

The Gift of Wisdom

I truly believe that every thinking person on earth has a desire for wisdom. We naturally look up to a person who expresses wisdom in their lifestyle.

Colossians 4:5-6 [NIV] *“Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”*

As part of our witness to the un-godly world we are to act with wisdom.

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

If we feel we do not have the wisdom we need to be a good witness for Jesus then we need to ask God for such a gift.

1 Corinthians 12:1, 4, 7-8 [NIV] *“Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.” ... “There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit.” ... “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit...”*

Wisdom is a gift from God, one of the gifts we can receive from the special presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Note: Paul claims there is a difference between the gift of wisdom and the gift of the message [or words] of knowledge.

Why is this study important?

a) There is an ever-increasing interest in the “*gifts of the Spirit*” in the Church Universal, so we need a clear and sober understanding of this subject of “*gifts of the Spirit*”.

b) In the list of gifts Paul gives us, wisdom is placed first, yet strangely this is a gift that is most neglected.

c) Perhaps then in God’s sight the more “*sensational*” gifts such as healing, miracles, or even prophecy are **not** what is most needed in the Body of Christ the Church!

d) **1 Kings 3:5-14** [NIV] *“At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.” Solomon answered, “You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day. “Now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?” The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him, “Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for, both riches and honour, so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. And if you walk in my ways and obey my statutes and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life.”*

God was really pleased with Solomon's request for wisdom. As God does not change we can conclude that God is still pleased with those who deeply desire His wisdom.

Definition of Wisdom:-

- a) Wisdom is the ability to see in advance what is the right course of action.
- b) Wisdom is the intelligent use of knowledge.
- c) Wisdom is discernment; wisdom is making sound judgement between choices that are offered us.

The wisdom we receive from God will be His wisdom, such wisdom in the most part will not be acceptable to the un-godly society.

James 3:17 [NIV] *“But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.”*

Not a description of society's idea of making wise choices.

- a) God's wisdom is sound judgement but is unpredictable to the human mind.
- b) A person who has God's wisdom can often be surprised by what God shows is the truly wise course of action.
- c) God's wisdom will often be misunderstood or underestimated at the time.
- d) A person who possesses God's wisdom must be prepared to wait for vindication, even as God is having to wait for vindication of His dealings with His created children.
- e) Sometimes Godly wisdom will be immediately apparent but often not welcome.

There are three different Greek words used in Paul's list of spiritual gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:4 [NIV] *“There are different kinds of **gifts**, but the same Spirit.”*

Gifts – Greek “*charisma*” [khar-ismah] a divine endowment – a miraculous faculty – free gift.

The word “*charismatic*” comes from this root word.

1 Corinthians 12:5 [NIV] *“There are different kinds of **service**, but the same Lord.”*

Service [administrations] Greek word “*diakōnia*” [dee-ak-on-ee-ah] attendant servant – deacon – ministry.

1 Corinthians 12:6 [NIV] *“There are different kinds of **working**, but the same God works all of them in all men.”*

Working [operations] Greek word “*ēnergēma*” [en-erg-ay-mah] We get the word “*energy*” from this Greek word. Active – effectual power filled work.

The power in this case is the Holy Spirit.

There is also one Greek word which covers all the above operations or gifts.

“*Chrisma*” [khris-mah] **an anointing or unction, the investment of an office with a job of work to perform.**

From the root word “*chrío*” [khree-o] the rubbing with oil, through a personal contact with a higher authority.

Any gifts of anointing is merely the outward recognition of being chosen to do a job of work for our Creator God. Such an anointing has no grounds for personal pride and must be accepted in all humility.

Luke 4:18 [NIV] *“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed...”*

“Anointed” Greek “*chrío*”. It is also the root word for Christ or Messiah. Jesus is The Anointed One of God.

1 John 2:20 [NIV] *“But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.”*

John uses this term referring to all Christians.

