

When we say that there's only one way of salvation, people say, 'You're very narrow minded.' But the truth is always narrow-minded. 2 + 2 = 4. It's not 3.9; it's not 4.1"

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Prayer Study #298

**GIFTS OF REVELATION (THINK LIKE GOD):
WORD OF WISDOM, WORD OF KNOWLEDGE,
AND DISCERNING OF SPIRITS**

I want to remind you again that many churches have not been open to the Gifts of the Holy Spirit because of fear and ignorance. First, somewhere along the way many churches stop teaching about the gifts and ministry of the Holy Spirit. and became both carnal and complacent concerning spiritual gifts. Whole generations thus were never taught and did not know there was a Biblical experience called the Baptism with and in the Holy Spirit. I grew up in a good church but do not recall any teaching whatsoever on the gifts of the Spirit, much less on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. In fact the Holy Spirit Himself was rarely mentioned except in the Apostles' Creed.

Secondly, many church people became fearful of the gifts and the way they were used by some immature believers. Often, to be frank, Charismatics have used gifts in a soulish—(at times almost prideful)—way that has turned the traditional Church off and has created a certain amount of fear and controversy of the supernatural. Not knowing the scriptures, people fear that, if they walk in gifts, they will be like puppets on a string who are made to “perform” when they do not feel lead or comfortable doing so. They have not been taught that the gifts are subject to the receiver (For example, 1st Corinthians 14:32-33: *And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.*) Sadly, if Satan can keep men ignorant of God's power gifts, their faith stands largely in the wisdom of men and not in the power of God (1st Corinthians 2:4-5: *And my speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*)

As we have stated in a previous handout, spiritual gifts are supernatural endowments given by the Holy Spirit for ministry to others. They are gifts and cannot be earned. They are initiated only by the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not take them away once they are given.

Romans 11:29 tells us: *For God's gifts and His call are irrevocable.* [He never withdraws them when once they are given, and He does not change His mind about those to whom He gives His grace or to whom He sends His call] AMP. While Paul gave several different lists that were unique but also somewhat overlapped (Romans 12:6-8; 1st Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11; and 1st Corinthians 12:8-10) and other passages not written by Paul list spiritual gifts (1st Peter 4:11; Acts 8; Isaiah 11:2-3, and Mark 16:15-18), we will confine this study to the nine gifts of 1st Corinthians 12:8-10:

1st Corinthians 12:8-11 AMP

8. To one is given in and through the [Holy] Spirit [the power to speak] a message of wisdom, and to another [the power to express] a word of knowledge and understanding according to the same [Holy] Spirit:

9. To another [wonder working] faith by the same [Holy] Spirit, to another the extraordinary powers of healing by the one Spirit;

10. To another the working of miracles, to another prophetic insight (the gift of interpreting the divine will and purpose); to another the ability to discern and distinguish between [the utterances of true] spirits [and false ones], to another various kinds of [unknown] tongues, to another the ability to interpret [such] tongues.

11. All these [gifts, achievements, abilities] are inspired and brought to pass by one and the same [Holy] Spirit, Who apportions to each person individually [exactly] as He chooses.

Finally, I want to remind you that the Apostle Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said, *"But covet earnestly the best gifts..."* 1st Corinthians 12:31. Furthermore, he reiterates this theme later in his letter to the Corinthians telling them, *"Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order"* 1st Corinthians 14:39-40. We should never ever desire spiritual gifts more than we desire relationship with Jesus or as some say we should not seek the gifts more than we seek the Giver. However, we are commanded to zealously and earnestly seek spiritual gifts. And furthermore, it is through the use of these gifts in the proper way and under the leadership of the Holy Spirit that we are best able to cultivate our relationship with Jesus and to be a witness of our precious Savior with power in the world. Never think that the Lord does not want you to have spiritual gifts or to walk in the spirit of power.

THE WORD OF WISDOM

The Word of Wisdom has always been the most difficult of the Gifts of the Spirit for me to wrap my mind around. Wisdom, in the natural, is defined as insight or the ability to practically apply knowledge and learning. In the spiritual, the Word of Wisdom is seeing life from God's perspective.

