

Dr. Gary Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 13, Response to Chloe's Household, Part 4 (chs. 3-4) Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 13, Response to Chloe's Household, Part 4 (chs. 3-4), Biblicalelearning.org

This lecture by Dr. Gary Meadors explores **Paul's response to divisions within the Corinthian church**, stemming from reports from Chloe's household and focusing on 1 Corinthians 3 and 4. Meadors emphasizes that **these divisions arose from a misplaced loyalty to teachers** and a failure to recognize the divine source of Paul's authority and message. He explains how **Paul contrasts worldly wisdom with gospel wisdom**, asserting that the latter is revealed by God's Spirit to the apostles. The lecture further discusses **the reception and application of this spiritual truth**, highlighting the necessity of the Spirit for understanding and the objective nature of Scripture. Ultimately, Meadors underscores the **importance of diligent study of the Bible** as the means by which believers can access "the mind of Christ."

2. 12 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 13 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Pauline Epistles → 1 Corinthians).



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3. Briefing Document: Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 13, Response to Chloe's Household, Part 4 (chs. 3-4)

Briefing Document: 1 Corinthians 3 & 4 - Paul's Response to Chloe's Household (Meadors)

Overview: This lecture by Dr. Gary Meadors delves into 1 Corinthians chapters 3 and 4, focusing on Paul's response to the divisions within the Corinthian church as reported by Chloe's household. Meadors highlights Paul's evaluation of the problem, the nature and reception of gospel wisdom (particularly in 1 Corinthians 2:6-16), and the application of spiritual truth. A significant portion of the lecture centers on understanding the source and authority of Paul's message as divinely revealed.

Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:

1. The Problem of Division and its Roots:

- Paul addresses the division in the Corinthian church, which Meadors clarifies stems from **"competitiveness between teacher and students, between an authoritative teacher and a community."**
- This division is characterized by **"loyalty to certain teachers that created divisions because they were acting in a secular fashion,"** driven by **"pseudo-human wisdom"** prevalent in Roman Corinth, a form of **"sophistry sort of approach to understanding."**
- Paul reminds the Corinthians of their humble beginnings in their conversion, emphasizing that it was **"not by might nor power, but by God's grace and God's Spirit that truth moves forward."**
- The Corinthians failed to appreciate Paul's original ministry, viewing his lack of Roman social status and traditional teacher expectations as weakness, despite his strength lying in that perceived weakness (referencing 1 Corinthians 2:1-5).

2. The Source and Authority of Paul's Message:

- A central point is the Corinthians' **"failure to appreciate the source and authority of Paul's message."** They questioned his authority and the validity of his interpretation of the Christian message.
- Meadors emphasizes that Paul's authority doesn't stem from his own intellect or social standing but from **"divine revelation."** **"God had revealed the truth. Paul**

was sharing that truth, and the Corinthians needed to recognize that was the authority."

- Paul, along with the **"apostolic community,"** served as the vehicle through which God revealed this truth to the world. **"God revealed this message to the apostles and gave them the responsibility to share that message with the community."**
- This revelation is presented as **"not Paul's bright idea. It's revelatory truth."**

3. The Nature of Gospel Wisdom (1 Corinthians 2:6-9):

- Paul speaks of **"a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age"** (2:6). Meadors clarifies that "mature" (Greek: *teleos*) refers to those who have reached a fuller understanding, not necessarily just those considered "spiritual" in a stereotypical sense.
- Gospel wisdom is identified as **"God's wisdom a mystery (musterion), a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began"** (2:7). *Musterion* is a technical term for a sacred secret now revealed, particularly concerning the developments around Jesus and the church.
- Meadors strongly refutes the common interpretation of 1 Corinthians 2:9 ("what no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived") as referring to heaven. Instead, he argues it pertains to **"information... the content of revelation"** and touches upon **"epistemology"** – how we know what we know.
- Human means of knowing (senses, reason, even intuition) are insufficient to grasp this divine wisdom without God's revelation. **"To reason yourself to God, you have to take some steps that can get you there... it's not looking at the sky and the wonders of our universe that brings us to an understanding that there's a God."**
- What God has prepared for those who love him, in this context, is **"the cross... the wisdom of God on the cross and in Christ."**

4. Divine Revelation and the Role of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:10-13):

- Verse 10 marks the resolution to the epistemological dilemma: **"These are the things God has revealed to us by his spirit."** This underscores the divine origin and authoritative nature of Paul's teaching.

