

1 Corinthians 2:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

Analysis

But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. The pneumatikos (πνευματικός, "spiritual person")—Spirit-indwelt believer—anakrinei panta (ἀνακρίνει πάντα, "examines/judges all things"). Anakrinō (ἀνακρίνω) means "investigate, discern, assess"—the same term used of legal examination (Acts 4:9, 12:19). Spirit-illumination enables believers to evaluate truth-claims by biblical standards (1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 John 4:1), including assessing teachers, doctrines, and ethical dilemmas.

Yet **he himself is judged of no man** (autos de hyp' oudenos anakrinetai, αὐτὸς δὲ ὑπ' οὐδενὸς ἀνακρίνεται)—unregenerate people lack capacity to properly assess Spirit-taught wisdom. This isn't claiming believers are above accountability (Galatians 6:1) but that natural reason cannot adjudicate spiritual truth. The spiritual believer operates with different epistemology; the natural person's critique reflects their unregenerate state. Paul isn't promoting subjectivism but highlighting the noetic effects of sin and grace.

Historical Context

In Corinth's fractured church, factions judged Paul's apostleship by worldly standards—eloquence, credentials, power (1:12, 4:3-4). Paul insists such assessment is incompetent: only fellow Spirit-indwelt believers can properly evaluate apostolic ministry. This principle guards against tyranny of secular intellectual fashions. When modern critics dismiss biblical doctrines as "outdated"

or "unscientific," Paul's response applies: unregenerate assessment of revelation is categorically flawed. Conversely, this isn't license for believers to reject all outside critique—only recognition that spiritual matters require spiritual discernment.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does this verse guard against letting secular academic consensus determine what you believe Scripture teaches?
2. What prevents spiritual discernment from becoming self-righteous dismissal of legitimate questions or criticisms?
3. How can you grow in exercising spiritual judgment to test teaching and practice in your church community?

Interlinear Text

ο	δὲ	πνευματικὸς	ἀνακρίνεται	μὲν	πάντα	αὐτὸς
G3588	But	he that is spiritual		G3303	all things	he himself
G1161		G4152			G3956	G846
			G350			
δὲ	ὑπ' οὐδενὸς	ἀνακρίνεται				
But	of	no man	is judged			
G1161	G5259	G3762	G350			

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 28:5 (Judgment): Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the LORD understand all things.

1 Thessalonians 5:21 (Parallel theme): Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

Hebrews 5:14 (Parallel theme): But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

1 John 4:1 (Spirit): Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

1 Corinthians 14:37 (Spirit): 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.

Galatians 6:1 (Spirit): Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

1 Corinthians 3:1 (Spirit): And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

Philippians 1:10 (Parallel theme): That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;