

MATURING CHRISTIAN GIFTS--KNOWLEDGE, WISDOM, AND EXHORTATION
SPIRITUAL GIFTS PART #6
1204
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KOREANS PRAY MORE; Different world view; from animistic background; continually expect the supernatural to occur.

Americans more narrowly focused. Never really expect God to intervene.

Gifts today more supernatural in nature.

REACHING PEOPLE: Apostleship-Evangelism-Miracles-Healing-Mercy

MATURING CHRISTIANS: Prophecy-Teaching-Wisdom-Knowledge-Encouragement-Distinguishing Between Spirits-Faith-Tongues-Interpreting Tongues-Giving-Helps

ORGANIZING THE CHURCH TO REACH PEOPLE AND TO MATURE CHRISTIANS: Administration-Leadership-Pastoring

KNOWLEDGE- READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:8

THE GIFT OF THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE IS NOT JUST KNOWLEDGE IN GENERAL OR A BETTER KNOWLEDGE OF THE BIBLE THAN SOMEBODY ELSE. WE ARE ALL ENCOURAGED TO GET KNOWLEDGE.

We are all called to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). Paul to Timothy: "Study to show thyself approved."

He prayed for the Colossians that they "might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Col 1:19).

The Greek word for knowledge is used over three hundred times in the New Testament.

THE GIFT OF THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE IS A SPECIAL "WORD" FOR A PARTICULAR SITUATION.

The use of "logos" prefacing both wisdom and knowledge suggests that these gifts are situational communications given by the Spirit for that moment.

Contemporary view that this is people who are knowledgeable about the Bible or God.

No. We are talking about a word which comes from God as knowledge a certain specific situation.

DEFINITIONS

The gift of the word of knowledge represents a supernaturally revealed communication of helpful knowledge for a current situation.

The exercise of both these gifts is thus situationally specific and depends upon sensitivity to the Holy Spirit in the unique situation.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE

* READ ACTS 5:1-11 Peter's knowledge of God's supernatural judgment.

The purpose of the gift of knowing it to bring a helpful word from God to bear upon a person's life.

Word of Knowledge to Ruth Ann Prather

Word of knowledge to Preacher in last week's sermon who saw "Jane" and "Adultery" on the man's forehead in the airplane.

Henry Ford had to stop operations when an essential piece of machinery broke down. When none of the factory personnel could get it operating again, an outside expert was called in.

After looking over the situation for a moment, the expert took a hammer and gently tapped the machine in a certain spot, and it immediately started running again.

When he submitted his bill for \$10,000, Henry Ford was enraged and demanded an itemized bill.

The expert sent the bill: "For hitting the machine, \$10; for knowing where to hit, \$9990."

Rick Leis on Wednesday telling of the woman in his office for counseling. "You've been committing adultery. In fact, you have committed adultery today."

It is axiomatic in today's church that we must have people who "know where to hit." No, they're not fixing the machinery and certainly not physically hitting other believers, but those crucial decisions in business meetings, the courage to carry through on necessary discipline, and the appropriate word of admonition are essential to the biblical operation of today's church.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE

- * An unusual sensitivity to recognize thoughts or impressions that are from the Holy Spirit.
- * A recognition that in certain situations the Holy Spirit wants you to have knowledge and/or information beyond your expertise for some given situation.
- * An awareness that physical feelings may be correlated to something the Spirit wants to communicate.
- * A courage and willingness to share what the Holy Spirit has said to you.
- * A willingness to make a mistake to be right, rather than to be afraid to make a mistake to be wrong.

WISDOM-READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:8.

THE GIFT OF THE WORD OF WISDOM IS NOT JUST WISDOM IN GENERAL. WE ARE ALL ENCOURAGED TO HAVE WISDOM.

Proverbs 1-4. "Get wisdom" READ PROVERB 4:5.

EPHESIANS 1:17: "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . may give you the spirit of wisdom . . . so that you may know Him better."

JAMES 1:5, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

REMEMBER THAT THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE IS A "WORD" FOR A PARTICULAR SITUATION.

DEFINITION

The word of wisdom represents the supernatural capacity to synthesize the concepts, facts, truths, and then produce the needed God-inspired solution for a particular situation.

It is the knowledge which knows what to do in any given situation.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF WISDOM

READ MATTHEW 22:15-22.

Jesus repeatedly He refuted those who tries to trap Him. They asked if it were lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not. He gave the memorable answer, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."

READ 1 KINGS 3:16-28.

When Solomon was faced with the dilemma of choosing which of two women was the rightful mother of one surviving baby, he certainly required the divine wisdom.

