

LESSON 7 Word of Wisdom, Word of Knowledge, Faith

In our last four lessons we studied the first two groups of spiritual gifts, (1) the gifts of ministry, and (2) other ministry gifts. We noted that the first group was given for leadership in the body of Christ. Therefore, the number of believers receiving these gifts is somewhat limited. The second group of gifts is different. Almost every believer can have at least one of these gifts.

With this lesson we will begin our final group—the gifts of the Spirit. Special attention will be given to the fact that each of these gifts is given by the Holy Spirit. We will note also that none of these gifts are possible through only human ability or talent.

We will soon discover another thing—the added power received through the baptism in the Spirit is manifested in the gifts of the Spirit. God desires that His power will be manifested through each of His children. He wants His power to be shown through you. As you learn about these gifts, you will begin to find yourself able to be used by the Spirit in their effective manifestation.

lesson outline

Word of Wisdom

Word of Wisdom Defined

Word of Wisdom Explained and Illustrated

Purpose for the Word of Wisdom

Word of Knowledge

Word of Knowledge Defined

Word of Knowledge Explained and Illustrated

Purpose for the Word of Knowledge

Faith

Faith Defined

Faith Explained and Illustrated

Purpose for the Gift of Faith

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Explain the term “word of wisdom” and state the function and purpose of this gift.
- Describe the function and purpose of the word of knowledge.
- Tell how you would know if you received a word of knowledge.
- Explain the function and purpose of the gift of faith.
- Tell how you might know if you have a gift of faith.

learning activities

1. Read 1 Corinthians 12.
2. Read the lesson development. In your notebook write a short definition for each of the three gifts in this lesson.
3. Study the key words carefully in the glossary before studying the lesson itself.
4. Complete each self-test as in the previous lessons you studied.
5. Continue memorizing 1 Corinthians 13. Write the first nine verses from memory in your notebook. When this lesson is finished, you should be able to say the first ten verses.

key words

channel
Gentile

instrument
persuasion

transcend
utterance

lesson development

WORD OF WISDOM

Objective 1. *Explain the term “word of wisdom” and state the function and purpose of this gift.*

Now, we are ready to study the gifts of the Spirit. To begin, let’s look at Paul’s introduction to the subject in 1 Corinthians 12:1. “Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.”

As we began this course we saw the great value of knowledge in relation to the spiritual gifts. Paul understood the importance of knowledge. His strong desire was to help believers escape their ignorance . . . “I do not want you to be ignorant” (1 Corinthians 10:1). Five times in his epistles he says that same thing: Romans 1:13; 1 Corinthians 10:1; 12:1; 2 Corinthians 1:8; and 1 Thessalonians 4:13.

Paul knew that true knowledge in every area is necessary. He knew it would make the gifts of the Spirit more meaningful and effective, as God intended.

Believers can have gifts without much knowledge as the Corinthians did, . . . you do not lack any spiritual gift . . .” (1 Corinthians 1:7). However, if the gifts are to be useful, they must be based on true knowledge.

As we study these gifts, we will seek clear Bible-based knowledge about each one. We want to understand them well. We do not want just to know about these gifts—we want to see them in operation. We must pray that the Holy Spirit will open our minds to greater understanding.

Word of Wisdom Defined

“To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom. . .” (1 Corinthians 12:8). The King James Version says, “For to one is given, by the Spirit the *word of wisdom*.” Wisdom is good judgment based upon knowledge. The word of wisdom, then, is a word of good judgment based upon knowledge. But, the gift is more than that.

The term *word* is a key. It comes from the Greek word *logos*. *Logos* means “the matter of, the subject of, the essence of.” Since the gifts of the Spirit are strictly of the Spirit of God, we understand that the word of wisdom is an expression from God. It is not just an expression of wisdom. The wisdom spoken of here comes directly from God. It is His wisdom.

Therefore, through the gift of the word of wisdom, the Holy Spirit gives to the believer a bit of God’s wisdom.

The expression “word of wisdom” speaks of a *small portion*. It also seems to speak of special wisdom for a special need. We may say it is a small bit of God’s wisdom spoken at the proper time.

- 1** The word of wisdom is
- a)** a little of God’s wisdom spoken at the proper time.
 - b)** a gift which makes a person wise from then on.
 - c)** natural wisdom inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Word of Wisdom Explained and Illustrated

We must understand that the word of wisdom is fully supernatural. Paul says, “To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom” (1 Corinthians 12:8). One cannot get it by going to school. He does not get it because he is naturally a wise man. He gets it only by the Spirit.

