

SPIRITUAL GIFTS #1: WORDS OF WISDOM

Read 1 Cor. 12:4-11

Definition

- ✦ It is not a permanent gift. There is no definite article (lit. 'a word of wisdom')
- ✦ It is spoken. *Logos* = word, message, statement
- ✦ It is wise. *Sophia* = wisdom, prudence, enlightenment
- ✦ It is beneficial. Wisdom always results in welfare
- ✦ Such wisdom was promised by Jesus (Luke 21:12-15) and evidenced by the apostles (Acts 6:10)
- ✦ *A word of wisdom is an utterance relevant to a given need that supernaturally applies the healing and reconciling qualities of wisdom to that need*

1/The importance of wisdom

- ✦ Wisdom is supreme
- ✦ See Proverbs 4:7: 'The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight.'
- ✦ Proverbs 8:11: 'For wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.'
- ✦ We are all encouraged to pray for it (James 1:5-7)
- ✦ Eg Mrs Harris concerning her husband Leo Harris – 'He was always praying for wisdom.'
- ✦ A word of wisdom is one that excels 'normal' wisdom
- ✦ Examples of Solomon (1 Kings 3:16ff); Jesus (Matt 21:23ff; 22:19)

2/The wisdom of God

- ✦ God's wisdom is seen primarily in the cross of Christ
- ✦ A word of wisdom is always Christ-centred
- ✦ Rev 19:11
- ✦ See 1 Cor. 1:22-25, 30 ('He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption').
- ✦ Story of incident in Hyde Park (see Barry Chant, *Spiritual Gifts* Tabor 2002:32, 33)

3/The nature of wisdom

- ✦ Wisdom is shown by actions
- ✦ Not what we say but what we do that counts
- ✦ 'Actions speak louder than words.'
- ✦ See James 3:13: 'Who is wise and understanding among you? *By his good conduct* let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom...'

4/Marks of 'earthly wisdom'

- ✦ See James 3:13-18
- ✦ Bitter jealousy/envy

- ❖ Selfish ambition
- ❖ Boasting
- ❖ Falsity
- ❖ Earthly
- ❖ Unspiritual
- ❖ Demonic
- ❖ Disorder
- ❖ Evil practice
- ❖ See 1 Sam 18:1-16. It was Saul's envy and ambition that brought about discord and disorder and eventually his own downfall.

5/Marks of godly wisdom

- ❖ See James 3:13-18
- ❖ Meek/humble
- ❖ Pure
- ❖ Peace-loving
- ❖ Gentle
- ❖ Submissive/open to reason
- ❖ Full of mercy
- ❖ Full of good fruits
- ❖ Impartial
- ❖ Sincere
- ❖ Righteous
- ❖ Even a child can value these qualities
- ❖ Wise people are those who display them
- ❖ Words of wisdom will also reflect these qualities
- ❖ Who do you know who is wise?

6/Using words of wisdom

- ❖ Pray
- ❖ Believe
- ❖ Ask questions
- ❖ Obey the Spirit
- ❖ Example of two ministers who could not agree, although both good men. When I prayed about it I suddenly saw that the problem was they had quite different ideas of the nature of ministry. This was the solution to the problem (see *Spiritual Gifts* 2002:41).

Remember...

- ❖ Proverbs 4:7: The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight.
- ❖ Proverbs 8:11: For wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.

Challenge

- ❖ We need to pray for wisdom all the time (James 1:5-7)
- ❖ We need to be Christ-centred (1 Cor 1:30)

- ❖ We need to live wisely (James 3:13-17)
- ❖ We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18)
- ❖ We also need words of wisdom at times of special need
- ❖ Let's trust God for his wisdom today!

SOMETHING TO THINK OR TALK ABOUT

Read: 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; James 3:13-18

Biblical

1. What evidence is there that Paul believed in the Holy Trinity? (1 Cor 12:4-6)
2. Why are manifestations of the Holy Spirit given? (7)
3. Why do you think a word of wisdom is the first gift to be listed? (8)
4. What can we learn from comparing the qualities of divine wisdom and the qualities of earthly 'wisdom' (James 3:13-18).
5. Why do you think envy and ambition produce evil and disorder? (16) 1 Samuel 18:9 might be of interest here.)
6. What does verse 18 mean?

Personal and Practical

7. Which of the qualities of wisdom seems most important to you? (James 3:13-17) Why?
8. Can you think of examples of people who have exemplified one of these qualities? Share your example with the group.
9. The word 'submissive' (NIV) or 'open to reason' (ESV) can also mean 'willing to yield' (NRSV) or 'willing to give way.' How does this work out in practice?
10. The original Greek word for 'sincere' is *anupokrites*. What can you comment about this? (Say the word aloud and you will have a clue.)
11. Recount any examples you have experienced of words of wisdom ie an expression of unusual wisdom that obviously came from the Holy Spirit.

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