

## **Chapter 11 The Gift of the Word of Knowledge Part 1**

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.

Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit

And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE by the same Spirit;

To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

For the body is not one member, but many.

— 1 Corinthians 12:1-14

### **Don't Be Ignorant of Spiritual Gifts**

Paul said by the Holy Spirit to the Church at Corinth, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I WOULD NOT HAVE YOU IGNORANT" (1 Cor. 12:1). If the Spirit of God through Paul said that He didn't want the Church at Corinth to be ignorant concerning spiritual gifts, then I certainly do not believe He wants the Church today to be ignorant concerning spiritual gifts.

However, a gross ignorance does exist concerning these things. In some places people know nothing at all about the gifts of the Holy Spirit, or even that such gifts exist. They think these gifts have been done away with. In other places people know something about the gifts of the Spirit, but their knowledge is very limited.

## **Spiritual Gifts Will Exalt Jesus**

Paul also said to the Church at Corinth, "Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led" (1 Cor. 12:2). These folks had previously worshipped idols and in this idol worship, motivated by the wrong spirit, they would say a lot of things that were in error.

For instance, Church history tells us that some of these folks would come into the Christian assembly and when the Spirit of God began to manifest Himself, these people would yield to a wrong spirit and say things under the influence of the wrong spirit.

In fact, some of them would even rise up in the services when the gifts of utterance were in operation and they would say that Jesus was accursed. And the Bible says that no one speaking by the Spirit of God would call Jesus accursed.

### **1 CORINTHIANS 12:3**

3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that **NO MAN SPEAKING BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD CALLETH JESUS ACCURSED:** and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, ***but by the Holy Ghost.***

No, Paul said that when the Holy Spirit is in manifestation, He will make Jesus Lord. If an utterance gift, that is, a vocal gift — prophecy, divers kinds of tongues, or the interpretation of tongues — is in manifestation, then, of course, it will be clear by what is said that Jesus is Lord.

If the other gifts are in manifestation, they will always uplift the Lordship of Jesus, not the lordship of some man. They will not attract attention to some man, but rather to Christ.

You can be sure that if someone is operating in what appears to be one of the vocal gifts, and calls Jesus accursed or speaks against Him in any way, then he's not speaking by the Holy Spirit.

Then Paul said in First Corinthians 12:3 that no man can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. In other words, Paul was saying that if someone is speaking by the right spirit — by the Holy Spirit — then what he says will exalt the Name of Jesus.

Once in a meeting while I was praying for folks for healing, I sensed that someone in the prayer line had a wrong spirit. I knew within my own spirit who this person was before he ever stood in front of me to be prayed for.

When she stepped up in front of me for prayer, I asked her, "Are you a Christian?" She replied that she belonged to a particular church.

I said, "Well, you can belong to any church and still not be a Christian. You have to be born again."

"Oh, I am saved and filled with the Holy Ghost," she said. "Do you want to hear me speak in tongues?" Then she started saying something that sounded like tongues.

I said, "Sister, say this prayer after me from your heart." I prayed a prayer to God the Father and she repeated the words after me. Then I said, "I acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as Your Son, and I acknowledge that He is come in the flesh."

But when I said that, she said, "Jesus Christ is not Your Son and He is not come in the flesh." It was immediately apparent that wasn't the right spirit speaking.

Those tongues she was rattling off — some kind of "gibberish" — weren't given by the Spirit of God. I tried two or three times to get her to repeat that prayer after me. Finally, she said, "Something on the inside of me won't let me say what you said."

"I know it," I said. "Do you want to be free from it?"

"I sure do!" she answered. I cast that spirit out of her in the Name of Jesus. Then I had her pray the sinner's prayer and she was born again. She was then filled with the Holy Spirit and went home speaking in tongues.

This woman was saying, "I am saved, I am born again, and I am filled with the Holy Ghost," but she wasn't at all. People can make a lot of statements, but that doesn't necessarily make them true. When the Spirit of God is in manifestation, He will make Jesus Lord. The wrong spirit won't acknowledge that Jesus is Lord and won't say that Jesus is Lord.

