

**FOUNDATION OF FAITH!
GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT
 PART 5
 WORD OF KNOWLEDGE**

This morning in our Foundation of Faith series we are going to be looking at another gift of the Spirit and we will be focusing on the gift of the word of knowledge and what that is all about. And, as with all the gifts, we must keep in mind that it is the Spirit of God that gives us these gifts to be used to edify the body of Christ, to draw people to Jesus and to glorify God. If we lose sight of that, what we see happen is the abuse of these gifts.

With that said, let's begin reading in I Corinthians chapter 12, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study these gifts of the Spirit, specifically this morning the word of knowledge. Paul tells us, **“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.

Notice that Paul does not want us to be ignorant of these things, of the spiritual gifts that God has given to us and yet, when you look at the church today, that is exactly what we are seeing many times. Some feel that this gift, the word of knowledge is at our disposal anytime we want. They, in a sense, see this gift as kind of a psychic-hotline with God. But Paul speaks contrary to that kind of teaching for he says that the Holy Spirit is **“distributing to each one individually as He wills.”** That is important to understand, we don't control this gift but the Holy Spirit will impart a word of knowledge to us as He sees fit in a given situation.

And there are others who look at the gifts of the Spirit as something that was given to the first century church but are not in operation today. I again disagree with this for a healthy church will exercise these gifts for these gifts are to build up, they will benefit the body of Christ. Thus, knowledge to them is just learned spiritual information as you study the Word of God and walk in His ways. Kind of a maturing process and that is important for us, we should grow and mature in the Lord, but that is not what the word of knowledge is speaking of and you will see that as we continue in this study. And you will see how this gift is still in operation today.

Let me share with you some thoughts on this subject of the word of knowledge from someone who denies it. And keep in mind that I am not saying we are getting new revelation from God or adding to the Word of God, but God does speak to us today, absolutely. But because of the bizarre behavior in charismatic camps, many negate the work of God, these gifts of the Spirit as being for today. Listen to what he wrote and then I will answer what he has to say. He wrote,

Now tonight as we come to the second in our series on Charismatic Chaos, the issue at hand is, “Does God still give revelation?” That’s our subject for tonight: Does God still give revelation?

If someone were to write an anthem for the Charismatic movement it would have to be titled, “God told me! God told me!” you hear that over and over again. Strange prophecies abound in the Charismatic movement; in fact, it is well nigh impossible to turn on a Charismatic television station or a radio station without being exposed, almost on a daily basis to some new “Words from the Lord.” I was watching one today and sure enough, “The Lord said, the Lord said, the Lord said,” was repeated again and again. . . .

The Holy Spirit is working mightily, I believe, in the Church today, but not in the way that most Charismatic’s think. The Holy Spirit’s role is to empower the Church to preach the Word; to empower the Church to teach the Word; to empower the Church to write about the Word, that it might be understood. The Holy Spirit is empowering the Church to worship according to truth, to witness to the truth and proclaim it, to grow by the study of the Word, and to serve as the Word calls and commands. He does lead us into God’s truth and He directs us into God’s will for our lives through the Word, not through new revelation. “God told me,” is a dangerous and heretical model for anyone to take, because it opens to chaos, confusion, mysticism, subjectivism, demons and deception.

- John MacArthur, Does God Still Give Revelation Today? Charismatic Chaos Series, Part 2 of 13

Again, I agree with his statement that God is not giving to us new revelation in regards to adding to the Scriptures, but God is still speaking to us and He will give to us this supernatural gift, the word of knowledge to deal with situations we face. We are not negating the Word of God because of this or downplaying the Word of God because we believe in this gift. But let us not negate what God's Word has to say regarding this gift!

First, let me give you a definition 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. It is a principle or concept or teaching, and not necessarily just one word. And keep in mind that this is not a vast reservoir of information that we can draw from at will. Also, the word, "**knowledge**" or GNOSIS in the Greek speaks of knowing something. And so, the word of knowledge is this 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.

This morning we are going to look at this gift in operation in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. We will see examples of this gift in operation in the Scriptures and then we will look at this gift in operation in the church today. You see, 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 where 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 out that what God was saying did come to pass just as He said it would. And so let's look at this gift in operation, first of all in the Old Testament.

