

## **THE GIFTS OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE**

### **1 Corinthians 12:8**

**Dr. George O. Wood**

Our Scripture today is very short, 1 Corinthians 12:8. We are looking at a series from Corinthians, now especially dealing with the gifts of the Spirit. Today we look at the first two of nine gifts that are described in verses 8–11 (today just verse 8). “To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:8, NIV).

There are probably some fairly common assumptions that prevail among believers regarding the spiritual gifts, and especially the gifts of the utterance or the word of wisdom and knowledge.

We may not be quite sure what they are. What does it mean to have the word of knowledge or the word of wisdom? Is this for people who are wise and smart? In which case, most of us feel excluded. Maybe our only perception of the gift of knowledge is the way we saw it functioning through Kathryn Kuhlman’s ministry, when she would identify by means of a special word of knowledge where the illness was, who, located in a big auditorium, had an illness. She’d say, “The second part of the balcony, on the left-hand side. There’s someone suffering from cancer of the stomach.” And inevitably, somebody would be there. She had a supernatural gift. That was an expression of the word of knowledge. Maybe that’s our only familiarity with this gift. Maybe we don’t know that more is involved in the gift.

We may be convinced that these gifts are very rare. We don’t see them very much. We see tongues and prophecy perhaps more often. But the word of knowledge and the word of wisdom? When was the last time you heard a word of knowledge and a word of wisdom? The reason why we may think they are fairly rare is that they could be occurring quite frequently, but we just do

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not identify what is happening with a word of wisdom or a word of knowledge. We're using different terminology.

Suppose that I asked you, how many of you ingested protein, carbohydrates, and minerals and are currently in the process of metabolizing it? Would you know what I was talking about? What if I just said, "Did you have breakfast before you came?" That kind of puts it a little bit better.

The word of knowledge and the word of wisdom may be for some sort of mysterious language. Really the functions that are described in those gifts are occurring and we simply don't recognize them.

We are probably convinced that, if we're sort of an average person in the congregation, we'll never have one of these gifts. Wisdom and knowledge, those are the best of the gifts. They wouldn't therefore apply to me. Paul says, "Seek the better of the gifts." Don't jump to too quick of a conclusion. How do these gifts come anyway, wisdom and knowledge? How do any of the gifts come? They come to us through a combination of God's sovereignty (He gives the gifts) and our desire. Chapter 12 begins by saying "the gifts are given by the Lord." He gives them to whom He will. But chapter 12 ends by saying, "Earnestly desire spiritual gifts" (1 Corinthians 12:31). So there's a combination of "God selects and I elect." God gives and I desire. The gifts may come to us, therefore, in a number of ways.

Let me illustrate. When our son was born, a friend of ours gave him a gift, *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. That's an unusual gift to give a baby—that's the kind of friends I have. He sovereignly elected to give the gift. The only way that gift will ever be appropriated or used is if my son ever elects to get into Shakespeare in his life. The more he elects to get into it, the more he will understand the book. On the other hand, I had been desiring a set of books which examines the meaning of every word in the New Testament. It's a classic work. Every person

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who can use the Greek language and studies the New Testament ought to have that set, but it costs a lot of money. My wife knew that I desired it and she saved up enough money and got it for me for a Christmas gift.

We're talking about gifts—one gift had been given long in advance, sovereignly given. But it could only be used if it was desired. The other gift had been given because the desire was already present. God works that way in giving us spiritual gifts. Sometimes, the gift has already been given, but we haven't desired it, therefore, it's not being used. Other times God waits. He sees our desire and says, "If that's your desire, then I'll give you that gift." When we look at the gifts of wisdom and knowledge, we need to know specifically what we are asking for or looking at. We'll have to look at what Corinthians says about those gifts. What the Old Testament says. How they were demonstrated in the life of Jesus and how the Early Church used them—in order to know specifically what we are involved in when we talk about the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge.

