

When Ananias came before Peter, God gave to Peter a word of knowledge, exposing the lie. Ananias fell down dead! Now around 3 hours later his wife shows up, and we read beginning in verse 8 of Acts chapter 5, **“And Peter answered her, ‘Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?’ She said, ‘Yes, for so much.’ Then Peter said to her, ‘How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out.’ Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband. So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.”** Acts 5:8-11.

Why did God do this? God was using the word of knowledge to keep the church pure! You see, even at the beginning there was evil that was trying to destroy the church. God let Peter know, through the word of knowledge, that this couple were lying about their giving and they both were struck dead. Again, they could have told the truth when their sin was exposed, but they lied and it cost them their lives!

You can read in Acts 8:18-24 of Simon the sorcerer and how his sin was exposed to Peter. It cut right to the heart of the matter! Peter had no way of knowing what was in Simon’s heart, but God did and exposed it! That again is the word of knowledge in operation. As the Lord speaks to Paul, Paul tells the men on this ship not to fear. Their lives would be spared, but the ship will be lost. He had confidence that God had spoken to him, giving him a word of knowledge in what to do in the situation he was in. We see that not one man lost his life, just as God said through Paul.

These are some stories that show us the operation of the word of knowledge in the New Testament; how God graciously gave it to some as they needed it to solve a problem, silence the critics, expose a sin, encourage a person, and-so-on. What God has done in the Old Testament, what God has done in the New Testament thru this gift, is not over. This gift is still in operation today and I will show you some examples.

THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE CHURCH TODAY

Let me say this. To deny the operation of this gift today is to deny what the Scriptures have to say. You must also deny the many examples we see of this gift being exercised in the church today. I just want to share with you a couple of examples of this working in the church today to show you what I mean.

1. FRIEND’S SUICIDE THOUGHTS EXPOSED

Shortly after I got saved, a friend’s son came to church. He was a troubled young man. He had contemplated suicide and he even attempted to kill himself. Thank God he did not succeed. This suicide was on his mind right then. As my pastor began teaching, somewhere in the middle of his teaching, he got off on a tangent regarding suicide. It really didn’t fit in with the text, but off he went. As he spoke it nailed this young man right where he was at. In fact, I had become uncomfortable because I was thinking this kid must think I called the pastor and told him to teach on this subject because he was coming to the church that day. But that was not the case, not at all. The Holy Spirit gave Pastor Phil a word of knowledge that flowed so naturally that, unless you knew the situation, you would not see the gift in operation. In fact, after talking with Pastor Phil about this, he said that he had no idea why he went off on that tangent. But now he does, it was the Holy Spirit giving him a word of knowledge that a young man needed to hear!

2. WORD OF KNOWLEDGE OF BROTHERS WHEREABOUTS

Pastor Chuck tells the story of “a Korean lady who was separated from her brother when her homeland was divided into north and south. He was in the north, she was in the south. They had lost contact for some 40 years. One day the Lord started prompting her with a new concern for her brother, so she began praying that somehow God would help her find him if he were still alive.”

“She heard that he had been sent to Manchuria, so she prayed again that the Lord would help her contact her brother. While she was in prayer, the Lord gave her a phone number in Manchuria. She called that number and her brother answered! Just recently this woman returned from a trip to visit her brother. Before she left, the Lord had showed her a vision of her brother’s house. When she arrived in town she quickly recognized the house she had been shown, and she was

reunited with her brother! That’s the word of knowledge – a marvelous gift of God.” (Chuck Smith, Living Water, p. 112).

When you find yourself in a difficult situation, ask God to give you this gift, and He will as He sees fit. Other times He will give you this gift just because He is gracious and desires to. This is not some kind of occult power, not at all! It is a God given ability, to build up the body of Christ! God graciously gives it to some as they need it to solve a problem, silence the critics, expose a sin, encourage a person, and-so-on. ***THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE!***

What the Bible says about . . . Gifts of the Spirit Part 3

2. WORD OF KNOWLEDGE

In I Corinthians chapter 12 we see another supernatural gift of the Spirit, the word of knowledge. First, let me give you a description of what this word of knowledge is all about. It is supernatural information that has been given to us by the Holy Spirit; things we could not know through natural acquisition or study. The Holy Spirit gives us divine knowledge regarding a person or a situation that we could in no way obtain on our own. Think of it this way. God is the transmitter. He is sending the information to us and we are the receivers of that information.

Let’s break these two words down and I think you will see what this word of knowledge is all about. First of all, I think the key thought is the word, “**word**” or LOGOS in the Greek. Logos is a principle or concept or teaching, and not necessarily just one word. Also keep in mind that this is not a vast reservoir of information that we can draw from at will.

The word, “**knowledge**” or GNOSIS in the Greek speaks of knowing something. And so, the word of knowledge is a supernatural ability given to us by the Holy Spirit, a limited piece of information that will solve a problem, silence the critics, expose a sin, encourage a person, and-so-on. It is supernatural knowledge that the Holy Spirit gives to us as He wills.

Many times this gift is flowing so naturally that we don’t even recognize it or if we do, it is usually long after the fact. But, there are the other times when God gives us a word of knowledge about a given situation that is so incredible to us that we may want to dismiss it. We can’t even believe it. And many times we do, only to find that what God was saying did come to pass just as He said it would.



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WORD OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

When you look at this gift, the word of knowledge, other than Jesus, Elisha the prophet seems to have exercised this gift more than anyone else. God spoke to him so powerfully that he came to expect to receive from the Lord words dealing with various situations. He thought of it as common that God would give to him a word of Knowledge. When He didn't, Elisha was surprised!