READ ACTS 15:19-21

Confusion of how to allow Gentiles into the church.

James was able to see how to grasp all that had been said and done and the Holy Spirit gave the solution to this situational problem in terms of a "word of wisdom" for the group.

Matthew 10:19-20

Jesus promised His disciples that when they came before councils, courts, and kings for His name they would not need to make advance preparation for their defense. What to say would be given them by the Holy Spirit.

Such difficult situations would require wisdom at that needs moment.

READ ACTS 6:10.

When Stephen disputed with Jewish leaders, "they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake "

The word of wisdom is very important for our time. Few problems can be solved by the decision of a single person - more and more decisions are being made in group discussions and counsel. A group decision is based on more thorough knowledge of the factors involved and is often more accurate than the decision of an individual. But the path up to the point of decision is tedious and costs much time and energy.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WORD OF WISDOM

- * A good understanding of the spiritual truths of the Bible.
- * The unusual sensitivity to the Holy Spirit in recognizing His promptings in synthesizing facts, ideas, and concepts.
- * A consistent insight into solutions for complex situations.
- * When facts and ideas are presented the solution appears almost instantaneously. Later analysis and evaluation will confirm the intuitive solution.
- * The "intuitive-like solution" is usually authenticated by those who hear it with a consensus approval.

EXHORTATION-READ ROMANS 12:8.

DEFINITION

The gift of exhortation is the spiritual capacity (1) to urge people to action and to godly living, and (2) to encourage and comfort people through application of Scriptural truths to their needs.

Throughout Scripture the concept of exhortation has a double meaning: to comfort or encourage, and to admonish.

A good father is depicted as regularly engaged in both aspects of exhortation, sometimes in connection with the same incident.

The Apostle Paul used the father image for one in a leadership role of the church.

READ 1 THESSALONIANS 2:11-12.

"For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting, and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into His kingdom and glory."

When Jesus tried to teach the disciples about His coming death, resurrection, and ascension, they found it hard to face even the thought of his absence. "Lord, to whom shall we go?"

Seeking to alleviate their fear of the unknown, the Master explained that the Father would be sending "another Counselor."

READ JOHN 14:15-16.

We have come to know the Greek term used in this passage to describe the Holy Spirit as the word *paraclete*.

The Greek Word "parakaleo" means one who comes along side of another to help.

An exhorter isn't someone like we think of with a baseball bat who hits someone over the head to get him to understand.

He's someone with a fantastic ability to help--"Cheer up--Our God is omnipotent!

You know people who are like that; they're always in the right place at the right time--other folks are like Job's counselors, or his wife, "Curse God and die".

One gift Paul didn't have was exhortation; he demonstrated that with John Mark.

One gift Barnabas had was exhortation. He picked up John Mark when Paul dropped him, so that Paul could later say, "Send John Mark, he's a profitable man".

The gift of exhortation involves the supernatural ability to come alongside to help, to strengthen the weak, reassure the wavering, buttress the buffeted, steady the faltering, console the troubled, encourage the halting.

More than just the gift of counseling. Although most counselors will have the gift.

The various gifts from the Holy Spirit cannot always be clearly differentiated; they spill over their boundaries and have some characteristics in common with one another.

The gift of exhortation is closely related to two other gifts, mercy and serving.

Mercy expresses itself practically in the ability to listen without looking down on the other person. The counselor will not judge, but rather understand., He will still call sin "sin", but he is conscious of his own need for forgiveness.

In a counseling session, adultery is confessed. The counselor will not throw in the other's face, "A Christian doesn't do that sort of thing!" He will patiently attempt to untangle the threads behind the occurrence. He does this out of compassion for the guilty person, so that the latter can gain clarity about his motives and see why he stumbled at this point.

BEST EXAMPLE OF THE GIFT OF EXHORTATION: BARNABAS

If his original name were used, you probably would not recognize him: *Joses*.

Every time he appears in the sacred record he is encouraging someone. He so consistently used his gift that, according to Acts 4:36, the apostles called him "Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, the son of consolation).

1. He helped needy Christians.

The Early Church was composed of many common people and many poor. Confession of Christ made it harder to secure and hold employment.

Barnabas responded by selling property, probably on his native land of Cyprus, and surrendering the sale price at the apostles' feet to be used to alleviate temporal needs.

2. He endorsed Saul soon after his conversion.

Paul was rejected by the Sanhedran, to whom his conversion came as bad news. His old friends considered him a renegade.

The Christians, were slow to receive this newcomer, suspicious of his motives.

Barnabas arranged a meeting with the leaders at Jerusalem, "brought Paul to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus" (Acts 9:27).

