

**FOUNDATION OF FAITH!
GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT
PART 4
WORD OF WISDOM**

As we continue in our series Foundation of Faith we are currently in a section dealing with the Holy Spirit and we are specifically looking at the Gifts of the Spirit that have been given to us to edify the body of Christ, to build them up and to draw people to Jesus. Over the past few weeks we have been looking at the gifts that Jesus has given to the church, these gifted men that are empowered by His Spirit.

We talked about the apostles and the prophets and we saw how they laid down the foundation for the church and these offices have passed off the scene around the close of the first century. But, in a general sense, we are all apostles in that we are sent forth with the mission to bring the Gospel of Jesus to a lost and dying world. In a general sense we are all prophets in that we speak forth the Words of God. But the office of apostles and prophets has passed off the scene.

And last week we looked at the evangelists, the pastor-teachers and teachers whose ministry is still in operation today. And, the work of this ministry, what they are to do is **“for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ - from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”** Ephesians 4:12-16.

You see, these offices are to help equip the saints to go out and do the work of the ministry. As we have seen, in many churches today, they hire a pastor to do all the work of the ministry but that is not correct. His ministry is to teach, to equip the people to go out and do the work and that just makes sense. There is only one of him and there are many people in the congregation and thus, more work can get done if the people would step out in faith and do the work they were called to do. The Body of Christ would be functioning as it was created to do!

This morning we are going to begin a several week study looking at the gifts of the Spirit, what they are for and how they are to be used. We are going to see if some or if all of these gifts are even for us today. And when I say that we are going to be looking at the gifts that the Spirit gives to us, please understand that our Triune God, the Holy Trinity is actively involved in these gifts and their operations. How do I know that? Simply, in I Corinthians 12:4-6 we see that it is the Spirit in verse 4, it is our Lord or Jesus in verse 5 and it is God the Father in verse 6 all working together to gift His Church!

Now let me say this before we move on. When I am speaking of these gifts I am not speaking of talents or abilities that someone may have. These gifts are supernatural in nature and yet they may manifest themselves in a very natural way. But we need to understand that these are not just talents that someone has, these are gifts from God given to His Church for the edifying of the body of Christ and drawing people to Jesus. And you will see this played out as we look at these gifts over the next several weeks.

This morning we are going to be looking at the Spiritual gift called the Word of Wisdom and our text is going to be in I Corinthians chapter 12, starting in verse 1, where we are told by Paul, **“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant . . . There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.”** I Corinthians 12:1, 4-11.

Here we see nine gifts given to us by the Holy Spirit but please understand that this is not an exhaustive list. There is more in I Corinthians 12:28 and Romans chapter 12 as well as what we have seen in Ephesians chapter 4, where Christ gave gifted men to the Church.

Now as Paul opened up this chapter here in I Corinthians chapter 12 he clearly says that he doesn't want the Corinthian church or us to be ignorant of these gifts that God has given to us and yet, that is exactly what we see today, people are very ignorant about Spiritual gifts. And so Paul is telling them that he wants them to pay close attention to this information that he is giving them because it is important. But again, tragically, even today, look at how ignorant Christians are regarding Spiritual gifts; from abuse to negating them and saying they are not for today. May we pay close attention to what the Lord has for us regarding these spiritual gifts!

My prayer as we go through these gifts is that you would not approach this subject with your own preconceived ideas about this topic, but you would be open to what the Spirit of God is showing you and you would search the Scriptures to clearly understand all that God has for you. If you do, you will not be disappointed. If you close your mind to these things, then you will miss out on what God has for you. And again, I am not saying you have to believe what I am telling you, but you search the Scriptures to see if these things are true or not!

One more point here and again, I think this is important for us to see. Too often we see these gifts of the Spirit exercised in such a way that they profit the person doing them, and many times they are profiting the flesh. Paul is telling us that these gifts are for the profit of all, except the gift of tongues which does edify the person speaking them. Understand this, the Holy Spirit gives these gifts to the church not as some toys to be played with, but they are tools to be used for the profit of all! That is the perspective we need to have as we study the Gifts of the Spirit! With that said, let's begin looking at these gifts of the Spirit, starting with the first one found in verse 8, the Word of Wisdom.

