Introduction: Divisiveness is a terrible problem, one of the most damaging and devastating problems existing in the world. Divisiveness leads to anger, fights, divorce, murder, and war. One of the answers to solving divisiveness is to see ourselves as God sees us. When God looks at a person, He sees that person in one of three classifications.

1. The natural man (v.14).
2. The spiritual man (v.15-16).
3. The carnal man (1 Cor. 3:1-4).

1. (2:14) Natural Man— Man, Spiritual Stages of: there is the natural man or what the Greek calls the psuchikos man. The word "natural" (psuchikos) means a man who has physical life or who is living. The root word is soul (psuche), which simply means the life of a man, the consciousness, the breath, the energy, the being of a man. The soul is the animal life of a man. Men and animals are breathing and conscious beings. They are living souls. This is clearly pointed out in the creation of animal life. When God was creating the world and He had finished the creation of vegetation, He said:

"Let the waters bring forth abundantly 'living souls' [nephesh, Hebrew] that hath life" (Genesis 1:20).

What God was saying is that the life He was then creating was different from the vegetation He had just created. The things that were now being created were "living souls," things that breathe and possess consciousness—things that have "souls," life, and consciousness within their bodies.

The point is this: the natural man is a living soul, an animal soul; he is a man who is living on this earth, just as an animal. However, that is all he is doing. He is living in the flesh only. He has gotten no further than the flesh, no further than his animal life. He has never progressed to the level of the spiritual. His mind and life, energy and effort are all focused upon...

- the physical
- the material
- the world
- the flesh
- what can be felt
- what can be possessed
- the natural
- the human
- what can be seen
- what can be touched
- what can be heard
- what can be tasted

There is another way to say the same thing which is extremely helpful. The natural man is the Adamic man, the man who has fallen from the perfection of his creation. The natural man is...

- the fallen and depraved man.
- the sinful and corrupt man.
- the aging and deteriorating man.
- the dying and doomed man.
The natural man is the morally corrupt man, the man whose spirit is dead to God. He is a man with a human nature, and the human nature is all he has. His nature is human nature apart from God. It is a Christless human nature, a nature that will not believe and obey and live for Christ. It is life lived without the presence and influence of Jesus Christ.

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Romans 8:9).  
"This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish" (James 3:15).  
"These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit" (Jude 19).

Three things are said about the natural man.  
1. The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. The phrase "receive not" (ou dechetai) means that spiritual things are not welcomed as a guest, are not accepted. It means to refuse and reject. Spiritual things are of little if any concern to the natural man, for his mind is primarily upon this world and upon...
   - bigger and better things
   - acquiring more and more
   - desire and feelings
   - wants and cravings
   - position and wealth
   - attention and recognition

   The natural man's life and mind are spent focusing upon the natural, upon this world and not upon the spiritual; therefore, in God's eyes he is classified as the natural man. His heart welcomes only the world; it is closed to God. God is not welcomed into his life. Therefore, he does not receive the things of the Spirit of God.

"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7).  
"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind" (Ephes. 4:17).  
"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled" (Col. 1:21).  
"Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled" (Titus 1:15).

2. The natural man considers the things of God foolishness. The word "foolishness" (mōria) means dull, absurd, distasteful. Remember the natural man lives primarily for the animal part of his nature: he lives primarily for what...
   - looks good
• feels good
• tastes good
• sounds good

He lives primarily for his animal senses, primarily for what turns him on. It may be position, money, wealth, possessions, recognition, fame, influence, power, family, house, cars, sex, food, dress, popularity—an endless number of worldly and material things could be listed—anything that attracts and appeals to the animal nature within us as human beings. The man who gives in to these instincts and urges is the person who lives as the natural man. To him the things of God are secondary, of less importance. Why? Because he cannot see, feel, taste, hear, or prove spiritual things—not with his physical senses. Therefore, to his mind, it is utterly foolish to put spiritual things first.

"But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:23-24).
"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty" (1 Cor. 1:27).

3. The natural man cannot know spiritual things. Note the word cannot. It is not only that the natural man will not and does not know spiritual things, but he cannot know them. He is incapable, unable, helpless to know them. He cannot discern spiritual things...

• their truth
• their goodness
• their reality
• their virtue
• their hope
• their worth
• their excellence
• their wealth
• their majesty
• their glory

Why can the natural man not know spiritual things? Very simply, because they are spiritually discerned. The word "discerned" (anakrinetai) means investigated, judged, scrutinized, examined, estimated. Spiritual things have to be discerned by a living spirit, not by a natural man, not by a man who is primarily living by his animal nature. Spiritual things can be discerned only by a spirit that is living. Spiritual things can be...