Corinthians offers us some guidance about the meanings of these gifts. They're called "utterances." The "word" is *logos* in "word of knowledge" or "word of wisdom." That means that these gifts require speech to be employed. One doesn't have knowledge just secretly in his head. One doesn't have wisdom secretly in his head. It is wisdom spoken. It is knowledge spoken.

We would make a mistake if we assume that the only time the Holy Spirit speaks is when we are in church. Therefore, these spoken gifts of wisdom and knowledge can occur in a counseling context. They can occur in a small group of Christians. They might occur in the course of a casual conversation, as we are energized by the Spirit. They might occur in a family. They might

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occur in a prayer time in family, or around the dinner table. They can occur anywhere. They're spoken out.

These utterances, Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians, are given by the Spirit. That is, the Spirit is their source. We are not told what means the Spirit uses to give us the gifts. And we often quickly jump to the conclusion that God speaks only when we are in a state of ecstasy. And most of us have not been in a state of religious ecstasy. You sort of have to trip-out, park your mind in neutral and get in some sort of trance-like state. If you can be trance-like enough, suddenly the gift of the Spirit will go through you. The assumption being that you have to be "unconscious" or "subconscious" in order for God to speak through you. That, of course, is not the case in the New Testament at all with the exercise of spiritual gifts. In fact, the word "ecstasy," which literally means "out of one's being," never is applied to Christian worship. Only twice in the New Testament is it applied to an individual—Peter and Paul. They fell into a trance or an out-of-beingness. When the gifts are flowing, people are in being. They're not out of being. But we needn't wait for some ecstatic moment to think, "Now that we've worked ourselves up spiritually, the gifts can begin to flow." That's the way the pagans operated, in working themselves up into ecstatic states.

Don't wait for ecstasy to believe that a spiritual gift can flow. One man at a camp meeting felt he was getting in a state of ecstasy where a gift could come through. So he stood up and interrupted and said real loudly, "Yea, thus sayeth the Lord!" Then he realized he didn't have any more than that to say. He paused a real long time and said again, "Yea, thus sayeth the Lord!" And waited a longer time. No state of ecstasy had come to him. Finally he said, "Yea, what hath the Lord said?"

Don't wait for an unusual tone of voice, although the Spirit can employ that.

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How do wisdom and knowledge occur within the Corinthian letter? We have a well-defined meaning for both the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge within the Corinthian letter itself. For example, the word “wisdom” is a very frequently occurring word in 1 Corinthians, especially in the first three chapters. It occurs twenty-four times, either in noun or verb form. Paul identifies it this way. “We speak a word of wisdom among the mature. But not the wisdom of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God’s secret wisdom. This is the wisdom the world has missed, for they crucified the Lord of glory. But God has revealed how much He has prepared for those who love Him by the Spirit” (see 1 Corinthians 2:6–10) Paul’s saying, on that occasion, a word of wisdom is that Jesus died for our sins. And that this foolishness of God is really the wisdom of God. Foolishness in the eyes of man is wise before God. The word of wisdom, then, that Paul is preaching is not in man’s power, but it’s in the Spirit’s power. He, therefore, says that all true evangelism, all true proclamation of the gospel comes as an effective power of the Holy Spirit. “I did not come to you speaking only with words but I came in demonstration of the Spirit’s power” (1 Corinthians 2:5). Functioning as the gift of wisdom, as we are impressed as human beings, with the foolishness of God. That Christ should die in our place—that’s the wisdom of God.

Whenever that is preached effectively and declared effectively, either individually or in a group, there is one manifestation of the gift of wisdom. The gift of wisdom is nothing less than declaring the wisdom of God and in the wisdom of God He has chosen through the foolishness of preaching to save those who would believe.