## **Gifts, Administrations, and Operations**

### **1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-6**

***4 Now there are diversities of GIFTS, but the same Spirit.***

***5 And there are differences of ADMINISTRATIONS, but the same Lord.***

***6 And there are diversities of OPERATIONS, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.***

There are two lines of thought on this particular passage of Scripture in First Corinthians chapter 12. One line of thought says that the gifts of the Spirit are administered to different people in different ways. According to this line of thought, that is what First Corinthians 12:6 means by, "And there are diversities of operations. . . ."

In other words, there are those who think that diversities of operations in First Corinthians 12:6 means that the gifts of the Spirit will operate in different ways and not always in the same way through various people.

The other line of thought, however, says that diversities of operations is not referring to gifts at all. These people maintain that just as there are different gifts of the Spirit, there are also different administrations of the Spirit, as well as different operations.

In other words, they say that Paul was talking about three different things in First Corinthians 12:4-6, not just gifts. He was talking about gifts, administrations, and operations.

## **1 CORINTHIANS 12:7**

***7 But the MANIFESTATION of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.***

Notice Paul was calling the gifts of the Spirit manifestations. And he said, ". . . the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal" (1 Cor. 12:7). Paul was making the distinction here that "gifts" of the Spirit aren't gifts in the sense that the believer owns and operates the gift whenever he wants to. They are gifts of the Holy Ghost, manifested through individual believers as the Spirit of God wills. The gifts of the Spirit aren't just given for the individual, but they are given in order to profit the whole local assembly or local body of believers.

### **The Nine Gifts Categorized**

## **1 CORINTHIANS 12:8**

***8 For to one is g i v e n by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another THE WORD OFKNOWLEDGE by the same Spirit;***

Paul goes on to list nine manifestations or gifts of the Spirit. The nine manifestations or gifts of the Holy Spirit are generally divided as follows:

### **Three revelation gifts**

Spiritual gifts that reveal something:

- The word of wisdom
- The word of knowledge
- The discerning of spirits

### **Three power gifts**

Spiritual gifts that do something:

- The gift of faith
- The working of miracles
- The gifts of healings

### **Three utterance or inspirational gifts**

Spiritual gifts that say something:

- Prophecy
- Divers kinds of tongues
- Interpretation of tongues

Very often these gifts work together, as tongues and interpretation work together. But we divide them as they are divided here in First Corinthians chapter 12 in order to distinguish them and to talk about them.

We can readily see that very often these gifts of the Spirit are in manifestation together.

For example, sometimes what we call prophecy is actually a word of wisdom that is being given forth. It is not really the simple gift of prophecy at all because the simple gift of prophecy has no revelation; that is, no foretelling or element of prediction with it. The simple gift of prophecy brings edification, exhortation and comfort (1 Cor. 14:3). (We'll discuss this in greater detail in Chapter 13.)

These gifts are listed in the order of their importance. Of the three gifts of revelation, the word of wisdom is the best gift because it brings supernatural revelation of the plan and purpose of God.

Of the three gifts of power, the gift of faith is the best gift because it is the supernatural ability to work a miracle.

Of the three gifts of utterance, the gift of prophecy is the best gift because it is complete in and of itself and it brings edification, encouragement, and comfort to the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 14:3).

The Bible does say to seek earnestly the best gifts (1 Cor. 12:31).

The word of wisdom is the best gift of all, because as I said, it brings revelation about the divine plan and purpose of God. Although the word of wisdom is mentioned first, we will study the word of knowledge first because after discussing the word of knowledge, I think we can better understand the gift of the word of wisdom.

### **The Gift of the Word of Knowledge**

Notice that this gift is called "the word of knowledge." It is not "the gift of knowledge." There is no such thing as a spiritual gift of knowledge. There is, however, a spiritual gift, called the word of knowledge. The word of knowledge is the supernatural revelation by the Holy Ghost of certain facts in the mind of God.

God is all-knowing. He knows everything. But He doesn't reveal everything He knows to man. He just gives him a word or a part of what He knows. A word is a fragmentary part of a sentence, so a word of knowledge would simply be a fragmentary part of the entire knowledge or counsel of God. God is all-knowing. He has all knowledge. But He doesn't impart all of His knowledge to us; He imparts a word of knowledge to us — just what He wants us to know at a given time.

