

Lesson #8 – Gifts of Supernatural Revelation

We believe that God has spoken definitively and clearly through the inspired writings of Holy Scripture, never to be altered nor “improved upon.” But while God no longer issues revelations that rise to the level of Biblical authority, we believe that He still speaks today. God is not silent! He continues to speak through the general revelation of nature (Psalm 19) and also through a variety of “revelatory” giftings. In specific ways, the Holy Spirit reveals information and messages to God’s people in order to advance the work of the kingdom on earth. Certainly an “art” rather than a “science,” this “revelation” can often mix with human imperfections. When cultivated and properly “tested” by pastoral guidance, however, this work of the Spirit can be invaluable to God’s people and the ministry.

Wisdom
Knowledge
Prophecy
Discernment

The Gift of Wisdom

...he that winneth souls is wise. Proverbs 11:30b

This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. 1 Corinthians 2:13

Evidence that you may have this gift

Ask yourself...

- Do you sometimes “just know” how to reach a person in a specific, distinctive way?
- Do relevant answers “come to you” in moments of crisis?
- Do you enjoy solving problems?
- Do complicated situations (conundrums) present an exhilarating challenge to you, almost like “puzzles” to be solved?
- Are you able to “figure out” what God is doing through certain life events?
- Do people seek you out for advice?
- Do you have a well tuned “common sense” about people and life?
- Do you know how to “handle” different types of individuals and situations?

Definition: Supernaturally revealed understanding about how to proceed and speak in certain practical ministry situations.

Purpose: *To understand the will of God...*

- *To make a decision*
- *To answer questions from unbelievers*
- *To give advice*
- *To win a person over*
- *To handle a complex situation*
- *To provide direction to the church in big decisions*
- *To solve a problem*

Biblical examples of revealed Wisdom

- ***Solomon and the two prostitutes*** – 1 Kings 3:16-28
- ***Jesus evades the traps of the Pharisees*** – Mt. 21-22
 - The question of taxes
 - The baptism of John
 - Marriage at the resurrection
 - Is the Christ the son of David...etc.
- ***Jesus promises the disciples they will have wisdom when called before judges***

¹² “But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. ¹³ And so you will bear testimony to me. ¹⁴ But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. ¹⁵ For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. Luke 21:12-15

- ***Peter and John use divine wisdom when preaching***

When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. Acts 4:13

Note: General wisdom is a promise for all!

The book of Proverbs explains that wisdom “cries out in the street” and is available to all.

“⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. James 1:5



Potential pitfalls for the use of the gift of wisdom

Watch out! If you have this gift, be careful...

- Not to confuse the spiritual gift of wisdom with human intellectualism or academic preparation
- To remember from whence the wisdom comes and never neglect prayer
- To be humble and teachable, remembering that you are fallible and your understanding is limited.
- Not to assume you “have the answer” to any and every problem
- To use the wisdom God gives even if you lack academic preparation.
- Not to use your gift as an excuse to neglect preparation, planning and study

Questions

Define wisdom. _____

_____.

The purpose of the gift of wisdom is to understand the will of God for....

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

List some indications that you may have this gift.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What is the difference between the gift of wisdom and academic knowledge?

_____.

Mention some examples of this gift in scripture.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Mention some practical cases in ministry, (preferably yours), in which it would be necessary to use the gift of wisdom.

1. _____
_____.
2. _____
_____.
3. _____



The Gift of the Word of Knowledge

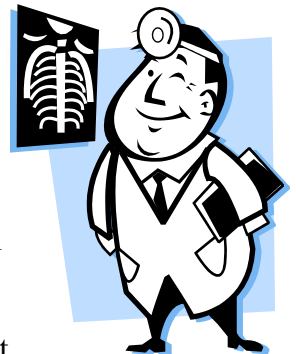
“X-ray vision in the Spirit”

Evidence that you may have the gift of word of knowledge

Ask yourself...

