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2.1 The Gifts of Knowledge, Wisdom and Healing

The Word of Knowledge and the Word of Wisdom

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the **Spirit of wisdom** and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the **Spirit of knowledge** and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

Isaiah 11:1–5 ESV

What, why and how

This prophecy of Isaiah obviously relates to Jesus, the Anointed One, and points to his intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit. Jesus' is our primary example in the gifts of the Spirit, his anointing is our anointing. And his anointing is in both the Spirit of wisdom and the Spirit of knowledge. [See also Ephesians 1:17].

So these gifts are an expression of Christ's anointing. So what are they and what are they for? Both are to do with revelation: the word of wisdom is the manifestation in the mind or on the lips of a believer of divine wisdom. God's wisdom is higher than human wisdom [see Isaiah 55:9, 1 Corinthians 1:25] and of all together a different kind! The word of knowledge likewise is the impartation of a supernaturally known piece of knowledge to the mind or to the lips of the believer.

Why does God do this? To open up situations and to show that he is the all-knowing [Acts 1:24] and only wise God [Romans 16:27]. These gifts are always with a greater purpose, they are instigating gifts and may require other gifts to follow quickly on their heels to achieve what God intends.

New Testament examples of Word of Knowledge

- **Jesus & Nathanael**

Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!” Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?” Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

John 1:47–49 ESV

- **Jesus and the Samaritan Woman**

Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.” The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.

John 4:16–19 ESV

So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?”

John 4:28–29 ESV

Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me all that I ever did.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world.”

John 4:39–42 ESV

- **Jesus and the Scribes**

And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.” And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming.” But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? But

that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he then said to the paralytic—“Rise, pick up your bed and go home.” And he rose and went home. When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

Matthew 9:2–8 ESV

Examples of the Word of Wisdom

Then the king [Solomon] said, “The one says, ‘This is my son that is alive, and your son is dead’; and the other says, ‘No; but your son is dead, and my son is the living one.’” And the king said, “Bring me a sword.” So a sword was brought before the king. And the king said, “Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other.” Then the woman whose son was alive said to the king, because her heart yearned for her son, “Oh, my lord, give her the living child, and by no means put him to death.” But the other said, “He shall be neither mine nor yours; divide him.” Then the king answered and said, “Give the living child to the first woman, and by no means put him to death; she is his mother.” And all Israel heard of the judgment that the king had rendered, and they stood in awe of the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God was in him to do justice.

1 Kings 3:23–28 ESV

The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst they said to him, “Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?” This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.” And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”

John 8:3–12 ESV

Listening to the Holy Spirit



The key to moving in these gifts is simply to listen to the Holy Spirit. Remember he is the Spirit of Knowledge and the Spirit of Wisdom [Isaiah 11], so all that he says to us will be wisdom and knowledge. Fellowshiping with the Holy Spirit – talking to him constantly and sharing our thoughts and desires with him and listening to his voice, will mean that the gifts of wisdom and knowledge are irresistibly manifest in us!

How these 2 gifts manifest can often seem in stark contrast however! A word of knowledge is almost always immediately recognisable – suddenly we know something factual and concrete that we know we did not know before.

The word of wisdom, however, can sometimes come without us realising. Note that we said before that words of knowledge and wisdom are manifest in the mind or on the lips of believers; the word of wisdom can be manifest in a conversation and can leave the person who spoke thinking, “Wow, I didn’t know I thought that!”

That is not to say that God wants to give us this gift without our knowing, we should seek to be discerning in the gifts and to draw on them knowledgeably.

Acting on the Knowledge

As we have seen from our examples, both these revelatory gifts come to illuminate: to minister justice or to bring about a divine encounter; to cause us to proceed in God’s ways and to highlight the lies of the enemy. Whatever the situation, God has an intention, a plan, and these gifts bring that plan, that purpose into it.

It is often very possible for us not to act on these manifestations of the Spirit as they manifest first in our minds. “*To set the mind on the flesh is life and peace,*” and this is what these gifts are all about, manifesting God’s life and peace. They open a source of blessing; we must be diligent to act on them.