C. S. Lewis, in a modern setting, I think has a real functioning of the gift of wisdom in one point in his little book *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* from the Chronicles of Narnia. It’s a fictional book, but the reality of the gift of wisdom, I think, comes through in that moment. He’s

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talking about the children who have gone into Narnia. Edmund has been made captive by the White Witch in Narnia, where, under her spell, it is always winter and never Christmas. Edmund has betrayed his brother and sisters. There finally occurs in the forest, at a stone table, an exchange. Edmund had escaped to Aslan, the lion who is the Christ figure. The White Witch comes and demands that Aslan hand Edmund over, because there is a law that states that whoever betrays another, their life must be forfeited. C. S. Lewis calls that chapter “Deep Magic From the Dawn of Time.” Aslan must keep his word to be the moral force he is in Narnia, even as God must keep His word to be the moral force in the world. Aslan proposes to the White Witch this exchange—that he would give himself in Edmund’s place. She snaps it up because Aslan is far more important to her than Edmund. Aslan lies down on the stone table and is killed. The next morning, Aslan has risen. C. S. Lewis calls that chapter “Deeper Magic from Before the Dawn of Time.”

That’s precisely what is involved in the preaching of the cross. Before the foundation of the world, Christ is slain. From the beginning of time, it’s written, “The soul that sins, will die.” From before the beginning of the world, God has purposed to save us in Christ Jesus—the word of wisdom.

In Corinthians, “knowledge” also is a frequent word. The Corinthians feel they have knowledge, they say, “We know that we all possess knowledge.” This appears to be a watchword of theirs (1 Corinthians 8:1). Yet Paul points out that they so pitifully lack knowledge because they are without humility and true love for God. Paul, in writing 1 Corinthians 12–14, is really giving them a word of knowledge. He says to them “I would not have you ignorant.” And the word for “ignorant” in the Greek is the word which means “without knowledge.” “I would not have you

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without knowledge.” He proceeds, then, in those chapters, to give them knowledge in respect to the spiritual gifts.

I’m not saying this is the only use of wisdom and knowledge, but they appear to be the ones that Corinthians deals with.

How does the Old Testament help us in looking at the gifts of wisdom and knowledge? Were they present in the Old Testament? The gift of the utterance of wisdom was obviously present in the life of Solomon. He is the person who prayed to God that above all things he might have wisdom. Wisdom in Solomon had two manifestations. It was a practical application of knowledge to life. That’s why Proverbs is a favorite part of the Bible for many people—practical application to life of the word of wisdom of God. Who of us can not be impressed by the statement in Proverbs 3:5 and 6 which tells us, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths.” A word of wisdom from God.

But the word of wisdom functioning through Solomon can also involve practical decision-making ability. Two women come to him. They’re quarreling over the one baby that they have between them. The previous night, one of the women had rolled over and killed her baby. Now both are claiming this is their true child. They come to Solomon with the case. His solution: he exercises a word of wisdom. He says, “Divide the baby in half.” The true mother manifests herself by pleading for the baby’s life and giving the baby to the other woman. Solomon says, “That’s the true mother, because she was concerned about the baby’s life” (1 Kings 3). He exercised a word of wisdom.

In terms of knowledge in the Old Testament, Hosea complains, “My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6). This is precisely the prophet’s point. The people of God are

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functioning without knowledge. They do not truly know God. They may be going through all the forms of relating to God, temple worship and the ritual of animal sacrifice and the like. But they do not know God. So the prophets came along and gave the people a greater understanding of God's truth, which is the function of a gift of knowledge: to give God's people a greater understanding of God's truth.

Amos says, "I hate, I despise your religious feasts. I cannot stand your assemblies. Even though you bring Me burnt offerings and grain offerings I will not accept them" (Amos 5:21-22). Here, Amos is speaking on behalf of God. God is literally saying, "I could care less about all your ceremonies. I could care less about your feast days. I'm not into animal sacrifices. I want obedience." As Samuel said to Saul, "To obey is better than sacrifice. And to harken better than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22). The gift of knowledge about God. Meanwhile, I'm certain there were other people who were contemporary to Amos who were teaching young priests, young Levites, the knowledge that they had on how to butcher a sheep properly, as you prepare it for sacrifice and all that. But the real word of knowledge is that all that is emptiness, unless you know God and will be obedient to Him and submitted to Him.

So the prophets came with knowledge. Knowledge by the Spirit.