WORD OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

When you look at this gift, the word of knowledge, besides 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, and when He didn't, Elisha was surprised!

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

Let's read in II Kings 6:8-12 as Syria is planning on invading the Northern Kingdom of Israel. We are told, **“Now the king of Syria was making war against Israel; and he consulted with his servants, saying, ‘My camp will be in such and such a place.’ And the man of God sent to the king of Israel, saying, ‘Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are coming down there.’ Then the king of Israel sent someone to the place of which the man of God had told him. Thus he warned him, and he was watchful there, not just once or twice. Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was greatly troubled by this thing; and he called his servants and said to them, ‘Will you not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?’ And one of his servants said, ‘None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom.’”**

Picture what is going on here. At this point of time the kingdom of Israel was divided into the Southern Kingdom of Judah and the Northern Kingdom of Israel. And Syria's leader, Ben-Hadad is preparing to invade Israel, the Northern Kingdom. And as they made their battle plans, God gave Elisha a word of knowledge of where they were going to strike, and he told the king of Israel, and the attack was halted. And 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 and came up with four! And more importantly, he felt that there must be a spy in his army, a traitor who was sensitive to this information and then he gave that information to Israel. It had to be a spy, and 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 and he would put to death this man for being a traitor!

And to his surprise, there was no traitor in their camp. Remember what we read in verse 12 of II Kings chapter 6, “**And one of his servants said, ‘None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom.’**” In other words, you have no secrets, for 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. You see, this was supernatural information given to Elisha to solve a problem, and that problem was 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. And on one of his raids into Israel he captures an Israeli girl and made her a slave in his home, caring for his wife. And she informs Naaman’s wife that if only Naaman would go and see Elisha, he would be healed of this condition, of his leprosy!

As you can imagine, word quickly got to Naaman who informed the Syrian king, who then allowed Naaman to go and see Elisha. And as he arrived, Elisha did not even go out to meet him, but sent his servant Gehazi to tell Naaman to go and wash in the Jordan River seven times. Well Naaman became very angry, and he began to leave. In Syria he was a respected man and here he was not honored at all. Elisha did not even go out to meet him but he sent his servant. And thus, his ego was hurt. And then to wash in the dirty Jordan River seemed foolish, and so he began to leave. Why in the world should he stay, in his mind there was no reason!

And as he was leaving the servant of Naaman said to him, **“. . . ‘My father, if the prophet had told you to do something great, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, ‘Wash, and be clean’?”**” II Kings 5:13. So Naaman humbled himself, dipped seven times in the Jordan River and was healed of the leprosy. In fact his skin was like that of a baby’s! And Naaman wanted to pay Elisha for this. But Elisha refused the offer, and Naaman departed for home a healed man.

And as they are traveling, and they had only traveled a short distance when Gehazi, Elisha's servant caught up with him, and he told Naaman that Elisha changed his mind. And let's begin reading in II Kings chapter 5, starting in verse 20 and see what transpired here. We are told, **“But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, ‘Look, my master has spared Naaman this Syrian, while not receiving from his hands what he brought; but as the Lord lives, I will run after him and take something from him.’ So Gehazi pursued Naaman. When Naaman saw him running after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him, and said, ‘Is all well?’ And he said, ‘All is well. My master has sent me, saying, “Indeed, just now two young men of the sons of the prophets have come to me from the mountains of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of garments.”” So Naaman said, ‘Please, take two talents.’ And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and handed them to two of his servants; and they carried them on ahead of him. When he came to the citadel, he took them from their hand, and stored them away in the house; then he let the men go, and they departed.”** II Kings 5:20-24.

As Gehazi catches up to Naaman he tells him this story that two young men have come and they could use the money and change of clothes. He asked for \$384,000, and I guess that would take care of anyone's needs. But Naaman is so thankful for what has happened to him that he gives Gehazi double of what he asked for. As Gehazi returned home, he hid the clothes and the money and then he returned to Elisha as if nothing happened.

And listen to what transpired starting in verse 25 of II Kings chapter 5 where 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!

3. SHUNAMMITE’S SON HEALED - II KINGS 4

In II Kings chapter 4 we see this story of the Shunammite’s son who was healed. In this story Elisha travels to Shunem where he was allowed to lodge in this family’s home. And this family, this husband and wife had no children. And Elisha tells the wife that this time next year they will have a son, which came to pass.