To help us understand this gift—the word of wisdom—we will ask several questions.

1. *To whom is the word of wisdom given?* “. . . he (the Spirit) gives them to each one, just as he determines” (1 Corinthians 12:11).

There is a sense in which every believer has the opportunity of being used in manifesting every gift. Let me explain. All of the gifts are *in the Spirit*. Now, if the Spirit is in the believer, His gifts are also in the believer. However, which gift, or gifts, the Holy Spirit will manifest through the believer, is His decision.

The gifts of the Spirit are resident in the Holy Spirit. They are manifested by the Spirit through the believer; thus they can be said to be given to the believer.

For an example of this, in relation to the word of wisdom, read Acts 15:5-27. A serious problem arose in the early church. It was about the new Gentile converts. To deal with the problem, the church leaders met with the other believers. They talked back and forth. Some had one idea. Some another. Finally, James, one of the leaders spoke out. When he finished, “. . . the apostles and elders, together with the whole church, decided . . .”

Now note these steps:

1. A serious problem (verse 5).
2. The body of believers came together (verse 6).
3. The group struggled hard to solve the problem (verses 7-12).
4. The Holy Spirit, through James, gave the answer in a word of wisdom (verses 13-21).
5. The word of wisdom brought the entire group to a decision (verse 22).

In these verses we see that the word of wisdom was given by the Holy Spirit. That word of wisdom needed to *reach* the people. The Holy Spirit was in James and through him the Holy Spirit manifested the word of wisdom to the church. Therefore, the church received the gift of the word of wisdom.

2 Write **T** before each TRUE statement, and **F** before each FALSE statement

- ... **a** The word of wisdom is partly supernatural.
- ... **b** It is not correct to say that a certain believer has the gift of the word of wisdom.
- ... **c** The word of wisdom is a gift to the church.
- ... **d** The word of wisdom is manifested through unbelievers.

3 Read Acts 6:1-7. Which verse would you say refers to the word of wisdom?

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2. *How does the word of wisdom work?* Does it require hard thinking? How does the believer, through whom the Holy Spirit gives the word of wisdom, know what to speak forth?

These questions can best be answered by those who have had this experience. Donald Gee, an able English Pentecostal teacher said this:

“In a manifestation of the word of wisdom something flashes. There is a sense of the divine (that is, God), a consciousness of an utterance transcending (that is, above) all the . . . stores of . . . human experience. One is deeply conscious that the . . . right thing has been said.”

The word of wisdom may be spoken directly into a man’s heart by the Spirit. In this case he would likely speak it forth later to the body. (See Ephesians 1:17-19.)

Paul spoke the word of wisdom to the Corinthians. But before he spoke it to them, the Holy Spirit spoke it deeply into his heart. (Read 1 Corinthians 2:5-15.)

3. *When is the word of wisdom manifested?* We cannot list all of the times when it may come forth. Often circumstances will determine when it is needed. Also, the Holy Spirit can manifest the gift only when a believer is spiritually ready and available to be so used. So we are to use our different gifts in accordance with the grace that God has given us” (Romans

12:6). We will be helped in our understanding of the gift, by noting the circumstances under which it was manifested in the early church.

- a. When the preacher was preaching. We can see flashes of it in Peter's sermon in Acts 2:16-36. We can also see signs of it in Stephen's sermon in Acts 7. (Note also Acts 6:10.)
- b. When problems arose in the church (Review Acts 15.)
- c. When persecution came, Acts 5:26-33. Note especially verse 29, "We must obey God rather than men!" What a powerful word of wisdom. (See also Luke 12:12 and 21:15.)
- d. When people had personal problems (Acts 5:1-11).

What a valuable and useful gift the word of wisdom is. Surely it must be one of the greatest gifts. We might wish to have it so we could be helpful in the church. If the Holy Spirit should allow it to be manifested through us, we should not think, "Now I have it." We should rather remember He uses us as His channel for giving the gifts to His body, the church, and we should humbly praise Him.

4 Believers give the word of wisdom by

- a)** repeating what they have read.
- b)** trying to think of something God wants them to say.
- c)** the Holy Spirit giving them a word to speak forth.

