

1 Corinthians 12:7-9 Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith and Healing

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www.calvarydcmetro.org

I say this all the time, but I love weddings. Now that's not uncommon, lots of people like weddings, they're usually fun celebrations. But I love weddings because, as the pastor, I get the best seat in the house. I'm right there in the middle of this incredibly intimate, personal, moment watching a man and woman tremble and giggle and cry and tell each other "don't you cry!" "Don't you make me cry!" And "I love you so much" and "You look so amazing" and every other thing they're saying in that moment with both the words coming out of their mouths and the look that's in their eyes.

What everyone else is seeing it with a wide-angle lens; I'm seeing it with the zoom, in HD, focused right where the action is.

Well, something very similar happens when you allow God to have His way in you. When God pours out His Holy Spirit in your life; you get to see and know what's going on better than anyone else. God is glorified, others are blessed, and you're right there at ground zero.

This morning, as we continue our study in 1 Corinthians 12 we're going to take our first look at some of the gifts that God gives. We pick things up here in 1 Corinthians 12:7

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:

To each one means to each Christian. God wants to give spiritual gifts to every single Christian, not just pastors and missionaries and worship leaders.

But also take notice the term – **the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one** – when you receive and display the gifts of the Spirit, God is manifesting Himself to other people through your life.

Chew on that for a minute – people are seeing something of God *in you*. Messed up you. Inadequate you. Selfish, sinful, shameful you. It's true. But they're not just seeing you, they're seeing the Holy Spirit manifested in you.

That's what it means to manifest – it means to make the invisible visible. Sometimes you see these action or suspense movies and they're trying to track someone or something down on an airplane or a ship and so they say, "let's check the manifest!" It's a list of everyone or everything onboard. We know there are 200 people on the flight, but which people, who are they? Their names are on the manifest. The manifest makes them known.

It's the same with medicine – you show up at the doctor's office with some sort of illness and they determine what disease you have based on what the symptoms are or how the disease is manifesting itself. How it's making itself known.

When the Holy Spirit gives gifts to you, they make Him known. You get to do that! – you get to help people see God and you get to see Him yourself!

And all of this is possible because the Bible tells us God has already manifested Himself to us:

1 John 4:9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.

So, God manifests Himself *to you* in Christ and then manifests Himself *through you* in the Holy Spirit.

And what does that look like? Well:

8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another *different* kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

So He gives the gifts and He knows which one to give to who and when in order to make Himself manifest.

If someone is sick and suffering they don't need you to show up with the gift of tongues and utter something you don't understand. No, they need someone with a gift of healing.

But by the same token, if we're working on putting together a system for children's ministry to make sure we've got teachers for every class and that they've had a background check and they know what to do when there's a problem – we don't need the gift of healing, we need the gift of administration.

But, did you know, one person could have both gifts? It's possible for God to give you both a word of wisdom and the gift of faith for example. There's no rule saying you can only receive one gift. Later on in verse 31 Paul will say, "**Earnestly desire the best gifts.**"

You can earnestly desire any of the gifts regardless of what gift you may have received in the past. You don't have to get pigeon holed. It's not a mark you bear for life so that you're only ever useful in particular situations. No. If you're available, and God wants to use you, He can and He will. The gifts are all about you coming to God in humble submission asking Him to have His way in you.

Andrew Murray captures this idea of submission to God's will perfectly in a quote I got from one of you this week. It was the signature block at the end of someone's email and it says:

"Father, let the Holy Spirit have full dominion over me, in my home, in my temper, in every word of my tongue, in every thought of my heart, in every feeling toward my fellow men; let the Holy Spirit have entire possession." - Andrew Murray

That's the kind of prayer God hears...and answers.

And that might mean that He gives you a spiritual gift like a word of wisdom. What's that? It's a sudden piece of counsel or insight that comes to you and which perfectly fits a situation you're facing. There's a situation going on and it's hard to tell what to do, and suddenly the perfect idea pops into your head – you suddenly see how to solve the problem. That's a word of wisdom.

Jesus gave His disciples an example of how this would happen when persecution came their way.

[Matt 10:16](#) "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. 17 But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. 18 You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. 19 But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; 20 for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

Notice, you don't have to plan for a word of wisdom – God just gives you wisdom right then and there in the moment – that's how you know it was Him.