3. He accepted Greek believers.

A large number of Gentiles believed. The result was a seemingly irregular church, which the leaders at Jerusalem sent Barnabas to investigate.

After only a brief review, Barnabas rejoiced at the evidence of God's grace. Had he been a rigid, narrow-minded man, he might have squelched the new work as heretical, demanding that every Gentile acquiesce to the Law of Moses in order to gain acceptance in the church. But Barnabas' gift of encouragement, directed by the Spirit, enabled him to anticipate the verdict of the first church council by years.

4. He developed a gifted assistant.

Bible students point out that on their first missionary journey the order reversed. No longer was it "Barnabas and Paul," but it became "Paul and Barnabas."

Without envy on his part, Barnabas recognized the leadership of Paul. The senior member was willing to let the junior member take over the top spot. A Christian has gone far in Christian grace when he can become assistant to his assistant, then carry on with the same enthusiasm.

Someone wrote:

"It takes more grace than I can tell
To play the second fiddle well."

5. He restored a youthful deserter.

Recognizing in his nephew Mark a potential Christian leader just as he had in Paul, Barnabas had used his influence to have Mark taken on their first missionary journey as their assistant.

Before their journey was half over, Mark defected. Whether homesick, afraid, noting Uncle Barnabas' leadership was gradually giving way to Paul's, or for whatever, Mark returned home.

When the time came to start the next missionary tour, strong disagreement arose between Paul and Barnabas over taking John Mark with them.

Paul thought of the work, Barnabas of the man. Paul operated on the principle - why endanger the work by the presence of a man who failed us last time?

Barnabas' willingness to give Mark another chance helped rescue him from his desertion. Barnabas saw Mark's potential for the ministry, which otherwise might have been wasted.

Barnabas' gentler handling prepared him to become a good traveling companion for the Apostle Peter.

Paul later acknowledged the merit of Mark, writing from prison in his last recorded letter, "Take Mark, and bring him with thee, for he is profitable to me for the ministry" (2 Tim. 4:11).

So we realize that had not Barnabas used his gift of encouragement we might be missing half the New Testament Books?

Through his salvaging of Mark, he got us a writer of one of the four Gospels, possibly the first one written.

Through his cultivation of Paul, he got us the writer of 13 epistles.

Here is something remarkable. Barnabas never wrote a book that found its way into the sacred canon, but he encouraged two men who between them wrote 14 books, over half of the 27 New Testament volumes.

How much do we owe this self-effacing exhorter.

SEVERAL YEARS AGO I SET A GOAL THAT IS CHANGING MY OUTLOOK ON LIFE: I try to do one encouraging thing every day.

At end of day, if have not fulfilled my vow, I can always say something encouraging to my children. They need it. It is tough growing up.

You never know when just the right word at the right time may change a life.

DESCRIBE THE AFRICAN MISSIONARY: DAVID LIVINGSTONE

The first attempt of David Livingstone ended in failure: "Friends, I have forgotten all I had planned to say," he gasped and in shame he stepped from the pulpit.

Robert Moffat, who was visiting Edinburgh came to the shaken man and advise him not to give up: "Perhaps you could become a doctor instead of a preacher."

Livingstone headed to medical school to become a doctor.

One Sunday evening as he was finishing his studies he sat in the Aberdeen Music Hall listening to a missions service conducted by the London Missions Society. When the service was over, Livingstone was looking wistfully at the missions team as they filed out the door.

The look on his face attracted the attention of the congregational minister who was standing nearby. He stepped quietly to the young man's side and asked with a smile: "You can be a missionary if you want to."

Livingstone later said that it was that questioning and tender smile which encouraged him to his life's work as a missionary in Africa.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GIFT OF EXHORTATION

- * A strong reaction (either for or against) from people regarding what you say (urge and admonish)
- * Frequent giving of advise to others (urge and admonish)
- * A sense an urgency to get something done and to transmit this urgency to others (urge and admonish)
- * A perception of your sharing as comforting words from God (comfort)
- * An openness for people to confide their innermost problems because they sense an empathetic ear (comfort)
- * An cheerful attitude and demeanor that attracts people (comfort)
- * A lack of satisfaction with a superficial acceptance of truth--a longing to see people put practical truth into action
- * An ability to visualize specific achievement by prescribing precise steps of action
- * A tendency to avoid systems of information which lack practical application
- * A desire to share your testimony and favorite scriptures with others because of a belief that God will use it in the lives of others
- * An ability to see how tribulation can produce greater levels of maturity
- * A tendency to interpret scripture in light of human experience
- * Occasionally accused of over simplification
- * A belief that non-Christians are best won to Christ through a living example (This may appear to be a lack of interest in personal evangelism)