

1 Corinthians 14:37

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

Analysis

If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord— Greek ei tis dokei prophētēs einai ē pneumatikos, epiginōsketō ha graphō hymiν hoti kyriou estin entolē (εἴ τις δοκεῖ προφήτης εἶναι ἡ πνευματικός, ἐπιγινωσκέτω ἂ γράφω ὑμῖν ὅτι κυρίου ἔστιν ἐντολή, "if anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize what I write to you, that it is the Lord's command").

Paul's test of spirituality: recognizing apostolic authority. True prophets and spiritual people will acknowledge Paul's instructions as entolē kyriou ("commandment of the Lord"), not mere human opinion. The aorist imperative epiginōsketō ("let him recognize") demands immediate, full acknowledgment. This is Paul's trump card: reject his teaching, and you prove you're not spiritual, regardless of your claims or experiences.

Historical Context

Some Corinthians likely claimed their charismatic experiences authorized ignoring Paul's regulations. He insists: true spirituality submits to apostolic teaching, which carries Christ's authority (cf. 2 Cor 10:8, 13:10).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. Why does Paul make recognizing his authority the test of true spirituality?
2. How do we balance Spirit-promptings with submission to apostolic teaching?
3. What does it mean for Paul's instructions to be 'the commandments of the Lord'?

Interlinear Text

Εἴ τις δοκεῖ προφήτης εῖναι ἢ πνευματικός
G1487 G5100 think himself G1380 a prophet G4396 to be G1511 or G2228 spiritual G4152

ἐπιγινωσκέτω ἀ γράφω ὑμῖν ὅτι τοῦ κυρίου
let him acknowledge the things that I write unto you that G3588 of the Lord G2962

εἰσὶν ἐντολαί·
are the commandments G1526 G1785

Additional Cross-References

1 John 4:6 (Spirit): We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

2 Corinthians 10:7 (Parallel theme): Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's.

2 Peter 3:2 (Word): That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:

Jude 1:17 (Word): But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;

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