5 Place a **T** before each statement that is TRUE, and an **F** before each statement that is FALSE.

- ... **a** The word of wisdom is given whenever there is need for it.
- ... **b** The word of wisdom is used only for preaching the gospel.
- ... **c** The word of wisdom must never be spoken directly to a person.
- ... **d** When men are being wrongly treated they may receive a word of wisdom.

Purpose for the Word of Wisdom

In studying the purpose of the gifts of the Spirit, there is *one simple rule* to remember—“All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church” (1 Corinthians 14:26). The King James Version is even more forceful—“Let all things be done unto edifying.” Edifying means “building up.” Therefore we can say, the *purpose* for the word of wisdom is to build up the body of Christ. This can be done if the word of wisdom is spoken to one member, a small group, or to a crowd.

This gift is never given by the Holy Spirit so that someone can feel better or more spiritual than other believers. It is a special privilege to be used by the Holy Spirit.

6 When the problems in a church are solved through the word of wisdom we say the church has been

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WORD OF KNOWLEDGE

Objective 2. *Describe the function and purpose of the word of knowledge.*

Objective 3. *Tell how you would know if you received a word of knowledge.*

Word of Knowledge Defined

“To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom” (1 Corinthians 12:8). The King James Version says “to another the *word of knowledge* by the same Spirit.”

Knowledge means “knowing.” As we saw in studying the word of wisdom, the term *word* comes from the Greek word *logos*. *Logos* means “the matter of, the subject of, the essence of.” The word of knowledge, then, is an expression of knowledge. But an expression of whose knowledge?

Let’s remind ourselves again that all of the gifts of the Spirit are either said to be *of the Spirit* or *by the Spirit*. The word of

knowledge is given by the *same Spirit* who gave the word of wisdom, the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, since He is the third person in the Godhead, has access to all of God's vast treasure of knowledge. There is a Latin-based word which describes how much knowledge God has. It is the word *omniscient*. Omniscient comes from two words, *Omni*, meaning "all," and *scient*, meaning "knowing." Putting the two words together, we have "all-knowing." Therefore, we say, God is all-knowing. God knows everything.

Through the word of knowledge the Holy Spirit makes the believer able to speak forth a bit of God's unlimited knowledge. In other words, God causes the believer to say things he in no way knows by using his own abilities. The Holy Spirit gives the word for him to speak. That word becomes known as the gift of knowledge to a believer or to the body. It is a gift to the body, because it is in the interest of the body, even when it is spoken to an unbeliever.

7 The word of knowledge is

- a)** the same gift as the word of wisdom.
- b)** the knowledge which comes from studying.
- c)** some of God's knowledge given through man.
- d)** knowledge which the speaker has not had before.

Word of Knowledge Explained and Illustrated

The baptism in the Holy Spirit increases God's power in the believer's life. "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. . ." (Acts 1:8). That power is often manifested through the gifts of the Spirit. Every gift of the Spirit shows forth God's power. On the day of Pentecost the early church received God's power. From then on, through the book of Acts, that power was shown forth.

Now, we want to see how God's power was manifested in the word of knowledge.

Spirit-filled Men and the Word of Knowledge

Throughout the book of Acts we see manifestations of the word of knowledge. You will see that in each case the believer, who spoke the word of knowledge, spoke something he had no way of knowing, except by the Spirit.

1. Read Acts 5:1-10. Peter *knew* Ananias and Sapphira had lied to the Holy Spirit. He also *knew* they had secretly agreed to lie.
 2. See Acts 8:23. Peter *knew* Simon had bitter envy and sin in his heart.
 3. Read Acts 9:1-18. Ananias (not the Ananias in Acts 5) knew several things about Saul, by the Spirit.
He *knew* where Saul was (verse 11).
He *knew* he was praying (verse 11).
He *knew* Saul had seen a vision (verse 12).
He *knew* Saul was a chosen vessel (verse 15).
He *knew* Saul would suffer for the Lord (verse 16).
 4. See Acts 10:19. Peter *knew* that three men had come to see him in behalf of Cornelius.
 5. Read Acts 27:13-44. Paul *knew* that the sailors in the storm-tossed ship could not be saved unless they stayed with the ship.
- 8** Read John 4:7-19. In which verses did Jesus speak the word of knowledge?
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Evil Men and the Word of Knowledge

Sometimes evil men, such as witch doctors, seem to have power to know things in a strange way. Do they have the word of knowledge? No. It is true, though, that they get knowledge in an unusual way. But how?