### **The Word of Knowledge Is Not Natural Knowledge**

This word of knowledge is a supernatural manifestation as are all of these gifts of the Spirit. None of them are natural gifts; they are all supernatural gifts. Since one of them

is supernatural, they all are supernatural. If one of them were natural, then all of them would be natural.

There are those who say that this gift of the Spirit — the word of knowledge — refers to natural knowledge. If that were true, then all the gifts of the Spirit would be natural, not supernatural. If that were true, for example, then the gifts of healings would not be supernatural healing, but simply healing through what people have learned and achieved through medical science.

We certainly believe in medical science and thank God for all it can do. But this passage of Scripture is talking about gifts of the Holy Spirit — supernatural knowledge and supernatural healing and so forth.

If these gifts of the Spirit were only natural gifts, divers kinds of tongues would simply refer to speaking different languages that were learned naturally. Then folks who wouldn't even be saved would have that gift.

However, we know that divers kinds of tongues are supernatural. Divers kinds of tongues is the gift of the Spirit enabling one to speak in languages he has never learned, given by the Holy Spirit.

It stands to reason that if some of the nine gifts are supernatural, then all of the nine gifts of the Spirit are supernatural. Therefore, this gift of the word of knowledge is not natural knowledge, but is supernatural knowledge. It is supernatural revelation of certain facts in the mind of God.

Confusing this gift with natural knowledge, some have said, "We don't need some of these lesser gifts. We have the gift of knowledge." The knowledge that they were bragging about was intellectual knowledge; knowledge they had gained themselves apart from the Holy Ghost and apart from the Word of God. That is not what this scripture in First Corinthians 12:8 is talking about at all. The word of knowledge is a supernatural gift.

### **The Word of Knowledge Is Not A Profound Knowledge of the Bible**

Also, this gift of the word of knowledge is sometimes confused with a profound knowledge of the Bible. A minister once tried to tell me that he had the word of knowledge because he had studied the Bible so much.

It is certainly true that God will help us understand His Word, but that is not a supernatural gift.

The gift of the word of knowledge can work in connection with the Bible, however. For example, God does reveal things in connection with His Word that we didn't know. But if that were all there is to the word of knowledge, we wouldn't have to study because the word of knowledge is supernatural revelation by the Holy Ghost of certain facts in the mind of God. However, Paul told the young minister Timothy to study.

In his letter to Timothy, who was the pastor of a New Testament church, Paul said, "STUDY to shew thyself approved ..." (2 Tim. 2:15). So that kind of knowledge — a profound knowledge of the Bible — comes by studying, but the word of knowledge comes by a supernatural revelation.

### **The Word of Knowledge Is Not Knowledge of God Through Close Communion With Him**

Another mistaken idea about the gift of the word of knowledge is that the word of knowledge is the knowledge that comes by walking closely with God. One does gain a real knowledge of God by walking with Him, but that is different from a supernatural impartation of knowledge of certain facts in the mind of God.

In the Old Testament, we read the story of how God spoke to the boy Samuel (1 Sam. 3:4-10). Samuel was in the temple helping the old prophet Eli.

One night Samuel heard a voice call his name. Thinking it was Eli calling him, he got up from his bed and went to him. Eli told him he hadn't called, so Samuel went back to bed. Just about the time Samuel had gotten settled, he heard a Voice saying, "Samuel, Samuel."

Again he ran to Eli, and again Eli sent him back to bed. When this was repeated for the third time, Eli realized that God must be talking to the boy, and Eli told him to answer the next time the Voice called. When God called to Samuel again, Samuel answered ". . . Speak; for thy servant heareth" (1 Sam. 3:10).

Eli had been walking with God, but he hadn't been as faithful to God in rearing his children as he ought to have been. He knew about the things of God, of course, but he didn't hear God's voice that night — Samuel did. So we see that this kind of knowledge doesn't necessarily come by a longtime experience of walking with God.

As I mentioned previously, there is a knowledge of God that is obtained by walking with Him, just as we walk with a friend or family member and become better acquainted with him or her.

As we walk with God, certainly our knowledge of Him increases, but this is still not a spiritual manifestation of the gift of the word of knowledge.