Knowledge in the Old Testament could also disclose information that was only accessible by the Spirit. It was not accessible simply through study or observation.

There are people in the Old Testament who had the precise ability to see into an event. Nathan the prophet had that ability. The only people in Israel that knew about David and Bathsheba's sins, other than themselves, was the prophet Nathan, who shows up at David's door one day and identifies him, "You are the man!" (2 Samuel 12). He not only had knowledge of what David

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and Bathsheba had done in the past, but he knew what was going to happen in David's regime from then on, that there was going to be strife and division. That's the word of knowledge.

How did wisdom and knowledge function in the life of our Lord? Obviously, the utterance of wisdom functioned through Him. Isaiah 11:2 had promised, "The Spirit of wisdom will rest upon Him." When Jesus was a child, before He turned twelve, in Luke 2:40, it says He was filled with wisdom. After his twelve years of age, we are told Jesus grew in wisdom. In Matthew 7:28, at the conclusion of the great Sermon on the Mount, the crowds are amazed at His teaching, at the wisdom that applies practically God's solutions to human living. Mark 6:2 says, "When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in His own synagogue at Nazareth. Many who heard Him were amazed and said, 'Where did this man get all these things? What is this wisdom that has been given to Him?'" His own people recognized the wisdom.

John, the Gospel writer, says of him, "No one ever spoke like this man." Jesus had wisdom, the ability to take knowledge and apply it to life. That's what wisdom is all about. And He uttered wisdom by the Spirit. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me," He said (Luke 4:18).

His utterance of wisdom also caused Him to be in good standing in emergency situations. He was asked, "What is the source of your authority?" He replied with a word of wisdom. "John's baptism, was it from men or from God?" (Matthew 21:25). Thereby turning His accusers on their heads, presenting them a dilemma. He is asked, "Shall we pay taxes to Caesar or not?" He said, "Give me a coin. Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21). A woman is brought to Him, taken in adultery, and the charge is made, "The law says, 'Stone her.' What do You do?" (John 8:5). Because they knew His compassion for people.

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Art Katz, a modern Jewish man, in reading the New Testament, describes in his testimony how he had begun to read about Jesus for the first time. He read through the Gospel and had begun to be very attracted. He's now in the fourth Gospel, the Gospel of John. He comes to John 8, where Jesus is presented this confounding problem. Art Katz said, "At the moment when they said to him, here is this woman caught in the act of adultery, what do You say we should do?" He said, "I was afraid to read on. I closed the book." He said, "I had begun to have such a high esteem for Jesus that I knew at long last they had Him trapped. On the one hand, they had the law of God. But on the other hand, they had His concern for people. How could he ever possibly reconcile the law of God with love for people?" He said, "With trembling, I opened the book to read the conclusion, and to my amazement heard Him say, 'Let him who is without sin cast the first stone.' Then and there I knew there was something about this man." We read that story and it may be so old that we cease to revel in the wonder of the word of wisdom which Jesus speaks in that moment.

Jesus also functions in the gift of knowledge; Colossians 2:3 tells us, "In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." When we speak of the word of knowledge, we're not speaking of a scientific or technical knowledge. We're not talking about the supernatural ability that God is going to give you to ace final exams when you haven't studied. That's not the way the utterance of knowledge works. You will utter ignorance if you try to get the gift of knowledge on a test. The utterance of knowledge has to do with the knowledge of God. Jesus possessed that knowledge. He possessed the knowledge of the Scripture and He possessed the knowledge of human life. He Himself knew what was in man. In His exercise of the utterance of knowledge, He gave utterances which were applicable to all. That is, teaching content through

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the power of the Spirit. For example, the beatitudes are a classic expression of His gift of knowledge, of what is needed in the human personality.

The gift of knowledge could function when He would put his finger on a problem right away.

Identify a man's main obstacle to coming to faith. He would say to the rich young ruler, for example, "Go, sell all you have" (Luke 18:22). Through His knowledge of that man's personality, He knew what blocked that young man from coming to Him.

