

The Gifted: Word of Wisdom

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This morning, we're continuing our message series entitled 'The Gifted'. So far, we've learned about what spiritual gifts are and why we receive them and why we should eagerly desire them. So far, we learned specifically how to receive and use the spiritual gift of prophecy and a word of knowledge.

We learned last week how powerful our words are and how they possess the power to bring life or death. They have the power to steer the course of our whole life. We learned specifically about the spiritual gift of a word of knowledge, what it is, how to receive it, and how to use it. This week, we are going to learn about a very similar spiritual gift, a word of wisdom. Word up!

A word of wisdom is the supernatural revelation of how to effectively apply knowledge or information. This is a gift that our culture needs now desperately. Although scripture reveals to us that wisdom surrounds us constantly and cries out from the streets, we seem to be blind to it and continue acting like fools.

We live in a culture saturated with knowledge and information, but there seems to be a great lack of wisdom, which is the ability to apply this information in an efficient and beneficial way for the common good. You can spend tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars to attend a college or university and receive knowledge – you can learn about anything and be able to describe and explain deep things. I've met many people in my previous career days who, when interviewing, could explain and describe things very well. However, when you sat them down and asked them to do what they spoke so richly about during the interview, they simply did not know what to do. It was all knowledge with no wisdom.

Knowledge alone is a very dangerous thing!

We need wisdom to know how to take that knowledge and apply it in a good and beneficial way. In our pride that has been puffed up with knowledge, we've made a lot of foolish decisions – all justified and defended with our knowledge without regard to the practical result of those decisions.

Knowledge tells us that a fetus is not a human, so destroy it. Knowledge tells us that trillions are worth spending to create a place for humans to live in outer space. Knowledge tells us that we'll all be drowning

soon due to global warming. Knowledge tells us that as long as I 'love' someone, I can marry them and start a family – even if that is very obviously physically impossible – knowledge finds a way. This list can go on and on and on, so please don't get me started. :-)

Knowledge tells us a lot of things that makes absolutely no sense to wisdom.

For us to be healthy and balanced, however, we need both. We must gain as much knowledge as we can and as much wisdom as we can to apply it effectively. Wisdom doesn't cost us anything, but is priceless in its value. It is wisdom that can take a simple idea and enable it to change the course of human history.

Let's take a look at a few examples of someone who had knowledge, but lacked wisdom. In these cases, it was either applied too late, or not applied at all!

*** Tim Hawkins on Parenting ***

How many of you dads have been there with your kids? I know there's been more than one occasion where I didn't exactly use wisdom with my kids – we did have fun, though!

Jesus said:

Matthew 11:19

I came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' But wisdom is proved right by her actions.

This is the true test of whether a word of wisdom is exactly that – by the result of its actions.

How many of you have been here? You have this great idea and you think it through thoroughly. You've got it all figured out, so then you go through with it. Once you reach the point of no return, you realize that this wasn't such a good idea after all!

It's kind of like being out skiing and you see this little hill that would make a good ramp part way down the hill. You look down at it and figure that even though it is outside of the park's boundaries, it would be safe to jump. You pick up a good amount of speed heading down the hill straight toward it. As you get closer, you realize that this isn't a small hill covered with snow, this is a pile of rocks covered with snow. Too late to change course, you smash right into it and get carried off by the medics with a few broken bones.

Wisdom is proved right by her actions.

Was that wisdom? NO WAY!

The truth is that God desires to give us wisdom. His desire is to bless and prosper us – to give us a hope and a future. These things are all made possible by wisdom. Using wisdom with even just one decision can completely turn the course of our lives and steer us into incredible and bountiful blessings. However, making just one decision without wisdom can cost us everything and force our lives completely off track.

For this reason, we should be eagerly desiring the spiritual gift of the word of wisdom. We need God's wisdom to avoid foolish decisions and to make good and beneficial ones.

The best way that I can think of to teach about what a word of wisdom is and what it looks like is to review a story of when this occurred. Where better to go than to the man who received the greatest amount of wisdom from God than anyone ever has or ever will receive, King Solomon himself?

1 Kings 3:16-28

16 Now two prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. 17 One of them said, “Pardon me, my lord. This woman and I live in the same house, and I had a baby while she was there with me. 18 The third day after my child was born, this woman also had a baby. We were alone; there was no one in the house but the two of us.

19 “During the night this woman’s son died because she lay on him. 20 So she got up in the middle of the night and took my son from my side while I your servant was asleep. She put him by her breast and put her dead son by my breast. 21 The next morning, I got up to nurse my son—and he was dead! But when I looked at him closely in the morning light, I saw that it wasn’t the son I had borne.”

22 The other woman said, “No! The living one is my son; the dead one is yours.”

But the first one insisted, “No! The dead one is yours; the living one is mine.” And so they argued before the king.

23 The king said, “This one says, ‘My son is alive and your son is dead,’ while that one says, ‘No! Your son is dead and mine is alive.’”

24 Then the king said, “Bring me a sword.” So they brought a sword for the king. 25 He then gave an order: “Cut the living child in two and give half to one and half to the other.”

26 The woman whose son was alive was deeply moved out of love for her son and said to the king, “Please, my lord, give her the living baby! Don’t kill him!”

But the other said, “Neither I nor you shall have him. Cut him in two!”

27 Then the king gave his ruling: “Give the living baby to the first woman. Do not kill him; she is his mother.”

28 When all Israel heard the verdict the king had given, they held the king in awe, because they saw that he had wisdom from God to administer justice.

So this is an incredible example of wisdom that came straight from God. King Solomon was not given a word of knowledge from God to be able to supernaturally know which woman was the child’s mother, but God gave Solomon the wisdom to be able to determine this information and to administer righteous justice.

So how do we receive this awe-inspiring word of wisdom? The same way we receive everything else from God – ASK FOR IT!

James 1:5

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will

be given to you. So easy enough, we simply ask God for wisdom and He'll give it to us! We then receive the word of wisdom by the same creative means of prophecy or a word of knowledge or more commonly just by reading and applying what He has already given us in the Bible. However, a word of wisdom will be very clear in what to do with it because that is the essence of what wisdom is: effectively applying knowledge. As is the case with prophecy, scripture also gives us a test that we can use to determine the source of wisdom. Just like prophecy, we can test wisdom by the fruits that it will produce if put into action.

James 3:13-18

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. 14 But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. 15 Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. 18 Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

All too often, Christians do things in the name of Jesus thinking that they are moving in the wisdom of God. However, if it is done in pride (thinking that I'm better than you), or it is done out of envy or selfishness (what I can gain from it), or it creates disorder – it is demonic – not at all from God.

However, if we do things in the name of Jesus and it is pure (done without prideful, envious, or selfish motives), loves peace, considers others, submits to others; if it is merciful, sincere, and impartial, then it is indeed being done with the wisdom of God.

So now that we know what God's wisdom looks and acts like and we know how to receive it, let's get out there and start living our lives in the wisdom of God. Whenever we get stuck and we're not sure what to do, we'll ask God to give us a word of wisdom and fully expect to receive it.

We're now equipped with the spiritual gifts of prophecy, word of knowledge, and word of wisdom. This trio of God's revelation by means of words are powerful and have the ability to manifest God's love to a person or group of people in a real and tangible way. These gifts can be used inside of the church to build up other believers, outside of the church to show the lost the love of God, in the workplace, and anywhere that people are in need of these gifts. Let's go and be the superheroes that rush in to save the day that this world is waiting for!