1. WORD OF WISDOM

Now before we look at this spiritual gift we need to understand a little of what wisdom is all about. Solomon tells us in Proverbs 4:7, “**Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.**” Now, what is the difference between wisdom and knowledge or is there a difference? First of all knowledge is the gathering together, the accumulation of facts and information. Wisdom, on the other hand, is the proper application of that knowledge. You see, there are a lot of very intelligent people out there who are very unwise. They have all the information and they don’t apply it correctly to their lives. How important that is for the days we are living in, applying or wisdom, the correct information or knowledge to our lives!

I will give to you one example to show you that even highly educated men and women in highly technical fields like biology, physics, biochemistry, anatomy and physiology, and-so-on, who take all the information they have accumulated, and then say life arose out of spontaneous generation, life from non-life, to the multi-faceted life forms we have today by a random process that took millions and millions of years. By their application of the knowledge they have on the complexity of life, they are very unwise in believing this theory called evolution. They have all the information, the knowledge, they just have applied it wrong and, again, that is unwise!

Now let’s look at this through another perspective. You see, what about the person who has a high-school education, no college, no degrees and yet, they can look at the complex variety of life, take that information they have, and come to the conclusion that there must be a designer, there must be a creator, there must be a God. This person is very wise.

It is as Psalm 19:1-6 says, **“The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, And rejoices like a strong man to run its race. Its rising is from one end of heaven, And its circuit to the other end; And there is nothing hidden from its heat.”**

You see, God is seen through His creation! You can look at nature itself and come to the conclusion that there is a God. This general revelation does not show us who God is, that only can come from special revelation or the Word of God opened up to us by the Spirit of God. But the evidence is there if people would only apply the knowledge they have correctly!

Even Paul, in Romans 1:18-23 speaks of those who turn from God's revealed truth, and they are willfully suppressing what God is showing them and he calls them fools for their ignorance, for their misapplication of the knowledge they have. He said **“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man - and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.”**

Again, creation itself shows us God, we call it general revelation. But because they have rejected the truths of God, God gave their lofty thoughts to become worthless. We are to use wisdom wisely, as Solomon admonishes us in Proverbs 15:2, **“The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, But the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.”** The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“The tongue of the wise utters knowledge rightly, but the mouth of the [self-confident] fool pours out folly.”** It is as simple as that, but if you want to deny God, if you want to deny His Word, then you are going to apply the information you have, the knowledge that you have, incorrectly and you will come to the wrong conclusion, you will be unwise!

Now as we study the Scriptures we will see that there are four types of wisdom spoken of. There is natural wisdom, evil wisdom, God's wisdom, and the word of wisdom. Now before we discuss what the word of wisdom is, let's look at what these others are all about and then we will look at this gift of the Spirit, this word of wisdom.

A. NATURAL WISDOM

When we speak of natural wisdom we might call this common sense. For instance, as you are walking through the woods you come across this cute little creature that is black with a white stripe down its back and you recognize that it is not a cat but a skunk. That is knowledge. Wisdom will tell you to keep your distance from this creature. Another example is seen in fire. Knowledge will tell you it is hot, but wisdom will tell you not to put your hand in it. That is just plain natural wisdom and there are many who lack natural wisdom today.

We can see an example of this natural wisdom in II Samuel chapter 20, as Sheba tries to lead a revolt against King David. And as Joab goes after Sheba, he corners him in the city of Abel of Beth Maachah. And as Joab and his men prepare to storm the city a wise woman pleaded with Joab to stop, and she asks him what they want. And Joab tells her that he wants Sheba and he will then stop the assault. Her response is found in verse 22 of II Samuel chapter 20, where we read **“Then the woman in her wisdom went to all the people. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and threw it out to Joab. Then he blew a trumpet, and they withdrew from the city, every man to his tent. So Joab returned to the king at Jerusalem.”**

This woman understands the situation. She understood that Joab did not want to destroy their city but just to capture this man. Thus, this woman tells the people what Joab wants and they go above and beyond what Joab wanted and they cut off Sheba's head and toss it over the wall. That is wisdom and so we see that this natural wisdom is the application of human knowledge!