I think the key to understanding the Word of Wisdom is found in 1st Corinthians 2:6-16 NIV:

6. *We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.*

7. *No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.*

8. *None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

9. *However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him"*

10. *But God has revealed it to us by His Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.*

11. *For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.*

12. *We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.*

13. *This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.*

14. *The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

15. *The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment.*

16. *"For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?"
But we have the mind of Christ.*

There are three kinds of wisdom in this passage: The wisdom of God, the wisdom of the world, and the wisdom of redeemed, spiritual man. The Word of Wisdom is the application of knowledge that God gives to spirit-filled believers. It cannot be gained through study or experience. A person

with this gift walks more and more in the reverential fear of the Lord as they exercise this gift for, according to Proverbs 1:7, *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*. The person with this gift speaks hidden truths of what is not known and gives words that give the divine means for accomplishing God's will in a given situation, thus giving direction and solving problems and being led by the Holy Spirit to act appropriately in any given situation. Paul indicates that this gift comes through prayer, and I find many intercessors walk in this gift. Ephesians 1:15-21: *Wherefore, I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my PRAYERS: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power towards us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come...*

Harold Horton says this about the Word of Wisdom: *It has to do with the supernatural unfolding of His plans and purposes concerning things, places, people, individuals, communities, nations. It may be manifested by an audible voice, angelic visitation, by dream or vision or through the spiritual gifts of prophecy or tongues and interpretation.*

Teachings from High Point Church in Macon, Georgia, give us some scriptural examples:

1. To warn and guide people of coming judgment as in Genesis 6:13-22; Genesis 19:12-13; Matthew 2:20.
2. To reveal God's plans to one whom God is going to use as in Genesis 41:16 & 28-41.
3. To assure a servant of God of his divine commission. Moses at the burning bush or Paul in Acts 26:16 (*But rise and stand upon your feet; for I have appeared unto you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of these things which you have seen and of those things in which I will appear unto you...*)
4. To assure of coming deliverance.

High Point teachings also tell us how the Word of Wisdom may be used:

1. To warn of impending disaster.
2. To make known or confirm a missionary call.
3. To tell us of blessing or judgment to come.
4. To reveal the future (see 1st Samuel 9:6).
5. To give personal guidance in a particular direction in unique circumstances (Acts 21:11).

THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE

I have been privileged to walk in ministry with some who have walked in very sharp, accurate, and anointed Word of Knowledge. I have seen this gift in operation in such a powerful way that it literally changed people's lives on the spot. The Word of Knowledge is a fragment or fragments of knowledge, which we could not otherwise have. Brother Don Van Hoosier says this about this gift: *God is All-knowledge and the Word of Knowledge is the revelation to man by His Spirit of some detail of that All-knowledge. It is not just an amplification of human knowledge but a "divinely given fragment of divine knowledge."*

Unfortunately, I have seen this gift misused by well-meaning people who want so desperately to be seen as spiritual gifted. They have tried to pass Words of Knowledge off by praying things they already secretly knew about a person, or they have spoken so generically that the word was not inspired by the Holy Spirit. For example, if you go to minister in a prison, you can pray over anyone in a generic way by saying something like, "*The Lord shows me that you have had a difficult life and been brought up in a home where there was not much love shown*" and probably be able to pray that over most of the people in the prison. Words of Knowledge are usually very specific and make the person receiving the ministry know that the Lord has their number!

Harold Horton in his book, *The Gifts of the Spirit*, says the gift is useful in:

1. Receiving knowledge to "aid in effectual prayer either for God's servants in distress or for those in need of spiritual help."
2. To recover lost persons or property.
3. To reveal the causes of sickness or demon-possession.
4. To reveal facts in private lives for spiritual correction or profit.

Perhaps the most phenomenal display of this gift was through the ministry of William Branham (1909-1965). Branham's accuracy is attested by Walter J. Hollenweger, who interpreted for him in Zurich, and "is not aware of any case in which he was mistaken in the often detailed statements he made." David Harrell reports of his popularity: "The power of a Branham service...remains a legend unparalleled in the history of the charismatic movement." Yet Branham got into some controversial teachings in his latter years and some obvious error. For example, he prophesied that by 1977 all denominations would be consumed by the World Council of Churches, that the Rapture would take place, and that the world would be destroyed. Many of his followers believed that he was God and expected him to be resurrected. His life is a warning to us that, just because men operated in gifts does not mean we do not need to check out everything they say by the Word of God.