You want to pray for a word of wisdom whenever you're counseling. And you know we all do counseling, right? Counseling doesn't just happen in some office or over lunch. It happens whenever someone comes up to you with a question about something that's happening in their life.

When they do that, you just fire off a quick prayer as they're talking to you – "God, please give me wisdom!" And you'll be amazed sometimes by how He answers that prayer – things will come out of your mouth that you've never thought of before, and you'll think to yourself, "Wow, that was good!" If it's happened to you, you know what I'm talking about.

Ask Him to do it and watch and see what He does. Remember, God wants to manifest Himself to others through you.

I was actually on the receiving end of a word of wisdom this past week. Two weeks ago I had a crown replaced. But because the process hurt so badly, they had to give me a double shot of Novocain. That meant went it was time to check the final fit – they ask you to bite

down and chew your teeth around – well, I didn't feel it very well, so I couldn't give the best feedback on the fit. I walked out thinking everything was fine but as the days went on my tooth started hurting more and more because the new tooth was actually too tall and so every time I bit down it was ramming the roots up into the tissue of my gums.

Well, Monday morning I left for Lynchburg for my very last doctoral seminar and while I was down there my tooth just kept hurting more and more. Now, I never said anything to anyone about it. I was hoping it would get better or that at least I could make it through the week and get it looked at as soon as I got home. Well, Tuesday in class the professor is talking about decision-making and he's talking about how some people take a long time to make a decision and things just keep getting worse and worse. And I'm thinking, "Yeah, that sounds familiar." And then he says, "It's like sometimes you've got a toothache but instead of going to get it taken care of you just sit there and wait." He said, "Brother, if that tooth needs to be pulled, go have it pulled."

Now, again, he had no idea about my condition. But that night, as I couldn't sleep because of the pain in my tooth, I finally tapped out in submission to God and His wisdom and I drove back home. I went to the dentist's office first thing Wednesday morning and was back in class in time for the afternoon session with a re-adjusted tooth.

Now trust me, I would much rather have had just about any other illustration to share with you, but apparently God wanted to make sure we understood this one. So, be open to receiving a Word of Wisdom – even from people who might not know they're giving it to you. God loves you, He knows what's best for you, and He wants to speak wisdom and guidance into your life.

So, as we've said many times over the past several weeks – I hope you're cultivating an attitude of expectancy. I hope that you're not surprised when God moves but rather, you're surprised when He doesn't.

Now, that's not to say that you ought to go looking for angels and demons and miracles behind every occurrence or circumstance or conversation, but just have an awareness that these things are real, and the more you seek God for them the more likely you are to experience them, and remember, when you receive the gifts other people are blessed because they're given to you "for the profit of all" (verse 7).

So we've talked about a word of wisdom, but there's also a "[word of knowledge through the same Spirit.](#)" What's the difference? Well, typically wisdom is knowledge applied. Years ago when I used to work in the intelligence community we spoke of the difference between information and intelligence – information was just data, intelligence was useful information – the right information applied to the right problem, that's wisdom.

A word of knowledge on the other hand, is when the Spirit reveals information that was not obvious or commonly known to you. A classic example of this in Jesus' life is from John 4 – the woman at the well. You remember, Jesus meets this woman at the well mid-day and they start talking and she's getting a little snarky and sassy with Him and finally He says to

her, “Woman, go call your husband.” And she says, “I don’t have one.” And He says, “That’s right, you don’t have one, you’ve had four and the man you’re living with right now is not your husband.”

No generalities, no vagueness; this was hardcore, specific, verifiable information, and that’s what you should expect of a word of knowledge too. Anyone can make vague predictions that will apply to someone if the crowd is large enough. I could say, “someone in here has a back that is hurting this morning” or “Someone is facing a big challenge coming up on the horizon and God wants you to know it’s going to be OK.” That’s probably too vague. What I know of this gift has always involved a greater specificity.

I remember looking at someone in this building one day and God saying to me – this man is homosexual. Now, that’s kind of bold, right? You don’t want to just casually throw that out and see if it’s true. It’s not like – God told me you drive a blue car, is that right? If you’re wrong, it’s like “no, I drive a green car.” And you can go, “Huh. Well, I’m sorry about that, I guess I didn’t quite hear right.”