- Do certain thoughts sometimes “pop” into your mind, which convey information you would have no way of knowing by natural means?
- Do you sometimes know certain things about a person’s life or past which you would have no way of knowing by natural means?
- Do you sometimes feel an impulse to approach a person and speak to them, but you do not know why? When you do, you discover that it was a perfect evangelistic opportunity?
- At times when sharing the gospel or counseling a person, does God reveal something to you about the person which allows you to “cut to the chase?”
- Do you sometimes receive supernatural intuitions when praying?
- Do you sometimes “just know” the root issues of pain behind a person’s behavior without them ever telling you directly?

Perhaps you have the gift of knowledge!



Definition: *A special anointing to receive divinely revealed information which you would have no way of ascertaining by natural means.*

Purpose: *To provide specific direction to minister with greater effectiveness.*

Texts and Examples:

The Ministry of Jesus



- ***Jesus knew the "complicated" past (and present) of the Samaritan woman –***

¹⁶ *He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.”*

¹⁷ *“I have no husband,” she replied.*

Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.” John 4:16-18

- ***Jesus knew the thoughts of the Pharisees and the disciples***

⁷ *The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath. ⁸ But Jesus knew what they were thinking... Luke 6:7-8*

The disciples received divine knowledge in various situations

- ***Peter knew the deceitful scheme of Ananias and Sapphira***

³ *Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Acts 5:3*

- ***Ananias (not the same person as above), knew what had happened to Saul on the road to Damascus (later Paul)***

¹⁰ *In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, “Ananias!”*

“Yes, Lord,” he answered.

¹¹ *The Lord told him, “Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. ¹² In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.” Acts 9:10-12*

- ***Cornelius was given the address of Peter and knew where to find him***

⁵ Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. ⁶ He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea.” Acts 10:5-6

- ***Peter knew that emissaries from Cornelius were knocking at the door below and that he was to accept their information***

¹⁹ While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Simon, three men are looking for you. ²⁰ So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.” Acts 10:19-20

- ***Philip knew precisely where to go, which resulted in a divinely orchestrated opportunity to share the gospel with the Ethiopian Eunuch.***

²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” ²⁷ So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian^[a] eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Candice (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. ²⁹ The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.” Acts 8:26-29



Potential pitfalls that accompany this gift

Watch out! If you have this gift, be careful...

- *To use the revelation you receive in a prudent and discreet fashion.* Not all information revealed is to be shared publicly, but in private, and with appropriate love and tact.
- *To be humble and recognize that you are fallible.* It is possible to confuse your own human thoughts with divine revelation.
- *Not to presume to control* the lives or decisions of others through this gift
- *Not to quickly accuse* others based on a “revelation,” but with no proof.
- *Don’t be a witch!* The revelation comes from the Holy Spirit, and is not a special power you have!

Questions:

Define the gift of “word of knowledge” _____

_____.

What is the purpose of the gift of knowledge? _____

_____.

List some indications that perhaps you have this gift.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Mention two examples of the use of this gift in the ministry of Jesus.

1. _____
2. _____

Mention two examples of the use of this gift in the ministry of the apostles.

1. _____
2. _____

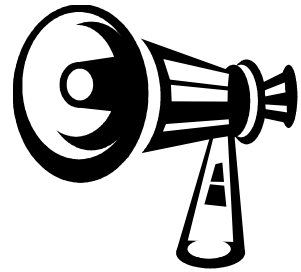
Mention some warnings and potential pitfalls associated with this gift.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

What kind of advice can you give to the person who thinks they are receiving divine knowledge, but are not completely sure if God is speaking, or their own thoughts?

The Gift of Prophecy

“¹ Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy. 1 Corinthians 14:1



Evidence that you may have the gift of prophecy

Ask yourself...

- Do messages sometimes pop into your mind during a worship service or a prayer meeting, and then someone says exactly what you were thinking?
- Do you sometimes have dreams that depict events that are going to occur?
- Have others been edified and blessed when you share messages that occur to you?