• investigated only by a living spirit
• judged only by a living spirit
• examined only by a living spirit
• estimated and valued only by a living spirit

"But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matthew 6:23).

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:3).
"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:4).

"Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Ephes. 4:18).

"Therefore I said, Surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the LORD, nor the judgment of their God" (Jeremiah 5:4).

"And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Micah 4:2).

2. (2:15-16) **Spiritual Man, Spiritual Stages**: there is the spiritual man or what the Greek calls the pneumatikos man. The word "spirit" (pneuma) is the word used for the Holy Spirit which means that the spiritual man is a person in whom the Holy Spirit dwells. A man is spiritual because the Holy Spirit dwells in him. He is not spiritual because he...

- has received some superior, human gift.
- has received some unusual ability.
- has become more intelligent than before.
- has become greater than he was before.
- has become better than he was before.

A man becomes spiritual because he has received the Spirit of God and is living under the influence of the Spirit of God. When man receives Christ Jesus as his Savior, Scripture says...

- that he is born again by the Spirit of God.

"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:5-6; cp. 1 Cor. 3:16; 1 Cor. 6:19).

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1:23).

- that he minds the things of God, not the things of the flesh.

"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:5-6).

- that he is in the Spirit and that the Spirit dwells in him.

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" (Romans 8:9).
"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:16-17).

- that the Spirit imparts life to him.

"And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Romans 8:10).

- that the Spirit quickens his mortal body.

"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Romans 8:11; cp. 1 Peter 3:18).

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).

- that he can kill the sinful deeds of his body only by the Spirit.

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:13).

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16).

- that the presence of the Spirit's leadership in the man's life proves that he is a child of God.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Romans 8:16-17).

"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:6).

"And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us" (1 John 3:24).

"Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit" (1 John 4:13).

"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth" (1 John 5:6).

Three things are said about the spiritual man.
1. The spiritual man judges or discerns all things. The word judges means the very same thing as discern in the former verse. The man who believes in Jesus Christ experiences a most wonderful thing:

⇒ The Spirit of God enters and dwells within his body converting his body into a holy temple for God's presence.

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Romans 8:9).
"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16).
"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (1 Cor. 6:19).

⇒ The man actually partakes of the divine nature of God and becomes a new creature, a new man.

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4).
"And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephes. 4:24).
"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3:10).

The point is this: the man who is truly spiritual lives under the control of God's Spirit. God's Spirit lives within his body. Therefore, it is the Holy Spirit of God who reveals the truth of spiritual things to the man. This is critical to note: the ability to discern is not the man's; it is the Holy Spirit within the man.

Thought 1. There is no room for super-spirituality in God's church, for all that we have is of God; it is not of us.

2. The spiritual man is not understood by the natural man. Note how Scripture words this point: the spiritual man is "judged of no man" (1 Cor. 2:15). This statement has been abused and misused to such a degree that some men have become not only laughingstocks, but stumbling blocks to the innocent. This is tragic, for the meaning is perfectly clear when kept in the context of this passage.

"No man" means the natural man, the man just talked about. The natural man has little concern and little knowledge of Christ and God; therefore, there is no human way he can understand the spiritual man. A man knows only that which he experiences and studies: common sense and honesty tell us this. There is no way a man can judge spiritual things unless he experiences and studies spiritual things. Therefore, the natural man cannot understand why any person would want to put his efforts into and waste his time upon matters that are "other-
worldly." After all, we live in this world, not the other world, not yet. Hence, the natural man feels that our primary concern should be upon this world (this is true even with religionists). The natural man might argue that a little thought about spiritual things is acceptable, but not the focusing of a person's whole life. The point is that the natural man just does not understand the spiritual man. To him the spiritual man is a fool for passing up this world and all the good things this world has to offer.

3. The spiritual man has the "mind of Christ." This is the reason the believer can discern spiritual things: he has the "mind of Christ." This does not mean that the spiritual man knows all there is to know about Christ, but it means that his mind is focused upon God and the things of God just as the mind of Christ was. The Spirit of God pulls, draws, and stirs the mind of the genuine believer to spiritual things.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:5-8).

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" (Luke 9:23-24).

"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:5-6).

3. (3:1-4) Carnal Man, Spiritual Stages: there is the carnal man. Three things are said about the carnal man.

1. The carnal man is not spiritually mature; he is as a babe in Christ. Note that the carnal man is a true believer. He is a babe in Christ, but he is deformed just like a deformed baby. He should be more mature, more developed spiritually, but he has not grown in Christ. The carnal man does not know Christ and the things of God like he should. His mind and behavior are not focused upon Christ like they should be. He has been a believer for years, but he knows little about Christ and God.

