

# The Need for Illumination

by A.W. Tozer

---

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of divine illumination in understanding spiritual truth, highlighting the limitations of human intellect and the need for the inward enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.*

**Scripture:** John 16:13, 1 Corinthians 2:14, Ephesians 1:17

**Topics:** "The Role of the Holy Spirit", "Divine Illumination"

---

## Description

A.W. Tozer emphasizes the necessity of divine illumination for understanding spiritual truths, arguing that mere intellectual grasp of Scripture is insufficient without the Holy Spirit's guidance. He critiques the tendency among conservative Christians to rely solely on doctrinal correctness while neglecting the transformative power of the Spirit. Tozer calls for a re-examination of faith that recognizes the importance of spiritual enlightenment in grasping the mysteries of God. He warns against the dangers of textualism, which can lead to a lifeless orthodoxy devoid of the Spirit's influence. Ultimately, Tozer urges believers to seek the Holy Spirit's illumination to truly comprehend and live out the truths of Scripture.

---

## Transcript

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. --1 Corinthians 2:14

The doctrine of the inability of the human mind and the need for divine illumination is so fully developed in the New Testament that it is nothing short of astonishing that we should have gone so far astray about the whole thing. Fundamentalism has stood aloof from the Liberal in self-conscious superiority and has on its own part fallen into error, the error of textualism, which is simply orthodoxy without the Holy Ghost. Everywhere among Conservatives we find persons who are Bible-taught but not Spirit-taught. They conceive truth to be something which they can grasp with the mind. If a man hold to the fundamentals of the Christian faith he is thought to possess divine truth. But it does not follow. There is no truth apart from the Spirit. The most brilliant intellect may be imbecilic when confronted with the mysteries of God. For a man to understand revealed truth requires an act of God equal to the original act which inspired the text....

Conservative Christians in this day are stumbling over this truth. We need to re-examine the whole thing. We need to learn that truth consists not in correct doctrine, but in correct doctrine plus the inward enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. We must declare again the mystery of wisdom from above. A re-preachment of this vital truth could result in a fresh breath from God upon a stale and suffocating orthodoxy. The Pursuit of Man, 76-77,84.

"Lord, I do believe in the authority of the Scriptures, and thank You for that foundation of truth. But I need this reminder that even that inspired text is not alive until the Holy Spirit takes it and enlightens the recipients. May the Holy Spirit indeed take what I teach and imbed it in the hearts and minds of my hearers. Amen."

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-tozer/the-need-for-illumination/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**