Regarding the future or knowledge only known supernaturally, He had that operating as well. He saw Nathaniel under the fig tree before He met him (John 1:48). He knew Peter was going to deny Him (Matthew 26:34). He knew that the woman at the well in Samaria had had five husbands and the man she was living with now was not her husband (John 4:18). All these things were supernatural manifestations of the utterance of knowledge. He expressed that utterance of knowledge, after His resurrection, He opened the disciples' minds to understand the Scripture, which is one of the main functions of the utterance of knowledge, to open people's minds to understand the Scripture.

If this is how the gifts are functioning in Christ's life, how then do these gifts function in the life of the Early Church? Wisdom functions in the Early Church as a spiritual gift. We see it in Acts. It functions in regard to the proclaiming of the gospel of Jesus Christ, even as we saw it in Paul, in 1 Corinthians, about declaring the wisdom of God. It functions with Stephen, for example, "These men began to argue with Stephen but they could not stand up against his wisdom or the spirit by which he spake" (Acts 6:9–10). What made Stephen so powerful as a proclaimer of the gospel of Jesus Christ? It was the Spirit of God, the Spirit of wisdom who rested upon him.

Ultimately, his stoning resulted because his wisdom could not be withstood.

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Wisdom in the life of the Early Church also came as a gift of the Spirit in moments of emergency. For example, in Luke 21:15, Jesus promises His disciples that, when they get into a jam, when they're brought before magistrates and governors, He says to them, "I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict." Jesus tells them, "Don't worry what you're going to say in that hour, for the Spirit will be with you." He promises, in an emergency, a word of wisdom.

I'm not telling you that the only emergency the gift of wisdom will function on is martyrdom, because I don't want you all to go out and seek it. But I want to use an illustration where the word of wisdom functioned in martyrdom: the martyrdom of Polycarp, the second century Christian bishop of Smyrna. As an old man, he was brought into the arena to die for his faith. The proconsul who was examining him was trying to get him to change his commitment to Christ. He said to Polycarp, "Have respect to your age. Swear by the genius of Caesar. Repent. Say, away with the atheists [meaning, 'away with the Christians']!" Polycarp waved his hand and, looking up to heaven, he said, "Away with the atheists!" The proconsul said, "Curse the Christ!" And Polycarp said, "Eighty and six years have I served Him and He has done me no wrong. How can I then blaspheme my king who saved me?" Powerful words of wisdom.

Wisdom can also function in the New Testament in dilemmas. Administrative dilemmas. In Acts 6, in the dispute among widows over the daily distribution of the welfare funds, the apostles have a word of wisdom: "It's not right that we should give up the preaching of the word for the serving of this administrative function. Therefore choose men full of wisdom" (Acts 6:3). They will need the gift of wisdom to adjudicate the disputes that come up. And godly counsel may be an expression of wisdom.

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Peter tells us that this godly counsel flourished in the apostle Paul. Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation. Peter recognizes Paul's writing as an utterance of wisdom, in 2 Peter 3:15. Paul would exercise an utterance of wisdom by putting his finger on a problem and presenting a solution. Like the problem between Euodia and Syntyche in Philippians. He says, as a word of wisdom, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). That is, "Be humble, be a servant to one another." Wisdom. Occurring in the Early Church, at least in the areas of proclaiming the gospel, emergencies, dilemmas and godly counsel.

Knowledge, occurring in the Early Church by, first of all, speaking forth the truth of God. That's involved in knowledge. God wants us to know who He is and what He wants of us. In John 14:26, Jesus promises us that "The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name will teach you all things and will bring all things to your remembrance." A certain bank of information will be given to us as Christians.

Ray Stedman defines the gifts of knowledge this way, "The ability to go through the Word of God and see what is there and to set forth, in a systematic way, the knowledge of what God wants man to know." The ability to read the Word and set it before us in the way that God wants us to know it. I'm not sure that that's all that's involved in the gift of knowledge, but I'm certain that that's a great part of the gift of knowledge.