These gifts require boldness, in using them we make ourselves totally dependent on the Holy Spirit; he is leading us on an adventure that will only succeed through relying on him completely; “*Are you so foolish?*” says Paul, “*Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?*” (Galatians 3:3).

These gifts, because they manifest the wisdom of God which is foolishness to men, can make us look foolish; if we fear this we will never move into the miraculous, but if we are ready to be fools for Christ, nothing can stop us!

2.2 Gifts of Healing

Overview of the ways healing was administered by Jesus

- With a touch and a word – Matthew 8:3, Matthew 9:29, Mark 1:41, Mark 5:41-42, Luke 5:13, Luke 12:13
- Just a word – Matthew 8:13, Mark 10:52, Luke 7:7, Luke 18:42, John 4:50
- Just a touch / Just laying on of hands – Matthew 8:15, Matthew 9:25, Matthew 20:34, Mark 1:31, Luke 4:40, Luke 22:51
- Command to the sick person – Matthew 9:6, Matthew 12:13, Mark 2:11, Mark 3:5, Luke 5:24, Luke 6:10, Luke 17:14, John 5:8
- Command (Rebuke) to the sickness – Luke 4:39
- Being touched – Matthew 9:20-22, Matthew 14:36, Mark 5:27-29, Mark 6:56, Luke 6:19, Luke 8:44
- Casting out demons – Matthew 9:32, Matthew 17:18, Mark 9:25-27
- Touching, Spitting, Speaking – Mark 7:33-35
- Spitting and Laying on of hands – Mark 8:23-25
- Spitting, Making and applying Mud, Giving a command to wash – John 9:6-7

Overview of the ways healing was administered by the Disciples of Jesus

- Anointing with Oil – Mark 6:13
- Command in the name of Jesus – Acts 3:6-7, Acts 9:33
- Extraordinary Miracles – Acts 5:15-16, Acts 19:12
- Laying on of Hands – Acts 9:12,17-18; Acts 28:8
- Praying then Commanding – Acts 9:40
- Praying beforehand – Acts 4:29-31

Heal the Sick!

Healing the sick is a command of Jesus, firstly to the 72 he sent out (Matthew 10:8, Luke 10:9) and then to all believers (Mark 16:18). It is inconceivable that this would be in any way other than by the gifts of the Spirit if we believe that everything we do is through a manifestation of the Spirit. So is the implication that we all have this gift? Well, one of the most important ways of seeing a gift imparted is to be in a situation where it is needed! Consider what we have said about Words of Knowledge and Wisdom.

Why Gifts (plural)?

It is interesting to note that it is only healing that is described in the plural “gifts of healing” [1 Corinthians 12:9]. Why might this be? I suggest 2 possible reasons (both of which *may* be significant).

Firstly, from experience of the way men and women who move in healing operate, it would seem that some “specialize” in healing certain ailments. Why would this be? Well God is a God of diversity and wants us to minister always with a sense of interdependence, so this should not perhaps surprise us. We all “*prophesy in part*” (1 Corinthians 13:9) and tongues and interpretation assume an interdependency as well, so this division of gifts of different kinds to different people seems in accord with this pattern.

This variety within the gifts of healing can often lead to an increase of faith both in the one possessing the gift and the one seeking the healing; if someone is known to have seen many people healed of particular sickness this can inspire faith.

Secondly, as we have noted in our survey, sickness can have a variety of sources, specifically some sicknesses are purely a physical ailment, whilst some physical ailments are the result of demonic oppression or possession. It was in the case of a physical illness with demonic origin that Jesus said, “*this kind can only come out by prayer and fasting,*” (Mark 9:29) when his disciples could not bring about a deliverance or healing. This could be a distinction in gifts of healing then, healing that is merely physical and healing that is brought about through the casting out of demons.

Giving what you have

Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the temple. Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, “Look at us.” And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!” And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong.

Acts 3:1–7 ESV

The gifts of healing, like every other gift, are irrevocable (Romans 11:29). If you have it, it is there to give away; Jesus said:

Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those with leprosy, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give.

Matthew 10:8 NASB



Peter here imparts healing from a place of confidence in what he has; Christ in him the hope of glory, a fullness of the Holy Spirit, but also an irrevocable gift of healing. When we are confident in what we have received we will be bold in how we act!