- Meadors emphasizes the restriction of the pronoun "we" in verses 6-16, suggesting it primarily refers to **"Paul and his community, mainly the apostolic community,"** who were chosen by God to receive and communicate these truths. **"Paul's authority is because of God's choosing him and his community to communicate these truths, to be the recipients and the vehicles through whom these truths come."**
- The Spirit of God is identified as the **"vehicle by whom God orchestrated the record of Scripture."** This involves a divine orchestration through human instrumentality, even when the human authors may not have fully grasped the ultimate significance of their writings.
- Meadors cautions against saying Paul was "inspired," arguing that **"inspiration does not apply to the people. It applies to the product"** – the Scripture itself.
- Verse 13 highlights that the apostles speak **"not in words taught by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit."** The exact nature of this process is described as **"enigmatic"** and an **"assertion, not an explanation."** The Greek phrasing suggests **"spirit-caused teaching"** (subjective genitive).
- Despite human involvement and minor textual variations, God has delivered **"a Scripture that is authoritative, that is adequate for all purposes, and that we can depend upon."**

5. The Application of Spiritual Truth and the Spiritual Person (1 Corinthians 2:14-16):

- Meadors discusses who can receive and understand spiritual truth. **"The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness and cannot understand them because they are discerned only in a spiritual way"** (2:14).
- He presents two interpretations of "the person without the Spirit": the unregenerate person or someone resistant to the apostles' Christian faith (Fitzmeyer's view). In the specific Corinthian context, the latter might be more relevant, referring to believers overly influenced by secular wisdom.
- He critiques the idea that only believers can understand the Bible at a basic level, arguing for the **"objective nature of Scripture."** Unbelievers can grasp the historical, linguistic, and literary aspects, even if they don't accept its truth.
- The **"regenerated person has the capacity to signify spiritual truth"** (2:15). However, the Corinthians were failing to do so due to their worldly perspectives.

- Paul concludes by affirming the nature of divine wisdom, quoting Isaiah 40:13: **"For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?"** The answer is no one, implying that human wisdom cannot dictate to God.
- However, Paul states, **"But we have the mind of Christ"** (2:16), based on **"revelation"** through the apostles. This doesn't mean believers have automatic, complete understanding but that the Scriptures provide access to Christ's mind, requiring diligent study and application.
- Meadors emphasizes the importance of hard work and commitment to understanding and teaching Scripture, discouraging laziness and the pursuit of mere emotionalism over intellectual engagement with God's Word.

Quotes:

- "competitiveness between teacher and students, between an authoritative teacher and a community."
- "loyalty to certain teachers that created divisions because they were acting in a secular fashion"
- "pseudo-human wisdom"
- "not by might nor power, but by God's grace and God's Spirit that truth moves forward."
- "failure to appreciate the source and authority of Paul's message."
- "God had revealed the truth. Paul was sharing that truth, and the Corinthians needed to recognize that was the authority."
- "apostolic community"
- "God revealed this message to the apostles and gave them the responsibility to share that message with the community."
- "not Paul's bright idea. It's revelatory truth."
- "a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age"
- "God's wisdom a mystery (musterion), a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began"
- "information... the content of revelation"
- "epistemology"

- "To reason yourself to God, you have to take some steps that can get you there... it's not looking at the sky and the wonders of our universe that brings us to an understanding that there's a God."
- "the cross... the wisdom of God on the cross and in Christ."
- "These are the things God has revealed to us by his spirit."
- "Paul and his community, mainly the apostolic community"
- "Paul's authority is because of God's choosing him and his community to communicate these truths, to be the recipients and the vehicles through whom these truths come."
- "vehicle by whom God orchestrated the record of Scripture."
- "inspiration does not apply to the people. It applies to the product"
- "not in words taught by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit."
- "enigmatic"
- "assertion, not an explanation."
- "spirit-caused teaching"
- "a Scripture that is authoritative, that is adequate for all purposes, and that we can depend upon."
- "The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness and cannot understand them because they are discerned only in a spiritual way"
- "objective nature of Scripture."
- "regenerated person has the capacity to signify spiritual truth"
- "For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?"
- "But we have the mind of Christ"
- "revelation"