### **Biblical Examples of the Word of Knowledge**

Let's look at some biblical examples of the gift of the word of knowledge in operation in the New Testament.

#### **The Word of Knowledge to John**

For instance, on the Isle of Patmos, John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day and Jesus appeared to him in a vision (Rev. 1:10-20). Here we will learn something about how this word of knowledge will come.

As in this particular instance with John the apostle, the word of knowledge might come through a vision. Jesus revealed to John in a vision the condition of the seven churches in Asia Minor, as recorded in the Book of Revelation.

Although there is a prophetic message for us today in this revelation, these seven churches actually existed at that time in Asia Minor. John, exiled to the Isle of Patmos, couldn't possibly have known what was going on in these cities or churches, but Jesus revealed to him their spiritual condition. That was a word of knowledge.

### **Word of Knowledge to Ananias**

Another example of this gift in operation is found in Acts chapter 9. "And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision . . ." (Acts 9:10).

Here the word of knowledge came to a layman through a vision.

Ananias wasn't an apostle, as was John. He wasn't a pastor or evangelist or teacher. The Bible calls him a disciple. He was just a member of the church at Damascus. If the Lord wills, laymen as well as ministers can have a manifestation of the word of knowledge or any of the gifts of the Spirit.

### **ACTS 9:11,12**

***11 ... ARISE, AND GO INTO THE STREET WHICH IS CALLED STRAIGHT, AND ENQUIRE IN THE HOUSE OF JUDAS FOR ONE CALLED SAUL OF TARSUS: FOR, BEHOLD, HE PRAYETH,***

***12 And hath seen in a vision [Saul also had a like vision] a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.***

In a vision the Lord told Ananias what to do: ". . . Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth" (v. 11).

Ananias couldn't have known in the natural that in a certain house on a certain street a man named Saul was praying at that minute. Ananias couldn't have known that Saul had had a vision in which he had seen a man called Ananias coming in and putting his hands on him that he might receive his sight. Ananias couldn't have known this any other way than by supernatural revelation. He knew it by the word of knowledge.

Of course, God knew about everyone who was praying everywhere at that time, but He didn't give Ananias knowledge of everyone who was praying; He just gave Ananias knowledge about one man who was praying — Saul of Tarsus. That was a supernatural revelation of a certain fact in the mind of God. It was the word of knowledge which came to Ananias in a vision.

## **The Word of Knowledge to Peter**

Another example is found in Acts chapter 10. Peter was in the town of Joppa.

### **Acts 10:9-19**

*9 ... Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour [ about noon]:*

*10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,*

*11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:*

*12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.*

*13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.*

*14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.*

*15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.*

*16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.*

*17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,*

*18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was sur-named Peter, were lodged there.*

*19 While Peter thought on the vision, THE SPIRIT SAID UNTO HIM, BEHOLD, THREE MEN SEEK THEE.*

Peter received a supernatural revelation — a word of knowledge: ". . . Behold, three men seek thee" (Acts 10:19). Peter did not know there were three men who were seeking him (v. 19). He had fallen into a trance and had seen the vision of the sheet descending out of heaven.

While Peter was thinking about what that vision meant, the Holy Spirit told him that three men were seeking him. The men were already standing at the gate. Peter hadn't seen these men. He had no way of knowing they were there except by the Spirit of God.

## **Modern Examples of the Word of Knowledge**

This manifestation of the Spirit isn't just for the Early Church, but it is for us today. Many years ago, a Spirit-filled Baptist brother who was the president of his local chapter of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship and one of the executives for the company he worked for, told me of an experience he had along this line.

He related, "I passed by a large Roman Catholic Church in my automobile and something seemed to say to me to stop. I pulled into the church parking lot, stopped, and sat there praying for a little while. Then that something seemed to tell me that the priest would be praying in his office in the rectory and that I should go in, lay hands on him, and he would be filled with the Holy Ghost.

"I hesitated," the Baptist brother said. "I didn't want to make a fool of myself. I sat there and prayed a little while longer. Then I decided it wouldn't hurt just to go see if I could find him and see if God was really leading me."

