

Exploring the Gifts of the Spirit - Part One
Word of Knowledge, Word of Wisdom, Distinguishing between Spirits
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This morning we are beginning a **three part series** where we will be exploring some of the **gifts the Holy Spirit**. Gifts the Spirit empowers us with to help us be more effective in helping others.

All the gifts of the Spirit are given to help us serve others. They are never given to make us look good or to impress people. The Apostle Paul says they are given for the common good. All the gifts are active and available to us today.

There are about 20 spiritual gifts listed in the bible, but in this series, we will only be looking at the nine gifts the Apostle Paul lists in 1 Corinthians 12.

Read 1 Cor. 12:1-11

12 Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. ²You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. ³Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. ⁵There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

⁷Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

⁸To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

Spiritual gifts differ from natural talents and abilities in that there is a **supernatural aspect to them**. The Holy Spirit takes up residence inside of us when we surrender our lives to Jesus. **And it is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit that releases these nine gifts in our lives for effective ministry.**

The Holy Spirit will release or manifest these gifts in our lives when the need arises. Some people have a stronger ministry around one or several of these gifts, but we can all move in any of these gifts as the Spirit directs and enables us.

Paul says to each one of us, the manifestation of the Spirit is given as the Spirit determines. He decides when and how to release these gifts in our lives, not us.

This morning we are exploring three gifts. The Word of Knowledge, Word of Wisdom, and the Distinguishing between Spirits.

There is natural knowledge, wisdom, and discernment we are to grow in. But these supernatural gifts go beyond our human ability, intellect and understanding.

It is supernatural revelation God gives to us to deal with a situation before us. It is usually given for that moment and a particular need.

This is so amazing. God is so good to us. He gives us everything we need to make us effective in helping people around us experience God's power and love.

These are the same gifts Jesus moved in when he was here. That's why Jesus said in John 14 we will do the same works that he did and even greater works. Because he is giving us the same Spirit and gifts he had. Let's look these gifts.

- 1. The Word of Knowledge is a supernatural awareness of unknown details about past, present, or future situations that you had no way of knowing.**

This gift is also a great tool in evangelism to get people's attention. God gives you an insight about someone and you share it with them, and it opens their heart to Jesus. They know God must love them if he took time to share something personal with you about them.

Jesus used this gift with the woman he met at the Samaritan well. Jesus told her to go get her husband and she said I don't have a husband. Then Jesus, through

a word of knowledge, told the woman that she had had five husbands and the one she was living with now was not her husband. She was amazed and her heart was opened to what Jesus wanted to share with her. Through this one word of knowledge the whole city became open to the gospel. These gifts are supernatural!

We often see this gift released by God in prayer ministry and counseling. It helps you get to the root of the problem quickly. God gives you supernatural insight as to what is going on in the person's life so you can help them.

A word of knowledge builds faith in people's hearts for what God wants to do and it unlocks things that are hidden to us.

This gift can work in your workplace and everyday encounters with people. God might give you a word of knowledge of an issue a person is struggling with or a sickness in their body he wants to heal.

It can function in the workplace in very practical ways as well. I love the story **Harold Hill shares.**

The company Harold worked for had sold some heavy machinery to a power station in Baltimore. Part of the contract included making sure everything was working properly before handing it over. One morning Harold received an urgent call: "At one o'clock this afternoon we need to turn the power station over to the mayor and we can't get it to work." They had technicians from General Electric and their own technicians working on it for two weeks and they were stumped. Harold said he began to pray and immediately in his spirit he knew exactly what was wrong. He said, "I saw it clearly like a picture on a screen." When he arrived at the power station, he walked directly over to the spot that he had seen in the Spirit as being the trouble source and told the 20 technicians standing there what to do to fix it. They said, "Well we've been through all that, we've checked it all out." Harold said, "You called me here as a consultant. Are you going to carry out my instructions? If not, I'm going back to the office. One of them said "Yes, sir, although what Harold said seemed ridiculous to them. They had nothing else to try. So, they did what he told them, pushed the buttons, threw the switches and the thing took off like it was supposed to. Harold said he was just as amazed as them.

Sounds like the story when Jesus told the disciples to cast their nets on the other side of the boat after they had just been fishing the whole night without catching anything. A supernatural word unlocks things in the natural and spiritual realm.

These gift are intended by God to be used everywhere we go as a witness to his power and love.

2. The Word of Wisdom is a supernatural impartation of instant insight in how to respond to a particular problem or need.

The gift of Knowledge gives us facts and information. **The gift of Wisdom gives us strategy to know what to do with those facts.** They usually flow together.

I ask God for wisdom whether the word of Knowledge I receive **is for my personal intercession for the situation or is it something I am to share?** When is the right time to share it? Who should I share it with?

- You can destroy someone by sharing sensitive revelation God gives you in a wrong way. Need to ask for wisdom.

These gifts come as divine inspiration when they are needed. Sometimes by an impression we sense in our spirit, or a picture we see in our minds eye, or in a vision or dream or something in the scripture the Spirit highlights, or other ways.

God often gives this gift to us when we are ministering to someone. The gift of Wisdom will direct you on how to minister to someone and even the questions to ask and answers to give.

We see this gift flowing through Jesus in how he responded to the Pharisees.

One time they tried to trap him about judging the woman caught in adultery and he responded with such wisdom that it confounded them and shut them up.

- *You without sin cast the first stone*

Another time they tried to trap him with a question on taxes and he responded with such wisdom that they didn't know what to say and walked away.

- *“Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”* Mt 22:22

The word of wisdom is often a simple response filled with Heaven’s wisdom.

3. The Distinguishing of Spirits is the supernatural discernment to know whether the spiritual source behind a certain behavior, word or situation is human, satanic or of God.

There are times when in the natural, everything looks right and sounds right but we have this **check in our spirit** that something is not right. God doesn't want us to be deceived so he gives us this supernatural perception to help us at those times.

We are also to grow in our natural spiritual discernment by being trained in God's word. **Most things can be discerned by the Scriptures.**

In verse 3 he says we usually can discern if someone is legit by how they speak of Jesus as their Lord. If their actions and teaching don't line up with Jesus teachings and they draw attention to themselves instead of Jesus, they are not to be trusted and followed.

There are three realms operating around us.

- **The natural realm - reasoning, knowledge, and feelings**
- **The demonic realm - deception, evil, and pride**
- **The Kingdom realm – faith, life, and godliness**

This discernment gift helps us know whether what is going on is from God, from the devil or from a person's own human spirit or natural causes.

There were time Jesus discerned that sickness was from natural causes and other times he discerned there was a spiritual component to it. Sometimes he rebuked a spirit of affliction before healing people and other times he just healed people and didn't attribute it to lack of faith, sin, or spiritual causes.

That's why we need this gift. In the natural we don't always know the root of the problem or what is behind a situation.

God has protected me and our church many times through this gift of discernment. This gift has helped us to **discern between spiritual fads and genuine moves of God**. They can look the same on the outside, but the inner motives are different.

We need this gift to sort out the mixture even in a genuine move of God.

Conclusion:

God has given us these amazing spiritual tools to protect us and help us be effective in whatever God's calling is on our lives. I encourage you to study them and learn how they function.

Here at Petra we do our best to honor and embrace the Holy Spirit. We recognize we desperately need his ministry in our lives and church. We need his breath upon us in all we do.

Let's stand and sing this song as a prayer and invitation for the Holy Spirit to breathe on us in a fresh way. To welcome his presence in our lives, our church, our homes, our schools, our places of employment.

Closing Song: Breathe on Us