1 John 2:27 [NIV] *“As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit, just as it has taught you, remain in him.”*

This personal “*anointing*” teaches us, and is a direct reference to the special presence of the Holy Spirit [**John 16:13**].

1 Corinthians 12:7 [NIV] *“Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”*

Paul calls these differing gifts “*manifestations*”, what has been bestowed to individuals.

There are really as many “*anointings*” as there are Christians [anointed people – the root word for Christians is “*chrío*” to be anointed].

1 Corinthians 12:8-10 [NIV] *“To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.”*

One list of the anointings [gifts].

1 Corinthians 12:28-30 [NIV] *“And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?”*

The extended list of anointings [gifts] some of which are very broad in nature. Just how many ways can we “*help*” other people?

1 Corinthians 12:4-7 [NIV] *“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”*

The big point that Paul is making is **not** the difference between the gifts but the difference between people who have the Holy Spirit, the giver of these gifts.

It is not the gift that God uses but the person; every Christian is different, unique, and very special to the Creator God.

We must not forget there is considerable overlapping between natural talent and supernatural Spirit given gifts.

A person may have a natural predisposition to do certain things [an anointing by common grace] to which God may add a special anointing [spiritual grace].

For example, a person may have received a natural [common grace – received by non Christians] for public speaking to this God may add towards gifts of discernment and wisdom.

“To the spiritual person the supernatural seems natural” Quote: Jackie Pullinger.

The definition of an anointing

What comes easily, effortlessly, that which you don't have to *“work up”*.

The anointing of wisdom.

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

Wisdom is on offer to all believers universally, **not** to any selected few.

James 1:6 [NIV] *“But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.”*

Wisdom from God is only offered to believers, **not** society in general.

Godly wisdom is both “vertical” and “horizontal” in its application

Vertical path of Godly wisdom.

Towards God, to seek to understand His ways.

For example:-

James 1:2 [NIV] *“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds...”*

In the context of Godly wisdom we are told, what to a human mind is illogical and foolishness, to consider trials to be something joyful.

Godly wisdom however tells us if we dignify the trial by **not** complaining and persistently remain faithful to God, we will accomplish the goal that God has in mind and is using the trial to reach in us.

James 1:4 [NIV] *“Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”*

A mature God-like person.

Horizontal path of Godly wisdom

Towards other people, showing a selfless concern for them.

James 3:17-18 [NIV] *“But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.”*

This is the lifestyle of a person who is driven by Godly love.

These are the fruits of Godly love and stand out in stark contrast to worldly wisdom.

James 3:13-16 [NIV] *“Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbour bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.”*

This unspiritual wisdom is the way human logic and human thinking influence people in a godless society.

Love [“agape” love] is the key that unlocks Godly wisdom.

1 Corinthians 12:31 [NIV] *“But eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way.”*

The eager desire for God-given gifts, including wisdom, is good but the way to receive them is through seeking to live God’s way of love.

Wisdom as a special gift from God

The gift of wisdom is God’s own mind “*in miniature*”, a reflection of God’s thoughts and judgement.

Matthew 10:19-20 [NIV] *“But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.”*

God’s wisdom is the Holy Spirit putting the thoughts and words into our mind.

Acts 6:8-10 [NIV] *“Now Stephen, a man full of God’s grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people. Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia. These men began to argue with Stephen, but they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke.”*

The Holy Spirit expressed His mind through Stephen, but note a certain condition that was found in Stephen’s character.

Acts 7:60 [NIV] *“Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.”*

Here was in Stephen a heart that was devoid of bitterness, only in such an environment can the Holy Spirit operate.

Ephesians 4:30-31 [NIV] *“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.”*

Only an unrieved Holy Spirit will be active in our lives, and bitterness is a major factor that grieves the Holy Spirit.

Nobody has Godly wisdom all the time. Why?

John 1:32 [NIV] *“Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him.”*

The Holy Spirit never left Jesus, for Jesus was the only human being who at no time grieved the Holy Spirit. Jesus never expressed any bitterness or any of the other human traits that grieve the Holy Spirit.