There are many scriptural examples of the use of the Word of Knowledge gift. Some include the following:

- a. **To know men's thoughts:** 1 Samuel 9:19: *And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer; go up before me unto the high place; for you shall eat with me today, and tomorrow I will let you go and will tell you all that is in your heart.*
- b. **To discover a man in hiding:** 1 Samuel 10:22: *Therefore they inquired of the LORD further, "Has the man come here yet?" And the LORD answered: "There he is, hidden among the equipment."*
- c. **To expose a hypocrite:** 2nd Kings 5:20-27: *But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, "Look, my master has spared Naaman this Syrian, while not receiving from his hands what he brought; but as the LORD lives, I will run after him and take something from him." So Gehazi pursued Naaman. When Naaman saw him running after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him and said, "Is all well?" And he said, "All is well. My master has sent me, saying, 'Indeed, just now two young men of the sons of the prophets have come to me from the mountains of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of garments.'" So Naaman said, "Please take two talents." And he urged him and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments and handed them to two of his servants; and they carried them on ahead of him. When he came to the citadel, he took them from their hand and stored them away to the house; then he let the men go, and they departed. Now he went in and stood before his master. Elisha said to him, "Where did you go,*

Gehazi?" And he said, "Your servant did not go anywhere." Then he said to him, "Did not my heart go with you when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you? Is it time to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants? Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your descendants forever." And he went out from his presence leprous as white as snow.

- d. **To tell of an enemy's plan of destruction:** 2nd Kings 6:9-12: *And the man of God sent to the king of Israel, saying, "Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are coming down there." Then the king of Israel sent someone to the place of which the man of God had told him. Thus he warned him, and he was watchful there, not just once or twice. Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was greatly troubled by this thing; and he called his servants and said to them, "Will you not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?" And one of his servants said, "None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom."*

DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

Derek Prince was one of the most gifted and most brilliant Bible scholars that has been alive in my lifetime. He died in September of 2003. Prince, most well-known for his teachings on deliverance and on Israel, spoke of the last days often. In his book *Protection from Deception*, he writes: *"Deception-not sickness, poverty, or persecution-is the greatest single danger in the end of the age. Anyone who denies his vulnerability to deception is already deceived, for Jesus has foretold it, and He does not err....It is important to realize that signs and wonders neither guarantee nor determine truth. Truth is established and unchanging; it is the Word of God....Many Christians assume that every supernatural sign must be from God, forgetting that Satan, or the devil, is completely capable of performing supernatural signs and wonders....The book of Revelation promises a specific series of supernatural signs and wonders that will signify the end of the age, but we must practice discernment as we anticipate judgment day, guarding ourselves against the devil's tactics and holding fast to the true church, the bride of Christ."*

Prince says that we must practice discernment in these last days, and I truly believe that the Gift of Discerning of Spirits is one of the most practical and needed gifts in the Church, especially in the Charismatic Church. We

are seeing more and more pastors and church members walking in great deception because they are not acknowledging the Truth of the Word of God. We need those with the Gift of Discerning of Spirits and with Holy boldness but also genuine love for the believers to stand up and speak the Truth of the Word.

This gift is more than just a mother's intuition. Most mothers are blessed with a couple of spiritual antennas and know exactly who they don't want their children playing with. But having the Gift of Discerning of Spirits is like having 10 antennas actively operating all the time. Sometimes this gift can produce sorrow in the one walking in the gift because the information in our spirit man is painful, as people operating in this gift pick-up not only the good and right and holy but also discern the fake and phony and oppression and depression and sorrow and defeat in people's lives.

To help us understand Discerning of Spirits, I want to quote verbatim from the excellent teaching at High Point Church in Macon, Georgia:

With this study we finish the last of the Revelation Gifts of the Spirit. Although it is difficult to place one gift above another, certainly in the end-time days of increased demonic activity this is one revelation gift that is urgently needed in every assembly of believers. Only by this gift will we be able to tell sometimes whether God is really moving in a meeting or if we are seeing Satan's lying wonders (2nd Thessalonians 2:9).

In order that we may sum up the comprehensiveness of the Revelation Gifts and show their importance, let us again quote from Harold Horton: "Everything within the realm of knowing-facts, events, purpose, motive, origin, destiny (human or divine or devilish), natural or supernatural, past, present, or future, comes within the focal range of one or other of the three gifts: Word of Wisdom, Word of Knowledge, and Discerning of Spirits. They include in their comprehensive survey all that God knows, and there is nothing that God knows that may not be made known to man as God wills through the agency of one of more of these three gifts."

