about the impartation of spiritual truth to redeemed man alone lies the great lesson concerning unredeemed man’s relationship to the Word of God. It is utterly futile for unredeemed man to either himself attempt to understand the Word of God or for redeemed man to attempt to teach him the Word of God. Scripture is “spiritually discerned,” and a man must be born from above — be made alive spiritually, which places him in a position where he can exercise spiritual discernment — before he can understand the things of the Spirit of God. The soulical (unredeemed) man, completely alienated from God — spiritually dead and in no position to exercise spiritual discernment — cannot understand spiritual things, and they appear to him as no more than “foolishness” ([1 Corinthians 2:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.14&t=NKJV)).

(Unredeemed man can understand the letter of Scripture [i.e., the stories or accounts of events in Scripture, viewing them as he would a secular book]. But to take these stories or accounts of events and see the spiritual content that God has built into them is completely beyond his ability [cf. [2 Corinthians 3:6ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+3.6ff&t=NKJV)]. He simply cannot understand the things of the Spirit, for, spiritually, he is dead; he is alienated from God.)

Thus, herein also lies the reason why the things of the Spirit have been hidden from the “wise and prudent,” but revealed unto “babes” (cf. [Matthew 11:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+11.25&t=NKJV)). Certain Christian intelligentsia of the present dispensation, even though saved and in a position to understand the Word of God, too often seek spiritual discernment in the light of worldly wisdom rather than through comparing Scripture with Scripture and looking to the indwelling Spirit to lead them “into all truth” ([John 16:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+16.13&t=NKJV); [1 Corinthians 2:9-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.9-13&t=NKJV)).

And, although those Christians who seek spiritual discernment in this manner may often be looked upon as great spiritual leaders, theologians, expositors, etc., they, in the final analysis, cannot understand these things. Such individuals can only be sadly lacking in the very realm where they are held in high esteem.

While at the same time, “babes” (Greek: nepios, those who are still on the milk of the Word and have not grown enough to even partake of solid food), by the leadership of the Spirit of God — as they compare Scripture with Scripture and look to the Spirit to lead them “into all truth” — can invariably be brought into an understanding of these things. They, by turning to the Word and looking to the Spirit for discernment and leadership, can understand more about these same spiritual truths than the “wise and prudent” who turn to places other than the Word and either ignore or reject the Spirit’s discernment and leadership.

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Excerpts from [Bible One - Charles Strong's The Crown Jewel of Christian Doctrine](http://www.bibleone.net/Christian-Doctrine.htm).

Also see [The Crown Jewel of Christian Doctrine](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-two.php#The%20Crown%20Jewel%20of%20Christian%20Doctrine) in this site.