B. EVIL WISDOM

Yes there is natural wisdom as we have seen, but make no mistake about it, there is also evil wisdom. And many people, even Christians are naive about this. We must understand that Satan is feeding us all kinds of misinformation to confuse us, to destroy us, and he is very good at it. We can see a good example of his crafty ways in Genesis chapter 3, as he tempts Eve into disobeying God. He makes two interesting statements to her, "**Has God indeed said**", as Satan was challenging God's Word, trying to confuse Eve. He was undermining what God has said. Secondly, he said "**You will not surely die**", contradicting what God has said would happen if they disobeyed Him. And the result is found in verses 6 and 7 of Genesis chapter 3, where we read, "**So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.**"

Their innocence was gone as they were influenced by misinformation, and they acted in a way we might call evil wisdom, based upon evil knowledge! Do we see that today? Absolutely we do. I will give you one example and there are many. We hear today that science has shown that homosexuals are born that way, their brains determine that they are homosexuals and some have even taken this even farther stating that people who have affairs, who steal, who even murder are born that way, it is in their DNA and thus, it is not their fault. And so you have the wrong information and many come to the conclusion then that these things are not wrong, especially homosexuality because they are born that way and they come to the wrong conclusion based on wrong information. Thus, this is evil wisdom! You see, God's Word says that homosexuality is a sin and the correct application of this information is to avoid homosexuality, don't go down that path and we will deal with that more as we look at the third aspect of wisdom we find in the Scriptures, God's wisdom! But evil wisdom is related to misinformation, evil information!

C. GOD'S WISDOM

We I speak of God's wisdom please understand that this is not the gift of wisdom, but it is the wisdom that is exercised according to God's Word. Psalm 19:7 tells us, "**The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.**" God's Word makes even us simpletons wise if we obey! You see, the Scriptures tell us about God, who He is, what He is like, what He expects of us. That is information or knowledge. We must then take what God has said and apply that to our lives and that is wisdom.

We see Solomon tell us in Proverbs 1:7, “**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.**” This is where it starts, a right relationship with God, hating evil just as God hates evil. Again in Proverbs we read, “**For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.**” Proverbs 2:6. God gives to each of us this wisdom, it is available for us all, and then we must apply that to our lives - that is God’s wisdom that has been imparted to us through His Word!

The problem for us as Christians is that we don’t always like what God is saying and thus, we do our own thing, we don’t apply the truths of God to our lives and that is very unwise. In fact, that is very arrogant because we believe that we know better than God and folk’s, like it or not, we don’t! He loves us so much and has only what is good for our lives. Obey what His Word is saying and you will have that Godly wisdom that application of the truths of God found in the Word of God!

D. WORD OF WISDOM

First of all we need to understand that this is not just natural or even godly wisdom. The Word of Wisdom is a supernatural gift that the Holy Spirit gives us at various times in our life to help us answer a question, solve a problem, defuse a crisis, and-so-on. And many times as this gift is exercised we see the critics silenced, problems resolved, and people amazed at what was said. One writer put it like this, “The Word of Wisdom supernaturally discloses the mind, purpose, and the way of God as applied to a specific situation.” (The Holy Spirit, theholyspirit.com).

Another writer put it like this, “The gift of the word of wisdom is the application of knowledge that God gives you (I Corinthians 2:6-7). This type of wisdom is a gift which cannot be gained through study or experience and should by no means try to replace them. The gift of the word of wisdom is seeing life from God’s perspective. . . . The gift of the word of wisdom is also the revealing of prophetic future; it is speaking hidden truths of what is not known. It is a supernatural perspective to ascertain the divine means for accomplishing God’s will in a given situation, and is a divinely given power to appropriate spiritual intuition in problem solving. Furthermore, this gift involves having a sense of divine direction, being led by the Holy Spirit to act appropriately in a given set of circumstances, and rightly applying knowledge. The gift of wisdom is the wisdom of God. It is the supernatural impartation of facts; it is not natural. You can’t earn it. . . . The gift of the word of wisdom works interactively with the other two revelation gifts: knowledge and discernment.” (The Word of Wisdom, David Holt Boshart, Jr.).

Now this is one of those gifts that most if not all of us wish we had all the time. That no matter what situation we are in this gift is in operation, but that is not the case. And you also need to understand that this is not a gift that you can turn on and off like a light switch whenever you want to. The Scriptures tells us that the Holy Spirit gives it to us in certain situations as He wills. In saying that, we are going to look at several examples of this gift being exercised in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

WORD OF WISDOM SEEN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. SOLOMON - I KINGS 3

God gave to Solomon Godly wisdom, and yet, we also see Solomon using the word of wisdom, given to him by the Holy Spirit to settle a very difficult problem that was brought before him

You may remember the story of the two harlots that came before King Solomon with a very difficult situation that they wanted him to solve. These two women dwelt in the same house and one of them had a child, and three days later the other gave birth and had a child. And one night, as they were sleeping, one of the mothers rolled over onto her baby and killed him by accident. So she got up in the middle of the night and switched babies with the other woman, unbeknown to her.