Now as time passed by and they had a son, one day as the child had grown, he and his dad were out in the fields working. And the son had a terrible headache and the dad sent his son over to mom to care for him while he went back to work. By the time she brought him home, within a few hours he died. And now she goes to Mount Carmel to find Elisha the prophet. And she was angry with him for doing this to her, giving her a son, and then taking him away so quickly. And in the end, God does use Elisha to heal this boy, raise him from the dead, so there is a happy ending. But in this story I want you to notice something which I find very interesting.

Let's pick up the story in II Kings chapter 4, beginning in verse 25 where we read, **“And so she departed, and went to the man of God at Mount Carmel. So it was, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to his servant Gehazi, ‘Look, the Shunammite woman! Please run now to meet her, and say to her, ‘Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child?’ And she answered, ‘It is well.’ Now when she came to the man of God at the hill, she caught him by the feet, but Gehazi came near to push her away. But the man of God said, ‘Let her alone; for her soul is in deep distress, and the LORD has hidden it from me, and has not told me.’”** II Kings 4:25-27.

As you read these verses Elisha is surprised that the Lord has not revealed to him what was going on in this woman's heart. He didn't know why she was coming, if there was something wrong. That tells me that we can't just tap into this information, this knowledge whenever we want, but the Holy Spirit will give to us a word of knowledge according to His will. The tragedy today is that when we are given this gift we are surprised we have it and the reality is, we should be surprised when God does not give it to us to use in the body of Christ, to minister to the body!

I hope you have seen how this gift was used in the Old Testament with these few stories. The reason we looked at these is that I want you to see that this is not just a New Testament gift, but 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. And what God has done in the Old Testament, we will also see Him do in the New Testament!

THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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

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

We will begin looking at this gift of the word of knowledge in the New Testament starting in John chapter 1, beginning in verse 43 where we read, **“The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, ‘We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote - Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’ And Nathanael said to him, ‘Can anything good come out of Nazareth?’ Philip said to him, ‘Come and see.’ Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, ‘Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!’ Nathanael said to Him, ‘How do You know me?’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.’ Nathanael answered and said to Him, ‘Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Because I said to you, “I saw you under the fig tree,” do you believe? You will see greater things than these.’ And He said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.’”** John 1:43-51.

Here 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. And as they begin walking, Philip and Nathanael run into Jesus and Jesus tells Nathanael things that Jesus could not have known. You see, that fig tree was a good distance away, a place where no one was able to see him sitting, and Jesus spoke of what Nathanael was doing, and it changed Nathanael's heart. And Jesus not only told him where he was, but what he was reading, the Scriptures. Specifically the book of Genesis where Jacob has the vision of the ladder with angels ascending and descending upon it, and 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 she is giving 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. And 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. And 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 it 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, and 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. And 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. And there is nothing wrong with that. The problem arose when they lied and said they gave all the money to the church.

And when Ananias came before Peter, God gave to Peter a word of knowledge, exposing the lie, and 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 that evil that was trying to destroy the church and 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!

5. SIMON THE SORCERER IS EXPOSED - ACTS 8:18-24

Samaria was the place where Jesus encountered the woman by the well, and as she turned to Jesus, she brought many from her city to meet Him. Now Philip is in Samaria and people are getting saved. As the news spreads of what is happening in Samaria, the church in Jerusalem send Peter and John to see if they could help out. And when they arrive they laid hands on these new believers, and the Holy Spirit came upon them.

Let's just pick up the story in Acts chapter 8, starting in verse 18 and then we will expound on what is taking place. We are told, **“And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, ‘Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.’ But Peter said to him, ‘Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.’ Then Simon answered and said, ‘Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me.’”** Acts 8:18-24.

You see, as all this was going on, the laying on of hands and this empowerment with the Holy Spirit, Simon the sorcerer was watching all this and he wanted that kind of power. And as he tells Peter what he wants, Peter tells him literally, “You and your money can go to Hell!” Probably not politically correct today, but it did nail Simon, or should I say the Holy Spirit nailed him. God revealed to Peter what was going on in Simon's heart, bitterness and iniquity that were keeping him from a relationship with God. And his response to what Peter told him was **“... ‘Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me.’”** Acts 8:24. God used the word of knowledge to pierce Simon's heart, to expose his sin! Did he repent and get right with God? We are not sure but he does ask for Peter to pray for him. That again is the word of knowledge in operation. Peter had no way of knowing what was in Simon's heart, but God did and exposed it!