We need to remember, that while there is a Holy Spirit, there are also *unholy* spirits. The Holy Spirit is God's Spirit. The unholy spirits come from the evil one, Satan.

Satan knows some things evil men do not know by their own power. Yet, Satan is not like God. He does not know everything. He knows only *some things*.

For example, there was a man in Gerasa who had many demons (evil spirits) in him. When Jesus came near he cried out, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don’t torture me!” (Luke 8:28).

How did the man know who Jesus was? How did he know about Jesus’ power to punish him? He knew these things from the demons (unholy spirits) within him. This knowledge did not come from God.

How can we be sure the word of knowledge which we may speak comes from the Holy Spirit? Do we need to fear that we might speak by an evil spirit?

No, the believer need not fear this at all. When we are filled with God’s Spirit there is no room for evil spirits. They have no part in us, “. . . the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (that is the world of the ungodly, 1 John 4:4).

9 Place a **T** before each TRUE statement below, and an **F** before each FALSE statement

- . . . **a** Witch doctors can have the Spirit’s gift of the word of knowledge.
- . . . **b** Satan is omniscient.
- . . . **c** Believers need to be very fearful that they will speak by an evil spirit.
- . . . **d** Evil spirits are stronger than the Holy Spirit.
- . . . **e** God’s Spirit leaves no room for evil spirits.

The Human Spirit and the Word of Knowledge

The word of knowledge is more than man’s own thoughts. Sometimes people don’t understand the difference. They imagine something in their own minds, and believe it is the word of knowledge. Our minds can deceive us.

I remember an incident that illustrates this point. One evening, at a home prayer meeting, the believers began to feel the need for a musical instrument to help with the singing. There happened to be the exact instrument there in the home. One of the men from the group, believing he had a word of knowledge from the Lord, promptly told the woman of the house to give this instrument to the group.

When the woman heard this, she could not quite understand it. She told the man the instrument did not belong to her, it was borrowed. The man had spoken out of his own thoughts and not through a word of knowledge.

How can we be sure we have a word of knowledge? Here are some simple tests you can apply to each situation.

1. Are my own selfish desires leading me to speak?
2. Am I sure I have a word of knowledge from the Holy Spirit?
3. Do I sense God's peace in my heart?
4. Am I personally upset and unhappy with someone, or with some situation?

If you are troubled about the answer to any one of these questions, it is better to seek the Lord before speaking out. You should feel free to speak out only when you are happy about your answer to all of the above questions. You should know also that the believer who gives a true word of knowledge has a strong inward feeling about something that should be spoken. Experience will help you recognize the moving of the Holy Spirit.

10 We can know a word of knowledge is from the Holy Spirit when

- a) we are good teachers.
- b) we are aware of the Lord's peace in our hearts.
- c) we are angry with someone.
- d) we have no selfish desire related to the matter.

Purpose for the Word of Knowledge

The *purpose* for both the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge is the same. It is to build up Christ’s body.

These two gifts often work together, but the word of knowledge may come before the word of wisdom. By the word of knowledge Jesus told the Samaritan woman about her past life. Then, by the word of wisdom He gave her the solution to her problem.

11 Read again the purpose for the word of wisdom. What word in the King James Version describes the purpose for all of the gifts?

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FAITH

Objective 4. *Explain the function and purpose of the gift of faith.*

Objective 5. *Tell how you might know if you have a gift of faith.*

Faith Defined

“to another faith by the same Spirit. . .”
 (1 Corinthians 12:9). The King James Version says, “To another faith by the same Spirit.”

Generally speaking, faith is the ability to believe. If a person has faith we say he believes. But the gift of faith is something beyond ordinary faith, which all believers have. It is *special* faith. It is faith given by the Holy Spirit to meet a special need. We can say it is a small part of God’s perfect confidence, given by the Holy Spirit to a person.

GOD	GOD	For Special Needs
FAITH	GIFT OF FAITH	To Believer

The gift of faith is not the property of the believer, through whom the Holy Spirit gives it. The gift is dropped into a person's heart at a special time, and for a special need. The gift is given. The need is met. The gift has accomplished its purpose.

12 Write **T** before each TRUE statement, and **F** before each FALSE statement.

- ... **a** Every believer may receive the gift of faith.
- ... **b** Through the gift of faith the believer is given a special kind of faith.
- ... **c** Because every Spirit-filled believer has the Holy Spirit, it is possible for him to receive a gift of faith.