Perhaps you have the gift of prophecy!

Definition: A special anointing to receive supernatural revelation and communicate messages from the Holy Spirit.

Purpose: To edify, exhort, and comfort the brothers through a spiritually inspired message.
1 Corinthians 14:3

Examples:

- ***Philip’s daughters*** – Acts 21:9
- ***Agabus***
 - Prophesied the arrest of Paul (Acts 21:10-11)
 - Prophesied a coming famine (Acts 11:28)

An Old Testament Prophet (Capital “P”) is different from a New Testament Prophet (lower case “p”).

In the New Testament...

- ***Prophecy is a generalized gift that many believers possess***

Not so under the Old Covenant. Only a few, chosen individuals occupied the spiritual office of “Prophet.”

²⁸ *“And afterward,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your old men will dream dreams,
your young men will see visions. Joel 2:28*



- ***A prophetic message can be mistaken, and thus must be tested by others***

An Old Testament prophet, if genuine, could never err when speaking prophetically. The Prophet received direct divine revelation without ambiguity. Any so called “prophet” who gave a message that was demonstrably false was to be put to death as an imposter.

A New Testament prophet can make mistakes without being judged as a “false prophet.” The revelation is often not direct and unambiguous, but given through internal impressions or dreams that can be confused with human thoughts. For this reason a New Testament prophecy must be “tested” by those in authority.

- ***A New Testament prophet does not have the right to add to scripture.***

An Old Testament prophet did have authority to add their oracles to the scriptural canon. A New Covenant prophet does not have this authority, but must submit to the Biblical teaching. (2 Peter 1:20)

Clarifications about the Gift of Prophecy

- ***Love is the principal motivation*** - 1 Corinthians 14:1
- ***The prophet can control themselves and must prophesy in an orderly fashion***

²⁹ Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. ³⁰ And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. ³¹ For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. ³² The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. ³³ For God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord’s people. 1 Corinthians 14:29-33

- ***Prophecy must be balanced by the “testing” and evaluation of leaders. Prophetic messages must be taken seriously, but not given unquestioned credence.***

¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not treat prophecies with contempt ²¹ but test them all; hold on to what is good, 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21

- ***Not all prophecy predicts the future.***
- ***A prophet should use wisdom and discernment in how he or she handles revelations.*** Not all prophecy is meant to be shared publicly. Sometimes prophetic messages provide guidance in prayer.

- ***A prophet does not always know how to apply the messages he or she receives.*** We must be careful in how we interpret and apply the revelation to the lives of others.
 - *Agabus* received a message that Paul would be imprisoned if he went to Rome, and all gathered pleaded with him not to go. But Paul did not allow others to make his decisions for him. In spite of this message, Paul pressed on to Rome, knowing that this message served to prepare him for what was to come, and not to guide him to avoid this fate. (Acts 21:10-11)
 - *Caiaphas* prophesied about the death of Jesus, and took this message as God's approval for his evil plan to crucify Jesus. (John 11:51-53)



Potential pitfalls related to the gift of prophecy

Watch out! If you have the gift of prophecy, be careful....