When morning came, as this woman awoke to nurse her baby, she found he was dead. Can you imagine how she felt? But after that initial shock, she began to examine the baby and came to the conclusion that this was not her child, but the other woman's. And so the two arrived before the king for him to decide who was the mother of this baby that was living and who was the mother of the dead baby.

As you can imagine, this was a very difficult situation. And Solomon has a good grasp of the situation; both the women are claiming this live baby as theirs. What is he going to do to resolve it? What can he do? Human wisdom is of no real help here. They didn't have DNA testing or even finger-print analysis to figure this one out.

Well, we don't have to guess what Solomon did because we are told what happened in I Kings chapter 3 as Solomon speaks to these women. We are told starting in verse 25 of I Kings chapter 3, "**And the king said, 'Divide the living child in two, and give half to one, and half to the other.'** Then the woman whose son was living spoke to the king, for she yearned with compassion for her son; and she said, '**O my lord, give her the living child, and by no means kill him!**' But the other said, '**Let him be neither mine nor yours, but divide him.'** So the king answered and said, '**Give the first woman the living child, and by no means kill him; she is his mother.'** And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had rendered; and they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice." I Kings 3:25-28.

You see, Solomon recognized that the real mother would rather have her baby alive and cared for by this woman than cut in two. That was the word of wisdom that God gave to Solomon and we see that it resolved the problem and everyone was amazed at what Solomon said.

2. JOSEPH - GENESIS 41

Remember the story of Pharaoh and the dream he had. As he stood by the river seven fat cows came up out of the river and grazed in the meadow. Then another seven cows came up out of the river and they were emaciated, and they ate up the fat cows. At this point Pharaoh woke up, but then fell back to sleep and began to dream again. This time seven plump heads of grain came up, and then seven thin heads which devoured the plump heads. And he woke up again, and by morning he was very troubled by these dreams.

As he shares this with the butler, the butler remembers a man named Joseph, a Hebrew, who was in prison and he could interpret dreams. And so Joseph is called for, and he explains the dreams to Pharaoh. The dreams represent seven years of plenty, bountiful harvests that will be followed by seven years of severe famine. Here Joseph was exercising the gift of the word of knowledge, which many times goes hand-in-hand with the word of wisdom.

And Joseph continues on in verse 33 of Genesis chapter 41 by saying, **“Now therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, to collect one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that are coming, and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. Then that food shall be as a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the land may not perish during the famine.’ So the advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said to his servants, ‘Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?’ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you.’”** Genesis 41:33-40.

Here we see that Pharaoh saw how Joseph applied the knowledge he had received wisely, and made him Prime Minister over Egypt. Joseph exercised the word of wisdom that resolved a problem and the people were amazed!

This is the word of wisdom in operation in the Old Testament as the Holy Spirit came upon certain men of God and empowered them with this gift. They did not have it all the time, but as the Spirit saw the need, according to the Spirit’s control, it was given to them.

WORD OF WISDOM SEEN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Now let's look at this gift in operation in the New Testament and see how it worked. And as you see this gift in operation, I want you to notice that this is truly a supernatural gift but it is operated in a very natural way. The people exercising this gift do not get all weird and strange and act if some kind of power had control of their body, they just spoke things forth that they had no way of knowing or understanding and yet they do so with such clarity it seems natural but it is truly supernatural!

1. JESUS QUESTIONED ABOUT TRIBUTE MONEY - LUKE 20

The religious leaders always tried to catch Jesus by the words He said, and in Luke chapter 20 it was no different. The question they presented before Jesus was simple, it was a pretty straight forward question, **“Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?”** Luke 20:22.

But the reality of this question is that there was no way you could answer it and be correct, this was a no win question to answer. You see, if Jesus said “yes”, that it was lawful, then the Jews in the crowd would walk away, for they hated Rome and looked for any way to separate themselves from Roman authority. If He said “No”, that they should not pay taxes to Caesar, then the Jewish religious leaders would alert the Roman authorities telling them that Jesus is a rebel, and He would be dealt with.