6. PAUL'S JOURNEY TO ROME - ACTS 27

In Acts chapter 27, as Paul was heading to Rome to appear before Caesar to plead his case before him, not on a cruise ship, but as a prisoner, he warned the people on the boat in Acts 27:10, “... ‘Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives.’” But at this point, they did not want to listen to Paul, but they will change their minds as we shall see.

You know the story. The weather started getting rough, the tiny ship was tossed. If not for the courage of the fearless crew, the ship would be lost! Or so they thought! Actually it was not going to be their wisdom or their knowledge that is going to get them through this storm alive, but God's.

We can pick up the story, as the storm is relentless upon them, in verse 21 of Acts chapter 27, where we read “But after long abstinence from food, then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, ‘Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss. And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.’ Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me. However, we must run aground on a certain island.’” Acts 27:21-26.

Paul is telling them not to fear, their lives would be spared, but the ship will be lost. And he had confidence that God had spoken to him, giving him a word of knowledge in what to do in this situation he was in. And 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, that 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. And what God has done in the Old Testament, what God has done in the New Testament, folk's, the story is not over for this gift is still in operation today and I will show you some examples.

THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE CHURCH TODAY

Now let me say this. To deny the operation of this gift today is to deny what the Scriptures have to say and 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, and he was a troubled young man. He had contemplated suicide and he even attempted to kill himself and thank God he did not succeed. And this whole idea is what was on his mind right now. 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. And 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, and 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).

3. EXPOSING A FALSE PROPHET

Again, Pastor Chuck tells the story of how on “One Sunday night I was talking about how to identify a false prophet. ‘There are a lot of paper missionaries out there,’ I said. ‘They live in some of the most beautiful areas of the world, and take candy out to the villages and honk their car horn. When the little kids come running, they shoot pictures of them reaching out for the sweets. Then they’ll send letters back home, along with pictures of huge crowds of kids, and say, ‘Recently we were at this village passing out Bible tracts. Look how eager the children are to receive. And God is blessing our ministry.’ And their plea? ‘Keep your support up.’ Yet these ‘missionaries’ do nothing at all. They’re retired but still use a mailing list to deceive the people back here in the states.’

“I continued, ‘Some right around here have these paper ministries. They have their mailing list which they use to bleed people every month. They live on Lido Island, drive white Cadillac convertibles and wear white wing tipped shoes. They live a high style life, but they don’t have any real ministry at all.’”

“The next morning I got an irate call. My secretary said, ‘This guy sounds awful mad. He wants to talk to you.’ So I replied, ‘Put him on.’ As soon as I picked up the phone, the man spat out, ‘I want you to know that I have a legitimate ministry.’”

“‘What are you talking about?’ I asked.”

“‘You know what I’m talking about!’ he shouted. ‘Last night you were telling the people that my ministry wasn’t legitimate. I live down on Lido Island. I drive that Cadillac convertible. But I have a ministry. It’s a legitimate ministry. I want you to know that.’”

“‘Wait a minute!’ I replied. ‘I’ve never heard of you. I don’t know you. I was just making up a hypothetical case. But if I were you, I would ask the Lord just how legitimate your ministry really is.’”

“At the time I gave that illustration, I thought I was drawing a word picture out of thin air. But not so. It was the exercise of the gift of the word of knowledge, and it nailed that guy to the wall. I even described him right down to his white wing tipped shoes!”
(Chuck Smith, *Living Water*, pp. 113-114).

4. EXPOSING A SIN IN CHURCH IN COSTA RICA

I was speaking with Cecilia a few weeks back after a Sunday morning service. And she was telling me how she truly believes in the gifts of the Spirit and gave me this example. She said that one of her friends was telling her that at a midweek prayer meeting the people just did not feel the presence of God and so two ladies got together and sought the Lord. They asked why He was so distant and the Lord spoke to them and said that there is a gentleman in the prayer meeting who is into pornography.