Conclusion:

Dr. Meadors' lecture provides a detailed examination of Paul's response to the Corinthian divisions in 1 Corinthians 3 and 4. He underscores the importance of recognizing the divine origin and authority of the apostolic message, particularly in 1 Corinthians 2:6-16. By clarifying the nature of gospel wisdom as revealed by God's Spirit through the apostles, Meadors challenges common misinterpretations of key passages and emphasizes the need for diligent study and application of Scripture for true spiritual understanding and growth. He stresses that the "mind of Christ" is accessible through the revealed Word, demanding a committed and thoughtful engagement with the Bible.

4. Study Guide: Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 13, Response to Chloe's Household, Part 4 (chs. 3-4)

Study Guide: 1 Corinthians 3 & 4 - Paul's Response to Chloe's Household

Key Themes

- **The Problem of Division:** Understanding the nature and source of the divisions within the Corinthian church, as reported by Chloe's household.
- **Pseudo-Human Wisdom vs. Gospel Wisdom:** Contrasting worldly philosophies and competitive attitudes with the divinely revealed wisdom of the gospel.
- **Paul's Apostolic Authority:** Examining Paul's defense of his authority and the source of his message as divine revelation, not personal merit or worldly status.
- **The Nature of Gospel Wisdom (1 Corinthians 2:6-16):** Delving into the characteristics of true Christian wisdom, its reception by the mature/spiritual, and its divine origin.
- **Revelation and Inspiration:** Grasping the process by which God revealed his truth to the apostles and how the Spirit was involved in the creation of Scripture.
- **The Application of Spiritual Truth:** Understanding how believers with the Spirit discern and judge spiritual matters, contrasting them with those without the Spirit.
- **Having the Mind of Christ:** Exploring the meaning of this concept in light of divine revelation and the role of Scripture.

Quiz

1. According to Dr. Meadors, what was the primary issue reported by Chloe's household that Paul is addressing in 1 Corinthians 3 and 4? How did the Corinthians manifest this problem?
2. What does Dr. Meadors mean by "pseudo-human wisdom" in the context of the Corinthian church? How did this type of wisdom contribute to the divisions within the church?
3. How did the Corinthians' worldly expectations of a teacher influence their perception of Paul's ministry? What does Paul emphasize in response to their lack of appreciation for his original ministry?

4. According to Dr. Meadors' interpretation of 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, who does the pronoun "we" primarily refer to in this section? Why is this identification significant for understanding Paul's argument?
5. Dr. Meadors clarifies that 1 Corinthians 2:9 ("what no eye has seen...") is not about heaven. What does he argue this verse is actually referring to? Explain his connection to epistemology.
6. Explain Dr. Meadors' analogy of the "open triangle" and the "fall" in relation to humanity's ability to know God. How does divine revelation, according to the lecture, overcome this problem?
7. What is Dr. Meadors' distinction between the inspiration of the person (Paul) and the inspiration of the product (Scripture)? Why does he emphasize this distinction?
8. Summarize Dr. Meadors' explanation of 1 Corinthians 2:13 regarding "words taught by the Spirit." What does the genitive case of "spirit" signify in the Greek?
9. According to Dr. Meadors, what are the two possible interpretations of "the person without the Spirit" in 1 Corinthians 2:14? What is the crucial limitation such a person faces in understanding spiritual truth?
10. What does Dr. Meadors say about having "the mind of Christ" as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 2:16? On what basis does Paul claim that believers have this mind?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The primary issue was the problem of division within the Corinthian church. The Corinthians manifested this problem through competitiveness and loyalty to certain teachers, acting in a secular fashion rather than being unified in Christ.
2. "Pseudo-human wisdom" refers to a sophistry-like approach to understanding prevalent in Roman Corinth. This contributed to divisions due to the competitiveness of different viewpoints and human pride in intellectual superiority.
3. The Corinthians expected Paul to conform to the social status and expectations of teachers within their culture. Paul emphasizes that his strength was in his weakness and that the authority of his message came from divine revelation, not worldly acclaim.