It was a no win situation. It was like being asked, “Have you stopped beating your wife?” If you answer, “Yes”, then are you are implying that you have beat your wife before? And, if you answer, “No”, then are you telling us that you are still beating your wife? You see, a no win situation, no matter how you answer the question, you would be in trouble and that is what Jesus was facing!

But notice what Jesus said. We read beginning in verse 23 of Luke chapter 20, **“But He perceived their craftiness, and said to them, ‘Why do you test Me? Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have?’ They answered and said, ‘Caesar’s.’ And He said to them, ‘Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’ But they could not catch Him in His words in the presence of the people. And they marveled at His answer and kept silent.”** Luke 20:23-26.

Here we see the word of wisdom working in Jesus. Notice that they were stunned! The word of wisdom given to Jesus in this situation solved the problem, silenced the critics, and amazed the people.

2. JESUS IS CONFRONTED BY THE SADDUCEES - MATTHEW 22

Here in Matthew chapter 22 we see the Sadducees, who were the liberals of their day and they did not believe in miracles or the resurrection. And so they pose this question to Jesus, which is just plain stupid. It is like asking the question, “Can God make a rock so big He can’t lift it?” If you answer the question, “Yes” or “No”, then God can’t do all things. You see, just a stupid question. The Sadducees gave to Jesus this situation.

There was this woman who marries a man and he dies not having any children. And his brother marries her and he dies before having any children. And this happens with 7 of this mans brothers, all dying not having any children. First of all I would like to know what she is putting in their drinks. But in the end, this woman dies also. And the question they ask Jesus is this, **“Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her.”** Matthew 22:28.

And you have to love the way that Jesus answers them. He tells them that they are ignorant, that they don’t understand the Scriptures. Notice the wisdom of Jesus here in answering their question. The Sadducees only believed the first 5 books of Moses, Genesis through Deuteronomy, those were the only books inspired to them. So Jesus speaks to them out of that portion of the Scripture.

He says beginning in verse 29 of Matthew chapter 22, “... **‘You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.’ And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching.**” Matthew 22:29-33.

You see, Jesus shows them that God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. He was not the God of Abraham, but He says, “**I am the God of Abraham.**” Again, the problem was solved, the critics were silenced, and the people were amazed as Jesus spoke forth the word of wisdom.

3. JESUS CONFRONTS THE PHARISEES - MATTHEW 22

Again in Matthew chapter 22 we see Jesus confront the Pharisees, the keepers of the Law you might say. And please understand that the Sadducees and the Pharisees didn’t get along too well, and when they saw the Sadducees put to silence, they gathered around to watch and probably gloat about it.

But Jesus comes and asks them a question. You see, they lived in a patriarchal society, where the father was always the leader of the family, a father would never call his son lord, but it would be the other way around. And the religious leaders believed that the Messiah would be a man, and not God incarnate, from the lineage of David.

So Jesus says to them beginning in verse 42 of Matthew chapter 22, **“... ‘What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?’ They said to Him, ‘The Son of David.’ He said to them, ‘How then does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool”?’ If David then calls Him ‘Lord,; how is He his Son?’ And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.”** Matthew 22:42-46.

Jesus nails them on this one. You see, the only way David can call his son, “lord” is if he was more honored, and being the Son of God He was more honored than David, and thus, David calls Jesus, the Messiah, Lord! The result of this word of wisdom is the critics were silenced, and the people amazed!

4. THE APOSTLES SOLVE A CHURCH DISPUTE - ACTS 6

In Acts chapter 6 we see the church growing, and one of the programs they had was a food pantry to help out the widows. Now a problem arose when some of the people felt the Hellenists Jewish widows were being treated unfairly, not like the Jewish ones were. The Hellenists Jews were those Jews who lived outside Israel who spoke the Grecian language and lived like the Greeks. Now the Jews living in Israel looked down upon them, and we need to remember, the apostles were part of those from Israel. Now was there a real problem or not? We don't know, but the issue is they felt like they were being cheated. It is out of this there could have been a huge church division!

But notice what takes place as the apostles are given a word of wisdom in this situation. Beginning in verse 2 of Acts chapter 6 we read, **“Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.’ And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them. Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith. And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.”** Acts 6:2-8.

This is a remarkable move and a very wise one! They have the Hellenist Jews pick out seven godly men to oversee this ministry, and they pick seven Hellenist Jews to do the work. And we see the problem solved, the critics silenced, and the church grow!