2. The carnal man has to be fed with milk and not the meat of the Word. This does not mean there are two sets of teachings, nor that there are two sets of beliefs, one for the learned believer and another for the unlearned. The same gospel is preached to all, and the same Word is studied by all; but some have paid attention, studied, prayed, and served Christ more than others. Therefore, they naturally know more about God's Word, and know more about what it means to pray and walk in Christ. The spiritual believer knows and experiences more of the depth of spiritual things than the carnal believer, much more. Therefore, the carnal believer has to be fed the very basics and not the depths of God's Word.
**Thought 1.** The same is true with any endeavor of man. The more a person experiences and studies a field, the more he knows his field. Everyone either feeds on the "milk" or the "meat" of his field or endeavor.

"And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it" (**Mark 4:33**).

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (**John 16:12**).

"I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able" (**1 Cor. 3:2**).

"To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (**1 Cor. 9:22**).

"Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men" (**1 Cor. 14:20**).

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (**Ephes. 4:14**).

"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat" (**Hebrews 5:12**).

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (**1 Peter 2:2**).

3. The carnal man is characterized by division. Division is striking proof that a man or a people are carnal, whether the division be in a church or in a family.

a. Carnality is clearly seen in envying and strife. Envy leads to jealousy, and jealousy leads to division. When people become jealous of one another, they become divided and begin to strive or argue and wrangle with one another. The envy may be caused by...

- some position
- some recognition
- some promotion
- some possession
- some gift
- some wealth
- some attention
- some person

The list could go on and on, but the point is well understood. Envy leads to differences and strife, and strife leads to division. Such behavior is carnal, of the flesh, and it does not belong in the church.

b. Carnality is seen when believers begin to walk and act like men of the world. Men in the world live for the world, so they want and struggle for all they can get for the least amount of effort...

- the best position
- the most money
- the coveted possession
- the highest honor
- the equal recognition

c. Carnality is seen when believers begin to follow men and form cliques.
"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:6).

"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7).

"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind" (Ephes. 4:17).

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephes. 4:22-24).

"Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind" (Col. 2:18).

"Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3:9-10).

"Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled" (Titus 1:15).

"Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries" (1 Peter 4:1-4).

(3:1-4) Carnal—Flesh—Natural Man: William Barclay points out that there are two different words used in this passage to describe the carnal man (1 Cor. 3:1). The Corinthians are called "carnal" (sarkinois, 1 Cor. 3:1) which means flesh. The ending "inos" means "to be made of." Paul is saying that the Corinthians were human beings, made of flesh. Their problem was that they were living as though they were nothing but flesh. They were still living at the human level of life. They had never gotten beyond the affairs and material things of this life. They acted as though this world was all there was.

The word "carnal" (sarkikoiPWS: 507, 1 Cor. 3:3) is also used. The ending "ikos" means to be "characterized by." Paul is saying that the Corinthians were not only "made of flesh" but characterized and "dominated by the flesh." They were allowing the flesh and its passions to captivate and control their behavior. They were living on the level of the flesh, dominated by it.

The word "flesh" is used to describe two different men.

1. There is the natural or Adamic man. (1 Cor. 2:14.)
There is the carnal or fleshly man. The carnal man follows the lower part of his nature. He follows the unregulated urges that are prone to sin and to center attention upon oneself. He lives a life that is opposed to God (Romans 4:14, 18). A carnal life refers to far more than just bodily or sexual sins. Galatians 5:19-21 shows this. Bodily and sexual sins are included, but so are sins of the spirit such as greed, selfishness, hatred, pride, and idolatry. It also includes that part of man that subjects a person to a legal and enslaving spirit, a spirit that subjects him to rituals and ceremonies and to rules and regulations (Galatians 3:3; Galatians 4:9). Simply stated, the man who is carnal is a man who lives after the flesh. He is a man who allows his lower nature, the worst part of his being, to influence and dominate his life.

The Bible says several things about the flesh.

1. The flesh has no good thing about it; it is opposed to doing good.

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not" (Romans 7:18).

2. The man who is in the flesh is under the influence of the flesh and cannot please God.

"So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:8).

3. The man who has the spirit of Christ is removed from being in and under the influence of the flesh. Such a man is said to be a transformed man, a new man—even a new creation.

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Romans 8:9).

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2).

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephes. 4:22-24).

4. The transformed man, however, can walk after the flesh—at least for a season. Such a man is said to be a carnal believer.

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death....That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because
the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:2, 4-7).

"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" (1 Cor. 3:3-4).

"For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. 11:30-32).

5. The regenerate man is strongly urged to walk "in the spirit." Such a man is said to be a spiritual believer.

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another" (Galatians 5:16-26).