

The Gift of the Word of Wisdom

1 Corinthians 12: 7-11 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit THE WORD OF WISDOM; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, DIVIDING TO EVERY MAN SEVERALLY AS HE WILLS. —

In studying the nine gifts of the Spirit, we can see from the Scriptures that all of these gifts work according to “. . . that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will” (**1 Cor. 12:11**).

The Holy Spirit Distributes Spiritual Gifts as He Wills.

Let me emphasize again that as a church — a local body of believers — we are to desire that these gifts be made manifest among us, and we are to leave it up to the Holy Spirit to use whomever He wills.

He will not use everyone the same way.

The Bible plainly states that the Holy Spirit divides the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit to every man severally as He wills.

Someone may want to be used in a certain gift; however, this may not be what God wills for him.

We must stay open to God and let His will be done, even in the area of spiritual gifts.

We get into trouble many times by wanting to do something ourselves and to have what we want instead of what God wants.

For example, not everyone will have all of these manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit in his life for the simple reason that the Bible says, ***“For to ONE is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to ANOTHER the word of knowledge by the same Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:8).***

It is quite obvious, then, that all the gifts aren’t given to everyone.

As the Body of Christ, let us desire these manifestations and then let the Holy Spirit manifest Himself in our midst as He wills.

That way we will be scripturally based.

Some of our wrong thinking keeps us from the best that God has for us, so let's stay with the Word.

The Gift of the Word of Wisdom

Regarding the scripture, “. . . *to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit*” (1 Cor. 12:8), people sometimes call these the gift of wisdom or the gift of knowledge.

That is not correct, however.

We must call spiritual gifts what the Bible calls them or we will become confused.

For example, if you called a dog a cat, people would say you are confused.

The Gift of a Word of Knowledge is not the Gift of Knowledge, and the Gift of a Word of Wisdom is no more the gift of Wisdom any more than a dog is a cat.

First Corinthians 12:8 is not talking about natural wisdom and knowledge in the general sense.

It is talking about just what it says — the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge.

And these gifts of the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge are given supernaturally.

They are not natural gifts.

God has all knowledge.

He knows everything, but He never reveals to anyone everything He knows.

He just gives various people a word, a part, or a fragment of what He knows.

A word of knowledge, for example, is just a fragmentary part of God's knowledge.

And so it is with the gift of the word of wisdom; it is not the gift of wisdom, it is the word of wisdom.

God has all wisdom and all knowledge.

But He only reveals a part of it to man — that which He wants him to know at a given time.

The Word of Wisdom Is Not Wisdom in the Affairs of Life

The word of wisdom is confused many times with simple wisdom in the affairs of life, but simple wisdom in the affairs of life is not a spiritual gift.

In the beginning of Joshua's ministry, God told him that the key to his success would lie in meditating on the Word of God, and that is how Joshua was to obtain wisdom in the affairs of life.

JOSHUA 1:8 8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Another translation says, ***"Thou shalt make thyself prosperous and thou shalt be able to deal wisely in the affairs of life."***

There is a wisdom that is gained through the knowledge of God's Word, but that is not the supernatural manifestation of the gift of the word of wisdom.

Some people think that Solomon's wisdom was a manifestation of this word of wisdom, but it wasn't.

Solomon's wisdom was given to him by God, just as we read in ***James 1:5: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."***

God has promised that this wisdom, which I simply call general wisdom to deal in the affairs of life, is available to everyone who will ask for it.

God will impart wisdom, but that is not a supernatural manifestation of the word of wisdom.

In writing to the Church, James said that if any lack wisdom, let him ask God for it (***James 1:5***).

So we see that this general wisdom to deal wisely in the affairs of life will be given to anyone who asks for it.

The wisdom that James is talking about is the wisdom to deal wisely in the affairs of life and the wisdom to know how to conduct yourself as a Christian.

However, when God sees fit to reveal His own mind and purpose and plan to man in a supernatural way, He does so by this supernatural manifestation of the word of wisdom.

The supernatural manifestation of the gift of the word of wisdom is not given to everyone.

Paul said in *First Corinthians 12:8*, ***“To one is given the word of wisdom.”***

This verse says the manifestation of the word of wisdom is given to one; not to all, stating that spiritual gifts are divided severally as the Spirit wills.

This infers that not everyone is going to have these manifestations.

The Word of Knowledge vs. the Word of Wisdom

I said that the word of knowledge is a supernatural revelation by the Spirit of God concerning certain facts in the mind of God — facts about people, places, or things in the past or present.

The word of wisdom is a supernatural revelation by the Spirit of God concerning the divine purpose and plan in the mind and will of God.

The word of wisdom is the best gift because it is a revelation concerning the plans and the purposes in the mind of God.

The difference between the two gifts — the word of knowledge and the word of wisdom — is that the revelation the word of knowledge brings is always present tense or concerning something that has happened in the past.

On the other hand, the word of wisdom speaks of the future.

The Word of Knowledge and the Word of Wisdom Can Operate Together

We divide the two gifts of the word of knowledge and the word of wisdom and deal with them singularly.

However, as I mentioned, very often spiritual gifts operate together.

We see these two gifts of the Holy Spirit — the word of knowledge and the word of wisdom — in operation throughout the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament.

In particular, we can see how the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge flowed together as the prophets prophesied.

The Old Testament prophets often operated in these gifts along with the gift of prophecy.

The Old Testament prophets not only prophesied about the present, which is the word of knowledge in operation, but they also prophesied about things in the future, which is the word of wisdom in operation.

And their prophecies foretold of events in the near future as well as events in the distant future, including the New Covenant and the coming Messiah.