Too many times folks get things messed up because they get ahead of God when He speaks to them instead of waiting and following Him softly and letting Him open the door.

The Baptist brother continued, "I finally found my way in and knocked on the door of the study. Someone invited me to come in. I opened the door to see a man sitting in a chair in front of a desk with some books opened in front of him. As I entered, the priest got up and greeted me and we introduced ourselves."

The Baptist brother said, "When the priest heard that I was the president of the local Full Gospel Businessmen's chapter, he immediately said, 'Praise the Lord! I was just reading about what God is doing these days by the moving of His Spirit! I was reading about this baptism of the Holy Ghost and speaking in tongues, and the Lord just witnessed to my spirit that this is what I need.'"

The priest said to the Baptist man, "I am conscious of my own spiritual lack. Only ten minutes ago, I bowed my head on my desk and said, 'Dear Lord, I don't know any Full Gospel people. I don't know anyone in this town who has had this experience. Send somebody by to pray with me.' And here you are!"

That priest got down on his knees and I laid hands on him and he began speaking in tongues almost instantly, lifting both hands to heaven. Then the priest got up and hugged me because he was so grateful.

It was the word of knowledge in manifestation that revealed to this Baptist brother that there was a priest in that particular church who was praying to receive the Holy Spirit.

## **Word of Knowledge Used To Bless Others**

I heard of a similar experience which happened to a group of women who would meet at a church to have a Bible lesson and then would go out and witness to people. They were more or less going in their own strength and were not accomplishing very much. They had been knocking on doors for a couple of weeks and talking to people, but they hadn't won anyone to the Lord.

One morning the pastor's wife suggested that they change their methods. Instead of reading

something from the Bible, praying a little, and going out, she suggested they read the Bible and stay there to pray - maybe for an hour, maybe longer — until they definitely felt led to go out. "I believe we will get more done if we are simply led by the Spirit," she told them.

The next morning the women had been praying about an hour when the pastor's wife had a vision in which she saw a certain apartment house and felt impressed to go there. She took one of the women with her, and when they arrived at the apartment and knocked on the door, someone inside said, "Come in." They pushed open the door and saw a woman lying on a bed in the corner.

When the sick woman saw them, she started rejoicing and said, "I recognized you the minute you came in the door. I was praying at six o'clock this morning and in a vision I saw you come in and lay hands on me, and I was healed." The two women then laid hands on the sick woman and prayed for her in the Name of Jesus, and she was healed.

By natural knowledge the pastor's wife couldn't have known that woman was sick and that she was praying for healing; she didn't even know her. But while the pastor's wife was praying in the Spirit, the Holy Ghost gave her a word of knowledge. Now God knew where everyone was who was sick at that time, but He didn't tell the pastor's wife about every one of them; He just sent her to one. He gave her a word of knowledge in the form of a vision.

Sometimes the word of knowledge comes by an inward revelation. The word of knowledge can also come by an audible Voice, by the Spirit of God speaking to you. Also, the gifts of the Spirit often operate together. We just separate them in order to define them.

For example, as I said before, the word of knowledge may come through tongues and interpretation of tongues, or through the gift of prophecy. Or an angel might come to deliver a word of knowledge. A word of knowledge can also be accompanied by a word of wisdom. God has many means of doing things, including manifesting the word of knowledge in various ways.

These examples also show us that what God did in Bible times, He is still doing in our modern times. It is amazing what is happening in the earth today. God is visiting hungry hearts everywhere. He is manifesting His power through the supernatural gifts of the Spirit, and one of these gifts is the word of knowledge.

### Questions For Study

1. Who will spiritual gifts exalt?

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2. If someone is speaking by the right spirit-by the Holy Spirit-then what he says will exalt the \_\_\_\_\_.

3. What are the two lines of thought on the passage of scripture in First Corinthians 12:4-6?

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4. What are the three revelations gifts?

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5. What are the three power gifts?

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6. What are the three utterance or inspirational gifts?

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7. What does the simple gift of prophecy bring (1 Cor. 14:3)?

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8. Of the three gifts of revelation, which is the best gift? Why?

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9. Of the three gifts of power, which is the best gift? Why?

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10. Of the three gifts of utterance, which is the best gift? Why?

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