Donald Gee, the great Pentecostal writer of decades before us, talks about the enablement of the Spirit to function in the office of the church. He says, "It is intolerable that teaching should be relegated to a natural ability." It's intolerable, for example, when you hear me teach from the Scripture that you simply say, "George Wood has a natural ability to do that." All true teaching, if it reaches the heart and declares the counsel of God, must come as an utterance of the Spirit. It is the work of the Spirit. It is not George Wood or any other person's native ability that does it. It

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is the equipping of the Spirit. Donald Gee says that to divorce the teacher from the gift of knowledge is to leave the office of teacher without a commiserate spiritual gift that's needed to conduct that office. That makes a lot of sense. And it makes a lot of sense too when you're teaching in a small group or you're before other believers, or you're teaching your children in your home, or you're teaching in a Sunday School class, to ask, that at that sphere of influence, as a teacher in the body of Christ, you could teach not simply the words of men but words as inspired by the Spirit. Speak God's Spirit-directed speech. Knowledge. Donald Gee makes the point that too easily in Pentecostal worship we have thought that the Spirit only moves in the service when there are tongues and interpretation. We will go away from a service where there've been no tongues or interpretation and sometimes say, "The Spirit evidently was not manifested today." When if we but had eyes to realize that the Spirit of God was manifest powerfully all the time in the expression of the utterance of knowledge. We simply box the Spirit in and say, "He can only be manifested through tongues and interpretation." When, in fact, He was very manifest through a word of wisdom or a word of knowledge.

Perhaps the term "word" trips it up because we expect it to be something very brief. When we say, "word of knowledge," we think of something 15 to 20 seconds long. But it may be a whole body content of teaching, as the word *logos*.

The gift of knowledge in the Early Church could also provide special insight into the meaning of an event. No one else knows what's going on, but the gift of knowledge gives us the perception of what's really happening. For example, when Cornelius and his family are baptized in the Spirit, Peter speaks by word of knowledge and says, "Can we prevent them from having baptism?" (Acts 10:47). All their previous knowledge said, "You cannot baptize a Gentile unless he becomes a Jew first, unless he is circumcised, unless he goes through dietary laws and the

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like.” But a word of wisdom is, “Can we forbid baptism?” Suddenly, people are given a new perspective of what God meant by the whole event of Cornelius’ Spirit baptism and salvation.

“Word of knowledge” can also be, in the life of the Early Church, direct knowledge of information that is available only by means of the Spirit. Peter has that kind of gift of knowledge functioning in Ananias and Sapphira’s case, Acts 5, “Why have you lied to the Holy Spirit?” So these people are carried out. Peter has a supernatural gift of knowledge functioning. He knows something that no one, through natural knowledge, could have known.

This gift of knowledge happens many times in the body of Christ. When happens is that it will be validated. You will see it used falsely when it’s not validated. I’ve been in a meeting where a person, in the course of about 15 minutes, had called out words of knowledge, maybe approaching two to three dozen words of knowledge in respect to healing, and no one was responding. I was beginning to say, “I don’t think they have the word of knowledge on this matter. There would be response.”

Sometimes, it’s possible that a word of knowledge will be spoken and there won’t be a response, because the person refused to identify themselves. That has happened here and I’ve seen it occur more than once. When it continually comes and there’s no response, I have to say, “They’re just guessing badly.”

The utterance of knowledge, when it has to do with knowledge that’s not attainable by anything except the Spirit of God, will come very powerfully. When it comes through one who’s expressing it, it may even catch them by surprise. I think the only time I can recall, in my experience, when the gift of knowledge functioned in me this way—in terms of having access to information only available by the Spirit—was about a year and a half ago. In the church, there was a young man who had attended who was on drugs, who had been around the church a great

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deal of time. Many people had prayed with him and tried to help him and counsel with him.