1. SYRIA'S WAR PLANS - II KINGS 6:8-12

Picture what is going on here. At this point in time the Kingdom of Israel was divided into the Southern Kingdom of Judah and the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Syria's leader, Ben-Hadad, is preparing to invade Israel, the Northern Kingdom. As they made their battle plans, God gave Elisha a word of knowledge as to where they were going to strike. Elisha told the king of Israel, and the attack was halted. This happened several times to Ben-Hadad and his Syrian army.

Finally, as you can well imagine, Ben-Hadad had enough and he put two and two together. He felt that there must be a spy in his army, a traitor who was sensitive to this information and giving it to Israel. It had to be a spy. Ben-Hadad demanded to know who this traitor was! Obviously he wanted this man exposed so he could stop this information from getting to Israel. He would put to death this man for being a traitor!

To his surprise, there was no traitor in their camp. In II Kings 6:12 we see that one of his servants said that Elisha knows what you say, even the words you speak in secret. The words you speak in your bedroom are known to him. God gave to Elisha a word of knowledge. This was supernatural information given to Elisha to solve a problem, the problem being this secret invasion into the Northern Kingdom of Israel by Syria. God used this gift in the Old Testament!

2. GEHAZI'S SECRET REVEALED - II KINGS 5:20-27

You may remember the story of Naaman, who was a commander in the Syrian army. A good man, and yet he had leprosy. On one of his raids into Israel he captured an Israeli girl and made her a slave in his home, caring for his wife. She informs Naaman's wife that if Naaman would go and see Elisha, he would be healed of his leprosy!

Naaman goes to see Elisha, and through a series of events, he washes in the Jordan River and he is healed from his leprosy! Well, Naaman wants to pay Elisha for his services and Elisha refuses. The servant of Elisha is interested in the money and he runs and catches up to Naaman. He tells Naaman this story that two young men have come and they could use the money and change of clothes.

Naaman is so thankful for what has happened to him that he gives Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, double of what he asked for. As Gehazi returned home, he hid the clothes and the money and then returned to Elisha as if nothing happened.

Starting in verse 25 of II Kings chapter 5 we read, **"Now he went in and stood before his master. Elisha said to him, 'Where did you go, Gehazi?' And he said, 'Your servant did not go anywhere.' Then he said to him, 'Did not my heart go with you when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you? Is it time to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants? Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your descendants forever.' And he went out from his presence leprous, as white as snow."** II Kings 5:25-27.

Once again we see God give Elisha a word of knowledge, showing not only what Gehazi had done, but also the motives behind his actions! In this instance we see the word of knowledge expose the sin of Gehazi so that he could repent and get right with God. But he did not repent. He lied to Elisha and God struck Gehazi with leprosy!

THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the New Testament we find the word of knowledge exercised by Jesus, but not exclusively, as we will see. As this gift was working in the life of Jesus, it will also work in us, as the Holy Spirit reveals to us the things He desires us to know for a given situation.

1. REVELATION TO NATHANAEL - JOHN 1:43-51

In John 1:43-51 we see that after Philip accepts the invitation to follow Jesus, he goes and tells Nathanael, who is very skeptical of this man named Jesus. As they begin walking, Philip and Nathanael run into Jesus. Jesus tells Nathanael things that Jesus could not have known. That fig tree was a good distance away, a place where no one was able to see him sitting. Jesus spoke of what Nathanael was doing by the fig tree, and it changed Nathanael's heart. Jesus not only told him where he was, but what he was reading, the Scriptures and specifically the book of Genesis where Jacob has the vision of the ladder with angels ascending and descending upon it. Jesus says that this bridge is pointing to Him; Jesus has bridged that gap between God and man. Jesus exercised the word of knowledge in His life to open the eyes of Nathanael so that he may see Jesus; it solved a problem of the hard heart!

2. WOMAN BY THE WELL IN SAMARIA - JOHN 4

In John chapter 4 you may remember the story of the encounter that Jesus has with the woman by the well in Samaria, and how she gave back to Jesus some cute little answers to His questions. But she missed the point. Jesus was dealing with a spiritual issue. She was looking at it as a physical issue. Beginning in verse 16 of John chapter 4 we read, **"Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come here.' The woman answered and said, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You have well said, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.' The woman said to Him, 'Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.'"** John 4:16-19.

Here we see Jesus, in speaking a word of knowledge, cut right to the heart of the issue, exposing her sin and her emptiness. The word of knowledge can do that. This woman's life is changed; she turns to Jesus and then calls the men of the city to hear what she has heard. She begins to evangelize!

3. JESUS KNEW LAZARUS WAS DEAD - JOHN 11:11-17

In John chapter 11 Jesus is told by the friends of Mary and Martha that their brother, Jesus' friend Lazarus, was sick. But in verse 14 Jesus said to them, **"Lazarus is dead."** How in the world did Jesus know that Lazarus was dead when even those who came to tell Him that Lazarus was sick did not even know, and they were with Lazarus? God gave Jesus a word of knowledge, showing that not only was Lazarus dead at this point, but he would not remain dead, and that as Lazarus was raised from the dead, God would be glorified.

4. ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA'S SIN EXPOSED - ACTS 5:1-11

In Acts chapter 5 we see the first instance of someone in the church being slain in the Spirit. As you will see, this was not a good thing! In the church people were giving to help others, selling property and possessions to help out. Ananias and Sapphira wanted to join in. Maybe they wanted the recognition. We don't know for sure. So they sold a possession and they gave some of the profit to the church. There is nothing wrong with that. The problem arose when they lied and said they gave all the money to the church.