

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 5/22/94 PM
I Corinthians 12:8 "Spiritual Gifts: Wisdom and Knowledge"

Intro: A TV commercial that's been around for a long time has this punchline, "The mind is a terrible thing to waste."

God places a premium on the mind. The mind is key to successful Christian living. Ph 2:5 "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Isaiah 26:3 "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." Romans 8:6 "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Rom 12:16 "Be of the same mind one towards another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits." Phil 4:7 "And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." II Tim 1:7 "For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." I Pt 1:13 "Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind."

Jesus said this in Rev 2:23 "...and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts."

God is interested in our minds. He has declared that, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he."

Listen. You and I will never succeed as a Christian until we learn to take control of our minds.

It's interesting that God gave the church two spiritual gifts directly related to the mind. We'll explore them tonight. Let's turn to I Corinthians 12:8.

Tonight we are continuing in our topical study of Spiritual Gifts. Our approach has been to follow the order given in Romans 12, examining one speaking and one serving gift each week. This evening let's take a look at two gifts that have to do with the Mind.

Outline:

Preliminary Observations about Spiritual Gifts:

1. There are different kinds of gifts (4).
2. The Source of the Gifts is the same (4b, 11).
3. Spiritual Gifts are for the common good of the Body (12:7; 14:12).
4. Spiritual Gifts are to be desired (14:1).

I. What are the Gifts of the Mind?

A. The Gift of Wisdom (I Corinthians 12:8a)

B. The Gift of Knowledge (I Corinthians 12:8b)

II. How do they work in the Church?

Preliminary Observations about Spiritual Gifts:

1. There are different kinds of gifts (4).

D.A. Carson, well-known Bible scholar, wrote this in his commentary on I Corinthians 12-14 (p. 32), "The Triune God loves diversity--so much so, as someone has remarked, that when he sends a snowstorm he makes each flake different. We

manufacture ice cubes. Doubtless the church is in some sense like a mighty army, but that does not mean we should think of ourselves as undifferentiated khaki. We should be more like an orchestra: each part making its own unique contribution to the symphonic harmony."

There are many types of spiritual gifts. In fact, in this passage alone, Paul mentions at least nine: wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment, tongues, and interpretations.

This list differs from the one in Romans 12. Here the gifts seem to be gifts which would be used in the actual corporate worship service of the church.

2. The Source of the Gifts is the same (4b, 11).

Who is the Source? V 4 "the same Spirit." V 11 "But all these worketh that one and the very same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." They are SPIRITUAL gifts. The Holy Spirit is the source and agent of these gifts.

The word for gifts is "charismata." The greek word for "grace" is "charis." Spiritual gifts are literally "grace gifts."

I agree with an observation John MacArthur makes in his book on I Corinthians 12 (p. 71). "I resent being called a 'noncharismatic.' I am not a non-charismatic; I am a charismatic Christian. I mean that I have received grace from God. Do you know a Christian who isn't a charismatic? Do you know any Christian at all who didn't receive grace from God?...There are not charismatic Christians and noncharismatic Christians; there are only true charismatics and counterfeit charismatics. We need to keep the terminology clear."

3. Spiritual Gifts are for the common good of the Body (12:7; 14:12).

V 7 reads, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit." The expression Paul uses here literally means "with a view to profiting" (Carson, 35). Grace gifts are for the common good of the church.

Paul elaborates in 14:12, "Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church."

4. Spiritual Gifts are to be desired (14:1).

Spiritual gifts are good! The church could not function without them. They do not belong to a group of spiritually elite. They are the possession of every member of the Body. We are gifted the moment we are baptized by the Spirit, and that occurs when we are saved (I Cor 12:13).

Some in the church are gifted with gifts of the mind. What are they?

I. What are the Gifts of the Mind?

READ--I Corinthians 12:4-7

V 8--"For to one is given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit."

As created beings, we stand in awe of our omniscient God. Paul expressed his humble adoration in Romans 11:33, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past

finding out!" Yet it was the same Paul who also taught the amazing truth that God's wisdom is reflected in His people through spiritual gifts.

In I Cor 12:8, the apostle mentioned two spiritual gifts that have to do with the mind--the gifts of wisdom and knowledge. Our Graduates here today have learned the value of the mind, after years of hard work. Our Minds matters to God.

All of us are responsible to use our minds to please God.

II Peter 3:18 "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ".

I Cor 1:5 "I thank God. . . for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ, that in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge."

Col 1:9 ". . . we do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding."

Warning: The gifts of wisdom and knowledge are not intellectual gifts, but spiritual gifts. You may have an IQ of 165, but that's no guarantee that you possess these gifts! These gifts are vital to the church. They continually remind us of our foundation and dependence upon the Word of God.

Illust: Gangel, 62 (Bill from Repairman)

A. The Gift of Wisdom

John MacArthur would offer the consideration that both gifts also have to do with the mouth as well as the mind. These are speaking gifts. Notice the key phrase--"the word of" (one greek word--logos). This phrase reminds us of the practical nature of these gifts. Gifts are to be used to edify others in the Church. And wisdom and knowledge will help others only when its communicated. So Paul speaks of the "word" or "utterance" of wisdom and knowledge.