The discerning of spirits is not used to make one a sort of "Peeping Tom" to look into another's inner life. It's not used to make one a judge of character or to sit in judgment upon other's actions. It is not mind-reading nor is it deep psychological insight. In fact, it is possible for those who have been greatly used with this gift to be really fooled in their own relationships with others. This is puzzling, but it has happened, and, if we denied it, we would be dishonest. There is the question as to whether they were fooled or failed in denying self and moved into relationships and situations because of human weakness.

By the way, we don't need gifts of the Spirit to discern a false prophet for Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets...Ye shall know them by their fruits (Matthew 7:15-20).

We need also to stop and consider what we are speaking of when we speak of spirits. Especially is this true of evangelical conservatives today who seem to think of spirits as the horrible creatures pictured by medieval artists. How few would consider heaviness a spirit, but God does (Isaiah 61:3)! How few would consider fearfulness or timidity a spirit, but God does (2nd Timothy 1:7)! Let us look at it this way: realities that are not physical or material are spiritual. That's simple enough, isn't it? Is it unscriptural or illogical to speak of lying spirits or spirits of apprehension, fear, anxiety, lust, uncleanness, apathy, dullness, impatience, heaviness, depression, etc.?

Spirits and demons are usually found in the soul (thoughts, imaginations, will, emotions), although the Scriptures speak of dumb, blind, deaf spirits, and a spirit of infirmity which affect the body. This is not to say that everyone who is deaf has a deaf spirit for there may be physical damage to an auditory nerve. And, too, demons or spirits of physical sickness may attack a weak or impaired organ of the body. We have neither time nor space presently, but may we observe that some men of prayer (and some of them doctors) who have had great and demonstrable success in praying for the sick consider cancer demonic. Some consider all germ or viral diseases as demonic since they have life from some source that is sapping and destroying the physical life that God gave.

Many believers are violently opposed to the thought that a believer can have an evil spirit. I think it is because they do not understand the difference between soul and spirit for one thing, and, too, Satan would desire to keep us ignorant of his devices for then he can get an advantage over us. Paul writes, "Neither give place to the devil..." (Ephesians 4:27). The word "place" here actually means an area. And because an area of the life has been taken over by (or given over to) a spirit of greed, fear, man-hate, rebellion to authority, lust, etc., does not mean that the whole person is possessed. To work in prayer room ministry for a few hours with God's troubled people who are members of evangelical churches and even those who have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit will soon convince any open and spiritually-minded person of the reality of wrong spirits in God's people. But the wonderful thing is to see the results of deliverance.

Use of the Gift of Discerning of Spirits:

1. ***To know how to intelligently minister to and pray for the afflicted, mentally confused, oppressed, and troubled-both saint and sinner.*** How many in mental institutions are receiving little or no help because their need is spiritual. How many families could have been spared great anguish had suicidal spirits been discerned and cast out.
2. ***In the end-time days especially to expose error, for we read in 1st Timothy 4:1 and 2nd Peter 2:1 that there will be “doctrines of devils” and “damnable heresies,” and “lying spirits.” Remember, it will be so bad that our Lord said even the very elect would be deceived if it were possible.***
3. ***To expose the devil’s tactics.*** Paul was plagued at Philippi for days with a woman who followed them about announcing to all around that they were servants of the Most High God who were proclaiming the way of salvation. Instead of paying her to be their public relations expert as some might today, they cast the spirit of divination out of her, which in this case surely must have been a religious spirit. We surely don’t need repulsive religious spirits to advertise for us. A much better advertisement are those rejoicing ones who are aglow with a new love for the Deliverer.
4. ***To expose those ministering under false anointing and satanic “signs and lying wonders” (2nd Thessalonians 2:9).***
5. ***To discern any spirits involved in physical illnesses.***

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I am so appreciative of these teachings from High Point, which must have been written 30 or more years ago. I want to conclude the discussion of discernment with some words from Francis Frangipane:

We will never possess true discernment until we crucify our instincts to judge. Realistically, this can take months or even years of uprooting old thought-systems that have not been planted in the divine soil of faith and love for people. To appropriate the discernment that is in the “mind of Christ” (1st Corinthians 2:16), we must first find the heart of Christ. The heart and love of Jesus is summed up in His own words: “I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world” (John 12L47).