5. JAMES SETTLES THE GENTILE ISSUE IN THE CHURCH - ACTS 15

The Judaizers would come into an area after Paul preached salvation by grace, and they said that Paul was right but you also had to be a Jew, you had to keep the Law of Moses. And there arose some dispute over this issue, and thus, the case was presented to the church in Jerusalem, in which James was the head of. And James listened to what Peter, Paul, and Barnabas had to say, and then he gave his recommendation regarding this issue, if gentiles need to keep the Law of Moses or not.

And James says to the gentiles that they don't have to keep the Law of Moses as part of the bases of their salvation for the Jew's couldn't even keep it. And they sent a letter to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas and others, to be read before all. And in verse 30 of Acts chapter 15 we see what transpired. We read, **“So when they were sent off, they came to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the letter. When they had read it, they rejoiced over its encouragement.”** Acts 15:30-31. Notice, the problem was solved, and these people rejoiced over the words that were spoken by James, as God gave him a word of wisdom to speak forth in a very difficult situation.

6. PAUL BEFORE THE COUNCIL - ACTS 23

Remember when Paul caused a riot in Jerusalem, as the people grabbed him, thinking he was teaching people to negate the words of Moses, that he was telling people to turn against the Jews, and he was accused of bringing gentiles into the Temple. Before they could harm him the Roman soldiers rescued him, and as they were bringing him up to the Fortress of Antonio, on the Temple Mount, Paul asks to speak one more time to the people.

And as Paul speaks of Jesus and all that He has done, the people listened until he said that God told him to forget about going to the Jews, for they rejected what He had for them, and instead, present it to the Gentiles. At this point, when Paul said, “**gentiles,**” they went ballistic. And Paul was hauled into the barracks by the soldiers before they killed him.

The next day they brought Paul before the religious leaders to see what he was being accused of, what wrong he had done. And we read beginning in verse 30 of Acts chapter 22, “**The next day, because he wanted to know for certain why he was accused by the Jews, he released him from his bonds, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down and set him before them. Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, ‘Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.’ And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. Then Paul said to him, ‘God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! For you sit to judge me according to the law, and do you command me to be struck contrary to the law?’ And those who stood by said, ‘Do you revile God's high priest?’**”

Then Paul said, ‘I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, ‘You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.’ But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, ‘Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!’ And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection - and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. Then there arose a loud outcry. And the scribes of the Pharisees' party arose and protested, saying, ‘We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God.’ Now when there arose a great dissension, the commander, fearing lest Paul might be pulled to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him into the barracks.” Acts 22:30-23:1-10.

God gave Paul a word of wisdom in this situation. As I said before, the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, that is why they are sad-u-see! But the Pharisees, who were very conservative, did. And thus, Paul says he is a Pharisee who had a hope in the resurrection of the dead. Now the Pharisees saw nothing wrong with that, but the Sadducees did, and so a conflict broke out between these two religious groups, and Paul is removed from the situation by the Roman commander, leaving these religious leaders fighting amongst themselves, as if they were on trial!

As we have seen, the word of wisdom is a supernatural power to speak with divine insight, whether in solving difficult problems, defending the faith, resolving conflicts, giving practical advice, or pleading one's case before hostile authorities. It is a gift that is given during certain situations, not something we have all the time, and it is given by the Holy Spirit as He sees fit.

Now I wish I had this gift more often, but when I have found myself in some difficult situations, the Holy Spirit has given me words to speak that have solved problems, healed relationships, and I rejoice in that. I know that it is not my superior wisdom that got me through, ask my wife about that. But it truly was a word of wisdom given to me in a situation when human intellect was of no help, but the Holy Spirit's wisdom was!

As I bring this study to a close, look at Colossians 2:1-3, which says, "**For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**"

It is the Lord that has this wisdom and He imparts it to us, and if any of us is lacking in wisdom, listen carefully to what James has to say. In James 1:5-6 we read, "**If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.**"

James is most likely speaking of Godly wisdom that we can learn as we walk with the Lord and study His word, applying those lessons to our life. But I also think he is speaking of the word of wisdom, a supernatural gift of the Holy Spirit that is given to us.

Thus, if you lack wisdom, ask God, and believe that He will supply you with that wisdom you will need in a given situation that will be used to solve a problem, silence the critics, and the people will look in amazement at the wisdom that God has given you in that situation, and the Lord will get the glory. As Proverbs 4:7 says, “**Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.**”

May we not forget that and may we not negate this gift that God has for us.