



# RCCG OCEANIA

Character & Holiness

## BECOMING THE SPIRITUAL MAN

### AT A GLANCE

#### BIG IDEA

Scripture contrasts a life shaped by the Spirit with a life stuck in childish, fleshly patterns. God's wisdom is not merely human insight—it is His "mystery" ordained for our glory. As Jesus was sent, He sends His followers to live and serve from that spiritual reality, not from division and immaturity.

#### PRIMARY PASSAGES

1 Corinthians 3:1-4

1 Corinthians 2:7

John 20:21

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

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- The “spiritual man” is contrasted with being “carnal” and remaining a spiritual infant (1 Corinthians 3:1-4).
- Carnality shows itself in envy, strife, and party-spirit attachments to human leaders (1 Corinthians 3:3-4).
- God’s wisdom is revealed as a “mystery,” ordained before the ages for our glory (1 Corinthians 2:7).
- Spiritual growth involves moving from milk to maturity—becoming able to receive and live by what God reveals (1 Corinthians 3:1-2).
- Jesus’ commission defines spiritual living as a sent life: “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you” (John 20:21).

## INTRODUCTION

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Becoming the spiritual man requires honest spiritual assessment. Scripture recognizes that a person can belong to Christ and yet remain carnal—stalled in immaturity, easily provoked, and shaped more by the flesh than by the Holy Spirit. At the same time, God calls His people into maturity: to receive the wisdom of God as His mystery and to live as those sent by Jesus. This study guide traces that movement ...

movement from infancy to maturity and from self-centered patterns to a sent life.

## SCRIPTURE READING

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- **1 Corinthians 3:1-4** — Paul addresses believers who cannot yet be spoken to as spiritual because they remain carnal. He describes “milk” versus “solid food” and identifies envy, strife, and party-spirit divisions as evidence of immaturity.

## SCRIPTURE READING (CONT.)

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- **1 Corinthians 2:7** — Paul centers attention on the wisdom of God—not as human philosophy, but as a hidden “mystery” God ordained before the ages for the glory of His people.
- **John 20:21** — After His resurrection, Jesus commissions His disciples: as the Father sent Him, so He sends them. Spiritual maturity is expressed in obedient participation in Jesus’ sending.

## KEY POINTS

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1. **SPIRITUAL VS. CARNAL** — Paul makes a clear contrast: some believers cannot be addressed as “spiritual” because their present condition is “carnal.” This is not meant to condemn, but to diagnose. A carnal pattern of life is treated as a real hindrance to growth, not as a normal or acceptable destination. The “spiritual man” is not defined by religious language or outward association, but by a life increasingly shaped by the Holy Spirit. The carnal person, even while belonging among God’s people, remains governed by fleshly impulses and childish reactions. Spiritual growth begins with truthfulness. ...

## KEY POINTS (CONT.)

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1. SPIRITUAL VS. CARNAL (CONT.) — Where Scripture names carnality, it invites repentance and transformation rather than excuses or redefinitions.

- Ask God to reveal areas where fleshly reactions routinely govern attitudes, words, and choices.
- Refuse to normalize carnality; treat it as a call to grow rather than a fixed identity.
- Choose one area (speech, relationships, motives) to bring under deliberate obedience and prayer.
- Practice humility: receive correction from Scripture without defensiveness.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:1-4

## KEY POINTS (CONT.)

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2. **SIGNS OF IMMATURITY** — Paul identifies specific marks that expose spiritual infancy: envy, strife, and divisions. These are not small issues; they reveal a heart still operating by the flesh. When envy and conflict dominate, spiritual capacity is reduced—people struggle to receive and live by what God reveals. Immaturity also appears in a party spirit—attaching identity to human leaders and forming camps. This kind of attachment shifts focus away from God's work and produces competition rather than unity. It is a fleshly way of finding security, significance, or belonging. Growth toward becoming the spiritual man involves recognizing these patterns quickly and refusing

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## KEY POINTS (CONT.)

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2. SIGNS OF IMMATURITY (CONT.) — to let them rule. Maturity seeks peace, humility, and a shared devotion to God rather than rivalries built around personalities.

- Identify recurring triggers for envy or strife and plan a specific, prayerful response before the next conflict.
- Refuse to speak in ways that recruit others into camps (gossip, comparisons, “us vs. them” narratives).
- Practice peacemaking: take one step toward reconciliation where conflict has been sustained.
- Evaluate whether admiration for leaders has become an identity substitute; re-center loyalty on God.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:1-4

## KEY POINTS (CONT.)

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**3. GOD'S WISDOM: THE MYSTERY** — The wisdom of God is described as a "mystery"—not meaning something unknowable, but something God must reveal. It is not merely human insight, technique, or intellectual superiority. It is God's counsel, originating in Him and carried out according to His purpose. This wisdom was ordained before the ages for our glory. That statement gives weight to spiritual growth: God intends His people to live by what He reveals, not by what the flesh prefers. The spiritual man is oriented toward God's wisdom—listening, receiving, and aligning life with God's purpose. Maturity includes ...