4. Dr. Meadors believes "we" primarily refers to the apostolic community. This is significant because Paul is defending his authority by asserting that God directly revealed the gospel message to the apostles for them to share.
5. Dr. Meadors argues that 1 Corinthians 2:9 refers to the content of divine revelation and how we come to know it (epistemology). He connects the "eye has not seen, ear has not heard, human mind has not conceived" to the limitations of empirical and rational ways of knowing God's truth, which is only revealed by the Spirit.
6. The "open triangle" represents all created reality, and the "fall" symbolizes humanity's transgression that created a distortion, preventing a clear path back to God. Divine revelation, through God's Word, acts as an "umbrella" to provide the necessary knowledge of God that cannot be attained otherwise.
7. Dr. Meadors states that inspiration applies to the product of the biblical writers (Scripture), not the individuals themselves. This emphasizes that it was God orchestrating the writing, and not every writing of an apostle should be considered Scripture.
8. Dr. Meadors explains that 1 Corinthians 2:13 asserts that the apostles speak God's wisdom in words taught by the Spirit, not human wisdom. The genitive case of "spirit" signifies a subjective genitive, indicating that the Spirit is the cause of the teaching (spirit-caused teaching).
9. The two interpretations are an unregenerate person or someone who is a Christian but resistant to the apostles' teaching. The crucial limitation is that they lack the independent capacity to correctly signify or truly understand spiritual truth without submission to the revealed word.
10. Dr. Meadors explains that having "the mind of Christ" is not an automatic or mystical transfer of God's thoughts upon conversion. Instead, it is based on the revelation provided through Scripture, given by Christ through the apostles. Believers have access to God's mind through this revealed Word, which requires diligent study and application.

Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss the socio-cultural context of Corinth and how it contributed to the divisions within the early church, according to Dr. Meadors. How did Paul attempt to address these issues in 1 Corinthians 3 and 4?
2. Analyze Dr. Meadors' interpretation of 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, focusing on the distinction between worldly wisdom and gospel wisdom. What are the key characteristics of gospel wisdom, and how is it received and understood?
3. Evaluate Dr. Meadors' argument for the divine origin and authority of Scripture based on his interpretation of 1 Corinthians 2. What role does the Holy Spirit play in revelation and inspiration, according to his lecture?
4. Compare and contrast Dr. Meadors' understanding of the "person without the Spirit" and the "person with the Spirit" in 1 Corinthians 2:14-16. What are the implications of this distinction for understanding and applying spiritual truth?
5. Explore the significance of the concept of "having the mind of Christ" in 1 Corinthians 2:16, as explained by Dr. Meadors. How does this concept relate to divine revelation, the role of Scripture, and the believer's understanding of God's will?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Oral Communique:** A spoken message or report, in this case, the information about the Corinthian church's problems brought by members of Chloe's household.
- **Pseudo-Human Wisdom:** What Dr. Meadors describes as a sophistry-like approach to understanding and knowledge prevalent in Roman Corinth, characterized by competitiveness and pride in human intellect.
- **Sophistry:** The use of clever but false arguments, often intended to deceive.
- **Apostolic Community:** In this context, referring primarily to Paul and the other apostles who were directly chosen by Christ and entrusted with the foundational teaching of the gospel.
- **Divine Revelation:** The act by which God discloses truths about himself and his will to humanity, often through specific means like prophets and apostles.

- **Musterion (Mystery):** A technical term in the New Testament for a truth that was previously hidden but has now been revealed through the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- **Epistemology:** The branch of philosophy concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge, its presuppositions and bases, and the reliability of claims to knowledge.
- **Empirical:** Based on observation or experience.
- **Intuition (Religious Sense):** A dawning of understanding or knowledge that cannot be explained through sensory experience or reason alone, often attributed to divine initiation.
- **The Fall:** The biblical account in Genesis of Adam and Eve's disobedience to God, resulting in sin entering the world and a separation between humanity and God.
- **Apologetic:** A reasoned defense of one's beliefs or doctrines.
- **Inspiration (of Scripture):** The theological doctrine that the Bible was divinely guided and influenced in its writing, resulting in it being the authoritative Word of God. Dr. Meadors emphasizes that this applies to the written product, not necessarily the person writing.
- **Subjective Genitive:** A grammatical case in Greek where the noun in the genitive form acts as the subject or agent of the verb or action implied in the related noun. In "teachings of the Spirit," "Spirit" is the cause of the teaching.
- **Canon (of Scripture):** The collection of books recognized as the authoritative and inspired Word of God.
- **Eschaton:** The final events in the history of the world or humanity; the end times.
- **Unregenerate Person:** A person who has not experienced spiritual rebirth or conversion through faith in Jesus Christ.
- **Regenerate Person:** A person who has experienced spiritual rebirth or renewal through the Holy Spirit, resulting in a new nature and relationship with God.
- **Pneumatikos (Spiritual):** An adjective in Greek that can refer to things relating to the Spirit or to people who are living in accordance with the Spirit. Dr. Meadors emphasizes it relates to alignment with God's revealed truth.
- **Pneumonikon (Spiritual - Neuter):** The neuter form of pneumatikos, often referring to spiritual realities or truths.