Faith Explained and Illustrated

Faith is always based on knowledge. This explains why our faith may be small. We have little knowledge, so we have little faith.

God can give the gift of faith, as He has no doubts about His ability. He also has perfect knowledge. Through the gift of faith, a bit of God's perfect faith is given to meet some special need.

Usually, three things are present when the gift of faith is manifested.

1. An impossible condition or situation exists.
2. A gift of faith is given.
3. A solution is seen.

The story of Peter and John going to the temple to pray will help us see how the gift of faith works. Read Acts 3:1-11 and see this for yourself. In this story all three of the things listed above happened.

1. A hopelessly crippled man sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple. He had been crippled all of his life—about forty years. All he could do was beg for a living. It was *impossible* for men to cure him.

2. Suddenly Peter discovered *special* faith in his own heart. Because of that faith, which was really God’s faith, he spoke to the man, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk” (Acts 3:6).

3. We know Peter really had the gift of faith by what *happened* to the cripple! “...instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk” (Acts 3:7, 8). His problem was solved.

The Holy Spirit desires to work like this today. He desires to give believers the special faith of God for great needs and difficult problems. Without doubt, He needs believers like Peter who will dare to act when He drops faith into their hearts. Often believers are afraid to act, and then faith cannot work.

How can I know that I have the gift of faith? We can know in our inner man—our spirit. The word *faith* in one sense, means “persuasion.” When the Holy Spirit gives us a bit of God’s perfect faith, a deep persuasion settles upon us that God will do a certain thing. The believer who receives this does not only *hope* God will do a certain thing, he *knows* God will act.

13 Complete the following statements.

- a** The basis for faith is
- b** Perfect knowledge is necessary to perfect
- c** Believers can do much the same as Peter did at the Beautiful Gate, if they have the
- d** Through the gift of faith, we know that God will

Purpose for the Gift of Faith

For the gift of the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge, we can see a similar purpose. Both are to build up the body of Christ. We saw how the two gifts may work together to build up the body. The purpose is also the same for the gift of faith.

Paul, before naming the nine gifts we are now studying, stated the purpose in another way. “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7). The King James Version says, “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.”

Through the gift of faith the whole body is helped and built up. If only one member were to benefit from a manifestation of the gift of faith, the whole body would still be helped. When one member is helped, all the members are helped. “If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it” (1 Corinthians 12:26).

14 The purpose for the gift of faith is

- a)** somewhat like the purpose for the word of wisdom.
- b)** different from the purpose for the word of wisdom.
- c)** the same as the purpose for the word of wisdom.

self-test

TRUE-FALSE. Write **T** in the blank space before each TRUE statement and **F** before each FALSE statement

- ... **1** The gifts of the Spirit are resident in the believer.
- ... **2** The word of knowledge was in operation in Acts 8:23.
- ... **3** To speak of God as omniscient means that He is present everywhere.
- ... **4** The believer is used as a channel for giving God's gifts to the church.
- ... **5** The gifts studied in this lesson are particularly for the leaders in the church, rather than for all believers.
- ... **6** The word of wisdom means "a small portion" of man's wisdom spoken at the proper time.
- ... **7** The purpose of the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, and the gift of faith is to build up the church.
- ... **8** Whenever a believer speaks the word of knowledge, he speaks something he had no way of knowing except through the Spirit.
- ... **9** The purpose of the gift of faith is the same as that of the other gifts, but its function is different.

answers to study questions

- 1 a)** a little of God’s wisdom spoken at the proper time.
- 8** Verses 17 and 18. “Jesus replied, ‘You are right when you say you haven’t got a husband. You have been married to five men, and the man you live with now is not really your husband.’”
- 2 a** F
b T
c T
d F
- 9 a** F
b F
c F
d F
e T
- 3** “So then, brothers, choose seven men among you who are known to be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, and we will put them in charge of this matter” (verse 3).
- 10 b)** we are aware of the Lord’s peace in our hearts.
d) we have no selfish desire related to the matter.
- 4 c)** the Holy Spirit giving them a word to speak forth.
- 11** edify, build up
- 5 a** T
b F
c F
d T
- 12 a** T
b T
c T
- 6** edified, built up

- 13 a** knowledge.
b faith.
c gift of faith.
d act.
- 7 c)** some of God's knowledge given through man.
d) knowledge which the speaker has not had before.
- 14 c)** the same as the purpose for the word of wisdom.

Your Notes