With us the special presence of the Holy Spirit comes but often leaves, taking with Him that Godly wisdom.

We all need to ask for the special presence of the Holy Spirit on a daily basis. But before we ask we need to be made a fit dwelling place for the Holy Spirit.

How do we accomplish this?

1: **John 1:8-10** [NIV] *“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.”*

Confess our sins before God and receive the cleansing power of Jesus’ blood sacrifice.

2: **Romans 4:20-24** [NIV] *“Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness, for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.”*

As a result of our faith in God’s promise to cleanse us from all sin, we are credited with some of Jesus’ righteousness.

3: Now purified by Jesus’ blood sacrifice, credited with His righteousness, we are a fit dwelling place for the Holy Spirit.

4: **Luke 11:13** [NIV] *“If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”*

Ask for the Holy Spirit. But how do we do this?

John 14:16-17 [NIV] *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.”*

Through Jesus our High Priest interceding on our behalf at the Father’s Throne.

This is a very humbling process and, as we see, totally dependent on our One and Only Saviour, Jesus the Anointed One, now our High Priest.

1 Corinthians 12:8 [NIV] *“To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit...”*

The Greek word translated “given” means to “hand over to” with the sense of receiving for a special task and a limited time.

Solomon’s example shows that although God gave him great wisdom, not all his choices and decisions were wise.

If we automatically, once received, had Godly wisdom all the time, the end result would be conceited self-righteousness.

Genesis 37:5 [NIV] *“Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more.”*

Joseph had this amazing gift – regarding dreams, but he didn’t have wisdom and the end result was pain and shame.

Galatians 5:25-26 [NIV] *“Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.”*

When we receive a gift from the Holy Spirit, we need wisdom to use it to glorify God and **not** draw attention to ourselves.

We proceed with the using of our gift of wisdom no further than is warranted by the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit has given this gift of wisdom on loan for us to be stewards of that gift.

There are certain principles that must be observed because the Holy Spirit is Sovereign, being God.

a) **Romans 8:14** [NIV] *“...because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”*

We only speak when we are given permission by Holy Spirit, we follow His lead.

b) **Luke 6:31** [NIV] *“Do to others as you would have them do to you.”*

We pause and consider the “Golden Rule” before we speak, for we are but the physical instrument in the hands of a God who is Love itself.

c) When we are truly under the anointing of the Holy Spirit we will experience a “check” [a negative impulse] when it is wisest not to speak. Yet we are free to speak our spirit-led mind without fear of how other people may respond.

John 16:1-2 [NIV] *“All this I have told you so that you will not go astray. They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God.”*

It may be wise and courageous at times not to say anything, when people are not yet prepared to receive the truth.

Luke 23:8-9 [NIV] *“When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform some miracle. He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer.”*

Acts 16:6-7 [NIV] *“Paul and his companions travelled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.”*

Matthew 21:23-27 [NIV] *“Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. “By what authority are you doing these things?” they asked. “And who gave you this authority?” Jesus replied, “I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. John’s baptism, where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or from men?” They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven’, he will ask, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From men’, we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet.” So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.” Then he said, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.”*

A perfect example of the anointing of wisdom is Paul’s letter to Philemon.

Philemon was enabled to “*save face*” while having to comply with Paul’s request.

We may be given Godly wisdom to exercise and yet not consciously be aware of this happening.

Exodus 34:29 [NIV] *“When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD.”*

Moses was unaware of the physical changes that a close communion with the Creator God had made.

Likewise we may be unaware of the changes that the Holy Spirit led words of wisdom have on other people.

Conclusion.

The anointing of wisdom is a valuable gift and scripture encourages us to recognise the need for this gift in the Church and to ask God for it.

True Godly wisdom operates in two directions, vertically towards God, as we seek to know His Ways, and horizontally towards others, as we exercise Godly wisdom in our relationships and dealings with them.