5. FAQs on Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 13, Response to Chloe's Household, Part 4 (chs. 3-4), Biblicalelearning.org

Frequently Asked Questions on 1 Corinthians 3-4 and Paul's Authority

1. What was the primary problem in the Corinthian church that Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians 3 and 4, stemming from Chloe's household report?

The main issue was division within the church, characterized by competitiveness and misplaced loyalty towards different teachers. The Corinthians were acting in a secular manner, exhibiting rivalry between teachers and their followers, rather than focusing on the unified message of the gospel.

2. How did the Corinthians' cultural context in Roman Corinth, particularly regarding wisdom and teachers, contribute to these divisions?

Roman Corinth valued sophistry and authoritative teachers with social status. The Corinthians applied these secular expectations to Christian leaders, judging Paul negatively because he didn't present himself with the social standing they expected. This led them to question his authority and the validity of his message compared to others who might have seemed more impressive by worldly standards.

3. Why does Paul emphasize that the gospel wisdom he preaches is not of human origin but divinely revealed?

Paul stresses the divine source of his message to counter the Corinthians' skepticism and their preference for human wisdom and rhetoric. He asserts that the core truths of Christianity are a "mystery" revealed by God through the Spirit to the apostles. This revelation, not human intellect or eloquence, is the true foundation and authority of his teaching.

4. According to Paul, who are the primary recipients and communicators of this divinely revealed gospel wisdom in 1 Corinthians 2:6-16?

Paul indicates that this special wisdom is communicated through the "apostolic community," including himself and those directly chosen by God to reveal and share the gospel. He uses the first-person plural ("we") in this section to highlight their unique role as recipients of divine revelation, contrasting with the second-person ("you") used when addressing the Corinthian believers.

5. How does Paul explain the limitations of human wisdom and sensory experience in understanding God's truth (1 Corinthians 2:9-10)?

Paul quotes scripture to emphasize that the profound truths God has prepared for those who love Him are beyond the grasp of human senses, reason, and intuition alone. He clarifies that verse 9 is not about heaven but about the very content of divine revelation, the "epistemology" of knowing God. These truths can only be known because God has chosen to reveal them through His Spirit.

6. What role does the Spirit of God play in both the revelation and the understanding of gospel wisdom, according to Paul?

The Spirit of God is central to both the revealing and the comprehension of God's wisdom. Paul states that God revealed these truths "to us by his Spirit." The Spirit searches the deep things of God and communicates them. Furthermore, understanding these spiritual truths requires discernment that is only possible "in a spiritual way through the Spirit," highlighting the necessity of God's Spirit for true insight.

7. How does Paul differentiate between those who can and cannot understand spiritual truths in 1 Corinthians 2:14-16, and what are the implications?

Paul distinguishes between the "person without the Spirit" (often interpreted as the unregenerate or those resistant to apostolic teaching) who considers spiritual truths foolish and cannot understand them, and the "person with the Spirit" (the regenerate) who can discern these truths. This doesn't mean believers have exhaustive knowledge, but they have the capacity to understand through the Spirit. However, even believers can struggle if they prioritize worldly wisdom or social status over apostolic teaching.

8. What does Paul mean when he says, "we have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16), and how does this relate to the scriptures?

When Paul states "we have the mind of Christ," he isn't suggesting believers possess God's complete thoughts. Instead, he means that through the revelation given to the apostles and recorded in the scriptures, believers have access to the understanding and wisdom of God regarding salvation and how to live. The scriptures provide the foundation for knowing God's will and thinking according to Christ.