Prophecy Can Be a Vehicle Through Which Other Gifts Can Flow

The prophet of the Old Testament had to have the word of wisdom in manifestation in his ministry to be able to stand in the office of the prophet because he made predictions concerning the future, and the simple gift of prophecy does not include with it the element of predicting or foreseeing into the future.

The prediction the Old Testament prophet gave, even though it came by prophecy, was actually a word of wisdom in operation.

For example, you may ride in an automobile, but that doesn't make you an automobile.

In other words, sometimes a word of wisdom is conveyed through the vehicle of prophecy, but it really isn't prophecy in and of itself.

It is a word of wisdom.

In other words, prophecy can just be the vehicle through which the word of wisdom comes.

The simple gift of prophesy as listed in *1 Corinthians 14: 3* ***On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.***

There is no element of prediction or foretelling in the simple gift of prophesy.

Therefore, you can tell when an utterance is no longer just the simple gift of prophesy in operation because it will include some revelation in it.

When these elements of prediction and foretelling are in operation in one who is in ministry, (particularly in the office of the prophet), although the prediction may come by prophecy, it is actually a word of wisdom in manifestation.

This particularly true if the prediction comes through a minister who stands in the office of a prophet.

Prophecy, then, is just the vehicle through which the word of wisdom comes.

A word of wisdom may be manifested through the vehicle of prophesy in any Spirit-filled believer's life in their own private prayer life, as the Spirit wills.

In public ministry, the word of wisdom, or any of the revelation gifts coming through the vehicle of prophecy, especially on more of a continual basis, will normally come through the office of the prophet.

Revelation gifts can also come through those who are called to the five-fold ministry but will more frequently manifest through the office of the prophet.

If a person is just used in the simple gift of prophecy, but does not have the revelation gifts in operation, then their prophesying is the simple gift of prophesy in demonstration.

And, that is used to bring edification, exhortation, and comfort, not revelation.

Therefore, the word of wisdom can come through the vocal gift of utterance – through prophesy or through tongues and interpretation.

The word of wisdom can also come through a vision or by a dream.

For instance, in the Old Testament, Joseph received a word of wisdom through a dream which revealed to him God's plans and purposes for Joseph's future.

Moses received the revelation of the Law by the audible voice of God speaking to him.

The law revealed the purposes of God for Israel, therefore, the word of wisdom was in operation.

Also, the prophets of the Old Testament who prophesied concerning the future of Israel, even things not yet fulfilled, did so by the word of wisdom.

The Old Testament prophets prophesied it, but it was actually a word of wisdom in manifestation.

The Word of Knowledge and the Word of Wisdom in the Old Testament

John on the Isle of Patmos

As we pointed out in a previous lesson, when the Lord spoke to the Apostle John on the Isle of Patmos, it was in the form of a vision.

Jesus appeared to him in this vision and told him about the present condition of these of the seven churches in Asia Minor.

This was a manifestation of a word of knowledge.

Then the Lord went on to reveal to John the future of these seven churches, and this was a manifestation of a word of wisdom.

Ananias

Acts 9: 10-16 Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord."

11 And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying,

12 and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight."

13 But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem.

14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name."

15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.

16 For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name."

Here again, we see the word of knowledge and the word of wisdom working together.

Philip

Acts 8: 26-29 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place.

27 And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship

28 and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah.

29 And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot."

Two important notes to be considered here; one is that according to **Acts 6: 2-3, And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables.**

3 Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.

5 And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch.

6 These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

Philip was a deacon, one who waited on tables.

Later, according to **Acts 21: 8** *On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip **the evangelist**, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.*

The angel gave Philip a vision of his immediate future.

Old Testament Examples of a Word of Wisdom

A word of Wisdom to Noah

Genesis 6: 13-18 *And God said to Noah, “I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth.*

14 *Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch.*

15 *This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark 300 cubits, its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits.*

16 *Make a roof for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above, and set the door of the ark in its side. Make it with lower, second, and third decks.*

17 *For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die.*

18 *But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you.*

The Word of Wisdom to Joseph

Genesis 45: 5-8 *And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.*

6 *For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest.*

7 *And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors.*

8 So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

The New Testament

The Prophet Agabus

Acts 11: 27-28 Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.

28 And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius).

Acts 21: 10-11 While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.

11 And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"

The Word of Wisdom to Paul

Acts 27: 10 saying, "Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives."

Acts 27: 23-24 For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship,

24 and he said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar. And behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you.'

When a Word of Wisdom is Conditional

II Kings 20: 1-6 In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him,

“Thus says the LORD, ‘Set your house in order, for you shall die; you shall not recover.’”

2 Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, saying,

3 “Now, O LORD, please remember how I have walked before you in faithfulness and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in your sight.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

4 And before Isaiah had gone out of the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him:

5 “Turn back, and say to Hezekiah the leader of my people, Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Behold, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD,

6 and I will add fifteen years to your life. I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city for my own sake and for my servant David’s sake.”

Jonah

Jonah 3: 4 *Jonah began to go into the city, going a day’s journey. And he called out, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!”*

I Corinthians 11: 30-32 *That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.*

31 *But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged.*

32 *But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.*

1. The Bible plainly states that _____ divides the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit to everyone severally as ___ wills.
2. God has all knowledge and all wisdom, how much does He reveal to man?
3. What is a word of wisdom many times confused with?
4. What kind of wisdom is James referring to in **James 1: 5**?
5. What is a word of wisdom?
6. What can be a vehicle through which other gifts can flow?
7. Give two examples of a word of knowledge and a word of wisdom working together in the New Testament.
8. Give two examples of a word of wisdom in the Old Testament.
9. Give two examples of a word of wisdom in the New testament.
10. Some manifestations of a word of wisdom are conditional. What do they depend upon?