But you know what, as I got to know this man more I learned it was true. And I learned that Pastor Bill had experienced the same thing. Now, we didn’t ostracize him, we didn’t treat him differently – we all sin in different ways – some people are prone to anger, others to pride, this man happened to be attracted to other men. All he needed from us was to be loved like anyone else and pointed toward Christ like the rest of us. But God showed us – two of us pastors, something that wasn’t immediately obvious – He manifested Himself to us through a Word of knowledge from the Holy Spirit.

I think the word of knowledge is also a gift you’ll commonly experience in leadership – whether in the home or in ministry. Parents, you can ask for and expect this as you try to raise your kids. God wants to love those young men and women through you - you’re the closest lifeguard to their pool so don’t be surprised if He shows you things.

That doesn’t mean you always have to take action or confront, sometimes He just wants you to know, watch, and pray. But talk with Him about it. And notice that once again, someone else is benefiting from the Holy Spirit giving a gift to you – (vs 7) [“the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.”](#)

Well, let’s go on to the next. [“To another faith by the same spirit.”](#)

Now, this is not the faith that leads to salvation. Though that is also a gift from God – this faith is an extra measure to believe and trust God for something that seems incredibly unlikely.

We find an example in the book of Acts. Jesus has risen from the dead and ascended to heaven, Pentecost has occurred and the Holy Spirit has been poured out in miraculous ways for the first time in the lives of Christians. And one day Peter and John are walking to the Temple to pray and they pass by a man sitting there begging and he looked at Peter and suddenly something happened.

Acts 3:6 Then Peter said, “Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.” 7 And he took him by the right hand and lifted *him* up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. 8 So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God. 10 Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Now all the people were freaking out – they wanted to know – what kind of miracle had just happened? And Peter tells them, look it wasn’t me, it was Jesus.

16 ... through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which *comes* through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Sometimes the Holy Spirit gives us great faith for a great work.

The next gift we see is actually listed in the plural – **gifts of healings**. I think it’s plural here because as we’ve mentioned no one has these gifts on a permanent basis. These aren’t super powers that you can tap into whenever you want. The Holy Spirit gives them as He sees fit.

If someone had the gift of healing, wouldn’t they be ethically responsible to go into the cancer ward at the children’s hospital and just start emptying the place out? But of course they don’t. And yet some people think they really do and they often want to blame the sick person for not having enough faith to receive the healing. That’s just mean and it makes me mad.

God can heal anyone He wants at any time He wants using anyone He wants. But for reasons we don’t completely understand He doesn’t always choose to. But I can tell you this much for sure, it’s not because the healer doesn’t have enough faith, or because the injured or ill doesn’t have enough faith, it’s because God has chosen not to move at that time.

God used Paul in incredible ways. The Bible tells us Paul healed all kinds of people. It even tells us in Acts 20 the story of a boy named Eutychus who was sitting in the third story window of a house one night as Paul preached on and on and the boy nodded off and fell three stories to his death, but then God used Paul – the Holy Spirit gave him a gift of healing, and he raised the boy from the dead. That’s kind of amazing.

But you know what? Paul also says that he himself suffered from sort of physical affliction that he prayed time and time again for God to heal and God told him no. He told Paul, “my grace is sufficient for you” (2 Cor 12:9).

Paul was also very close with Timothy – he considered Timothy almost like an adopted son. But Timothy suffered from some sort of stomach problems, maybe an ulcer or something. And instead of healing him, Paul just told him to take a little wine to help with the problem. How could a man who was used to raise someone from the dead not heal himself or someone so close to him? Simple, the Holy Spirit didn't give him the gift of healing for those situations.

You cannot obligate God to move, you can't back Him into a corner or force His hand. He has to give the gift when He determines the time is right. But, you can ask for them. You can earnestly desire the best gifts.

And that's what I'm hoping we'll all do – make ourselves available to God to move through as He sees fit. And that we would have an earnest expectation that He will move in a way that is undeniably Him in our lives for the sake of others. That we who have invited God into our lives would now invite Him out of our lives as well – flowing through for the benefit of others.

Would you pray that? Would you pray a prayer of surrender to God with me right now, and make yourself available for Him to use? We'll pick up here again next week but for now,

Let's pray.

“Father, let the Holy Spirit have full dominion over me, in my home, in my temper, in every word of my tongue, in every thought of my heart, in every feeling toward my fellow men; let the Holy Spirit have entire possession.” - Andrew Murray