What is the Gift of Wisdom?

Definition: The gift of wisdom is the skillful application of the facts of God's Word. The person with the word of wisdom has the God-given ability to understand God's will and draw its application in practical obedience.

Notice the following biblical examples of spoken wisdom in action:

--Jesus (Mark 6:2) "And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue; and many, hearing, him, were astonished, saying, From where hath this man these things? And what wisdom is this which is given unto him. . ."

--Stephen (Acts 6:9-10) "Then there arose certain of the synagogue. . . disputing with Stephen, and they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke."

Tran: The gift of wisdom is closely related to the gift of knowledge. Let's investigate this gift next, and then draw some valuable applications.

B. The Gift of Knowledge

V 8 "...to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit"

What is the gift of knowledge? Notice again, the text says, "the WORD of knowledge." The result of this gift is communication.

At one time, the gift of knowledge was a revelatory gift. In the formative years of the church, before the completion of the canon of the Scriptures, God would reveal truth to certain individuals, who in turn, passed it on to the church. We can thank God today that we have the complete and sufficient Bible. The gift is no longer revelatory.

Definition: The gift of knowledge is the Spirit-given ability to observe biblical facts and make conclusions. This is the gift which enables the believer to search, systematize, and summarize the teachings of the Word. Simply put, it's the ability to understand the Bible. This is the basic gift for biblical interpretation.

Certainly this applies to men and women who obtained Ph.D. degrees in Ancient Egyptian studies, or in Semitic languages, and devoted their lives to researching and collecting minute biblical data. They have provided a great service to the Church. They have labored so that the rest of us could benefit from their practical insights and information, and understand our Bibles better.

But this gift also belongs to some of you who have never been to college or seminary. God has given some here the special ability to study the Bible, draw out facts, and make conclusions by observation. The same gift works out differently in different Christians.

What is the relationship between wisdom and knowledge? Obviously, they are closely related. We must be careful not to drive a wedge of dichotomy between the two. If there is a difference, it has to do with emphasis.

Leslie Flynn says, "Knowledge is information. Wisdom is the right use of information to achieve proper ends." John MacArthur comments, "Knowledge is the collection of facts; wisdom is the application."

As wisdom and knowledge are related, so are the gifts of wisdom and knowledge. Wisdom and knowledge are interchangeable, and at times, synonymous in Scripture. They overlap in meaning. If there is a difference, it lies in the area of emphasis. A person with the gift of knowledge is keenly able to study and draw out the facts of God's Word. He can communicate the facts clearly, carefully, and concisely. A person with the gift of wisdom has the ability to take the facts, and make a skillful application of them.

II. How do they work in the Church?

Let's talk about application. The gifts of wisdom and knowledge are essential in the Church. Do you know why? Their presence reminds us of the importance of two things.

One, they highlight the importance of our minds. If we are to prosper in our Christian walk, we can't live at the "feeling" level. People who live by their feelings are unstable, unpredictable, and insecure. They are living roller coasters, up one moment, down the next.

I am describing some of you. If so, I would challenge you to learn to be aggressive with your mind. Take control. In the words of II Cor 10:5 (NIV), "We

demonish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

Two, these gifts highlight for us the authority and importance of the Word of God.

Now, how do these gifts work in the church? First, these gifts are essential for those in spiritual leadership in our church. We're told in I Timothy 3:2 that bishops are to be "apt to teach".

But these gifts are also frequently found in believers who do not have an official position or office in the church. People with these gifts are highly respected for their counsel. They are the opinion setters. Think of someone you go to when you're facing a perplexing problem, in order to obtain biblical counsel. Chances are, that person may have the gift of wisdom.

How practically can these gifts be used in WBC? Permit me to illustrate a few ways we can see the gifts in action:

--In a counseling situation where one Christian takes the facts of God's Word and practically applies them in order to salvage and rekindle a marriage.

--In a worship service where an expositor, who has labored in study over the Word, and has carefully digested the commentaries, then draws out principles of application for the rest of the church.

--In a conversation between two believers, where one is facing a critical career related decision, and the other sheds light on the decision-making process by pointing out relevant guidance from the Bible.

Critical Question:

Is God's Word really the final authority in your and my life? Is God's Word truly the final authority for our church? This basic question underlies our study of the gifts of knowledge and wisdom. Probably no one here today would deny verbally that the Bible is the written, reliable, powerful Word of God. In fact, we would shout a loud "Amen" to the affirmation of our "Articles of Faith" as a church, which reads, "We believe that the Holy Bible as originally written was verbally inspired. . . We believe the Bible to be the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions shall be tried." We say that God's Word is our final authority, but is it really?

What kind of man or woman rejects the clear teaching of God's Word? We're told clearly in I Corinth 2:14 "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him..."

Followup Question: Ask yourself, am I willing to change when some area in my life is clearly shown to be in contradiction with the Word of God? If we're not, then the Bible is not our final authority. And if we reject God's Word, we're giving clear evidence about our spiritual condition.