- *To submit to the authority and directives of the pastor or leader who presides over the gathering.* He or she is responsible to direct the service. If asked not to share the message at that moment, for whatever reason, the responsibility for this decision lies with them, and not you!
- *To submit to the care and authority of your pastors in general.* The prophetic temperament tends to be super-sensitive and given to violent fluctuations. Without pastoral covering, the prophet is vulnerable to severe Satanic attack and could suffer emotional complications.
- *To discern the appropriate moment* to share a message that the Lord has revealed. Not every message is to be shared publicly.
- *To be humble. You are an imperfect human being.* Even the most attuned prophetic minister can confuse his or her own thoughts with divine revelation.
- *Not to try to control others.* Prophecy usually serves to confirm decisions and callings that others have already made or received from the Lord. The prophet should not usually attempt to tell the recipient of the message what to do, since he or she does not know the will of God for that person nor the full interpretation or application of the revelation. (Joseph in Egypt is one exception to this general principle. He not only interpreted Pharaoh's dream, but gave divinely inspired advice, utilizing prophetic wisdom.)
- *Not to say anything that contradicts or adds to scripture.* The prophet should be immersed in the study of scripture and never venture beyond the plain meaning of the word of God in favor of "revealed" interpretations. Joseph Smith, in the late 19th century, presumed to add his own revelations to the Bible, resulting in the "Book of Mormon" and the cult of Mormonism. Other cults tend to have magazines to be read along with scripture and considered equally authoritative to the Word itself.

Questions:

True or False

1. Prophecy always predicts the future. _____
2. When someone delivers a prophecy, the Spirit takes control of the person and they cannot stop themselves. _____
3. If a prophet receives a revelation that another brother is in sin, they ought to proclaim this message publicly, since it is a word from God. _____
4. If someone has the gift of prophecy, we should believe everything this person says. _____
5. A person with the gift of prophecy has authority to write inspired messages that could be included alongside the Bible. _____.
6. If the pastor asks a prophetic minister not to deliver a message in a particular context, the prophet ought to speak anyway, obeying God rather than men. _____.
7. If someone questions a prophetic word, they must be squelching the Spirit. _____.
8. The prophet knows the will of God for another person most of the time. _____.

List some significant differences between Prophets under the Old Covenant and prophetic ministry under the New Covenant.

1. _____
_____.
2. _____
_____.
3. _____
_____.

List some words of counsel and warning for a person with the gift of prophecy.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

The Gift of Discernment

¹ *Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 1 John 4:1*

Evidence that you may have the gift of discernment
Ask yourself...

- Is your spirit extremely sensitive to spiritual things?
- Are you able to detect insincerity easily and quickly?
- Are you naturally perceptive and insightful?
- Can you sense evil presences in certain places, objects or people?
- Do you sometimes have a physical reaction when in the presence of demons?
- Can you “see” the potential in others quickly, and later find that your initial impressions were correct?



Definition: *A special anointing to perceive demonic or angelic presences, as well as to “read” the motivations and “source” behind the actions and words of others.*

Purpose: *To prevent confusion and false teaching from infiltrating the church and provide guidance in spiritual warfare and deliverance.*

Texts and Examples

Discernment is a type of spiritual revelation, and not merely human insight or “intuition”

¹⁴ *The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.* ¹⁵ *The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, 1 Cor. 2;14-15*

Read Matthew 16:21-23. *Jesus discerned the spiritual source of Peter’s words to him*

How do we observe Jesus’ discernment in this interaction?

Read Acts 16:16-18. Paul and the demonized child

How do we observe Paul's discernment on display in this case?



Potential pitfalls that accompany the gift of discernment

Watch out! If you have this gift, be careful...

- *To be humble.* Always remember that your discernment is not 100% reliable.
- *Not to accuse others easily.* Share criticisms, concerns, or discernment of sinful attitudes with others tactfully and in proper order.
- *Of paranoia!* Careful not to find a demon around every corner! Remember that the Apostle Paul ate meat offered to idols without qualms.
- *Not to become cynical* and untrusting of people in general; “sizing up” others with suspicion.
- *To submit to spiritual authority.* You are responsible to share your impressions with spiritual authorities, but the leaders are entrusted the responsibility to take action, or choose not to.

Questions:

List some indications that you may have the gift of discernment.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Define discernment. _____

What is the purpose of the gift of discernment. _____

What are some potential pitfalls for the person who has this gift?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

A case: You discern something negative in an invited preacher. What should you do?

Imagine a person is behaving strangely when receiving ministry, groaning and writhing. Why must discernment be used during this session of ministry?