## KEY POINTS (CONT.)

3. GOD'S WISDOM: THE MYSTERY (CONT.) — moving from "milk" to readiness for deeper realities. Receiving the mystery of God does not lead to pride; it leads to humility and steady obedience because the source is God, not self.
- Approach Scripture with dependence: ask God for understanding and submission, not merely information.
  - Replace "What do I prefer?" with "What has God revealed?" when making decisions.
  - Notice where human wisdom (status, competition, self-protection) is shaping responses; intentionally choose God's way instead.
  - Commit to consistent study and reflection so spiritual "solid food" can be received and practiced.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 2:7

1 Corinthians 3:1-2

## KEY POINTS (CONT.)

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4. A SENT LIFE — Jesus defines the posture of mature discipleship with a commission: “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” Spiritual maturity is not only inward development; it expresses itself outwardly as obedience to being sent. The spiritual man lives with a sense of divine assignment. To be sent means life is not centered on personal preference, group status, or winning arguments. It is centered on representing Jesus in the world—carrying His purpose with humility and faithfulness. This sent identity also confronts carnality: envy and strife cannot remain dominant where mission and obedience lead. A sent life turns maturity into ...

## KEY POINTS (CONT.)

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4. A SENT LIFE (CONT.) — movement. Growth is tested and strengthened in real relationships, real service, and real obedience under Jesus' authority.
  - Begin each day with a simple posture of obedience: "Jesus, send me—guide my words and actions."
  - Look for one concrete way to serve others that reflects Jesus' purpose rather than personal recognition.
  - When conflict arises, ask how a "sent" representative of Jesus should respond before speaking.
  - Regularly evaluate priorities: align time, energy, and relationships with the commission to be sent.

Scripture: John 20:21

## GROUP DISCUSSION

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Tip: Use these questions to guide the group from seeing → understanding → applying.

## OBSERVATION

- In 1 Corinthians 3:1-4, what words and examples does Paul use to describe being carnal and spiritually immature?
- What specific behaviors does Paul point to as evidence that people are “still carnal” (1 Corinthians 3:3-4)?
- What does 1 Corinthians 2:7 call the wisdom of God, and what does it say about its origin and purpose?
- In John 20:21, what comparison does Jesus make between His sending and the disciples’ sending?
- How do the passages describe the movement from “milk” to maturity (1 Corinthians 3:1-2)?

## INTERPRETATION

- Why might Paul say he cannot speak to some as “spiritual” even though they are among believers (1 Corinthians 3:1)?
- How do envy, strife, and divisions function as indicators of carnality rather than merely “personality differences” (1 Corinthians 3:3-4)?

## INTERPRETATION (CONT.)

- What does it mean that the wisdom of God is a “mystery,” and how does that shape the way it is received (1 Corinthians 2:7)?
- How might attachment to human leaders become a spiritual obstacle according to 1 Corinthians 3:4?
- What does it imply about spiritual maturity if Jesus ties discipleship to being sent (John 20:21)?

## APPLICATION

- Where is carnality most visible in daily life—speech, reactions, relationships, or priorities? What is one step toward change?
- What is a practical way to resist envy or strife when it begins to rise in the heart?
- How can a group avoid a party spirit and keep loyalty focused on God rather than personalities (1 Corinthians 3:4)?
- What habits help move from “milk” to maturity so God’s wisdom can be received and lived (1 Corinthians 3:1-2; 1 Corinthians 2:7)?

## APPLICATION (CONT.)

- What does living as “sent” look like in ordinary responsibilities, and what would need to change to embody that identity (John 20:21)?

## PRAYER FOCUS

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- Reveal and repent of carnal patterns such as envy, strife, and division.
- Grant a teachable spirit to receive and obey the wisdom of God.
- Form spiritual maturity that produces humility, peace, and unity.
- Strengthen obedience to live daily as one sent by Jesus.

## NEXT STEP

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Choose one fleshly pattern to confront with Scripture and prayer, then take one concrete act of peacemaking or service as an intentional response to Jesus’ sending.

## CONCLUSION

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Becoming the spiritual man is a movement away from carnal immaturity and toward a Spirit-shaped life. Scripture exposes envy, strife, and divisions as signs that growth is being resisted, and it calls believers to maturity—ready to receive the wisdom of God as His mystery, ordained for our glory. This maturity does not end in private spirituality; it expresses itself in a sent life. As Jesus was sent, so His followers are sent to live and serve from spiritual reality rather than from childish, fleshly patterns.