There came a crisis, one evening, here at the church on a Sunday night, and the whole service focused on this young man. The whole body, as a church, prayed for him. He still hadn't broken through, or come to a place of repentance in his life. The deacons and pastoral staff, after the service, took him up to the office and continued to pray with him. It finally came down to the bottom line, "Will you truly repent and become obedient, from your heart, to God?" I said to him (it was not myself, I would never say this in the natural!), "Robert, if you don't repent within six months, we're going to have your funeral." And within six months, we did. It was a terrible thing. It was the way the Spirit had of giving him an irretrievable last chance. Take this opportunity, or it will be gone. The word of knowledge.

How do we put the words of wisdom and knowledge into operation in our experience? It may be that these gifts, as Paul says, will not flow to everyone in the congregation. Looking at the gifts, we recognize that these gifts share a common ground. It's hard to distinguish them. When is a person speaking by utterance of knowledge and when are they speaking by utterance of wisdom? You can't always divide them cleanly. When there is a healing taking place, for example, was that healing a gift of faith, a gift of miracles, or a gift of healing? Obviously, faith was involved. Obviously, a miracle was involved. Obviously, healing was involved. So there's a certain amount of overlap. So the gifts of wisdom and knowledge are not separate circles out there, not having anything to do with one another. There's a certain amount of overlap among them. Wisdom, more specifically, relates to God's knowledge, to application and direction. Knowledge, more specifically, has to do with content and information.

These gifts depend upon taking the Word of God into our life. The gifts, the utterances of wisdom and knowledge will never flow freely in your life unless you're into the Word of God.

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They build upon the Word of God. The day when the Spirit of God brings something to our remembrance, it must be that something was already put into our memory bank, in our studying, that He can bring back to memory. These gifts depend on regular engrafting of the Word of God. These gifts frequently function with offices. Not exclusively limited to offices, but offices like evangelist and teacher and pastor and the like. The gifts are to be present in those offices, otherwise, the offices have no power. The gifts are present among the whole body of God's people, but we would especially seek their presence in the offices that God has ordained in the church.

These gifts are also always subject to the written Word of God and to the judgment of the Spirit-filled community. If someone arose in the body today and said, "I have a gift of knowledge, what would we do with it?" We would submit it to the whole body. Is that a valid word from the Lord? There's a resonance that comes with spiritual gifts. Just because one person stands up and says, "I have a word of knowledge," doesn't mean that everybody jumps on. There must be a consensus in the body. It must be a consensus that's always formed by principles in the Word of God. And also, we'd have to look at how the Spirit of God foretold disasters in the New Testament and how the Early Church responded to them. They never panicked. Every expression of a gift is subject to the written Word of God and the judgment of the entire community. It's not for one person to go riding off and everybody else follow. If that happens, then you've got a Jim Jones kind of thing going on.

These gifts finally excel in building up the body of Christ. Wisdom excels in building up the body of Christ because it will result in a powerful preaching of the gospel of Christ in the Gospels, the unsearchable riches of Christ, the manifold wisdom of God, which should be made known. The gift of wisdom will help us grasp how wide and long and high and deep the love of

## **THE GIFTS OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE**

### **1 Corinthians 12:8**

God in Christ Jesus is. The gifts of knowledge will help us to practically apply knowledge to life, whether it's in a church situation where they are used or a family situation. They can provide effective guidance for us in dilemmas and emergencies and incisive counsel in personal and interpersonal and family problems. The gift of knowledge by the Spirit can help us understand and speak forth God's truth, and give us direct knowledge of information accessible only by the Spirit, and special insight into the meaning of an event.

I hope, through this brief tour of these two gifts, that you think back a moment to the introduction where I said that there are some commonly held assumptions among believers who are not quite sure of what these gifts are. I hope you don't feel that way now. Are you convinced that these gifts are quite rare? I hope you don't feel that way now. These gifts function quite frequently in the body of Christ. I hope that you're not convinced that you'll probably never have any of these, because the Spirit of God wants to liberally give these gifts to His people. He is not a chintzy giver. He never has been. He wants to give us a lot of gifts. I'm convinced there are a lot of gifts that haven't been opened. They're just there waiting to be opened.