So as they came together again they spoke about this sin and this man broke down in tears and repented of his sin. God gave these women a word of knowledge that exposed a sin, solved a problem and restored a man back to God!

5. IN THE LIFE OF CHARLES SPURGEON

Listen to the story regarding Charles Spurgeon and how God used this gift of the word of knowledge in his life. We are told, “At a Monday evening prayer meeting, Charles Spurgeon suddenly interrupted his sermon, pointed in a certain direction, and said, ‘Young man, those gloves you are wearing have not been paid for; you have stolen them from your employer!’ After the meeting a young man came to the vestry and begged to see Spurgeon. Pale and trembling, the young man confessed that he had stolen the gloves he was wearing! He promised never to steal again and begged Spurgeon not to expose him to his employer.” (W. Wiersbe, *Wycliffe Handbook of Preaching and Preachers*, p. 219). God used this gift of the word of knowledge to expose the sin in this young man’s life!

6. HERE AT CALVARY CHAPEL OF MANITOWOC

Now I don't have this gift too often, at least not that I am aware of. But when I do see it exercised many times it is through the teaching of the Word of God. As I am teaching, something I say exposes or reveals something that is going on in your life that I would have no idea you were dealing with from the natural realm. And sometimes it is so accurate, so piercing that it seems like someone called me up and told me or wrote me a letter. Let me say this, no one calls me up and says to me, "Hey pastor Joe, I have a friend who is coming to church on Sunday and they are dealing with this issue. Can you teach on it?" And even if they did, I would not listen to them. Can you imagine the phone calls I would get! I will leave it up to the Holy Spirit as I prepare these studies!

And let me say this, most of the time, as I am teaching the Word, I am not even aware of what I am saying is speaking to you until after the service when you come and talk with me and tell me how you were dealing with that situation this week or you were going through that same problem, or living in that sin and are convicted. Now don't become terrified with this gift, it is not like I know everything everyone is doing or saying, not at all. But God does and He uses this gift in the church to build it up, strengthen it, and as the Holy Spirit sees fit, He reveals a word of knowledge in a given situation. And as for me, I see this exercised in my life as I teach the Word of God, but not exclusively.

I will give you one more example of this gift that was given to me at a time when it was needed, even though I did not know it was needed at the time. This took place probably over 10 years ago and at one of our church board meetings I asked the two elders if they would remain on as elders. Both of them said yes and after the meeting my wife and I were going on vacation to California.

While we were there and as we were hiking the Lord spoke to me. He told me that when I got home I needed to ask these men who said they were my elders and wanted to remain elders if they were going to support me in the work. And like Peter I questioned the Lord. "Lord, of course they support me; they said they wanted to remain as elders!" Not a good idea to question the Lord, He knows what He is talking about.

The Lord once again told me what I needed to do and I knew this was not good. I truly believe the word of knowledge was in operation as the Lord was showing me that something was not right and I needed to ask the appropriate question to find out the answer. When we got home I had another board meeting and did as the Lord told me to do. I asked these men if they would support me in the work that I was doing here at Calvary Chapel Manitowoc and when I said that one of the elders yelled out, "I knew it would come to this!" Right then and there I knew what the Lord was doing. He was showing me that not all of these men were behind me and the work I was doing. God exposed this, something that I was not even aware of and the issue was settled. I asked the elder to step down and sadly he left the church. But again, that was the word of knowledge in operation!

As I begin to rap this study up this morning, let me say this. The exercising of this gift, the word of knowledge, is vital for the church to remain healthy and strong. Yes, the gift is not in operation at all times, but as the Holy Spirit reveals things to us, it can be used in the building up of the body of Christ, and yes, this does include exposing sin. Remember Nathan the prophet who confronted David regarding his sin of adultery and murder. It was a word of knowledge that exposed this information to Nathan and then Nathan spoke it to David. And as with David, when sin is revealed and the person repents, the body is strengthened.

Let us not be ignorant of these things that the Holy Spirit desires to give us. The word of knowledge is the ability to know facts about situations or a spiritual principle that could not have been known by natural means. In a sense, it allows someone to see a situation as God sees it. And in the end it profits the body of Christ.

Make no mistake about it, this spiritual gift, the word of knowledge is in operation today, and as I have said, it is a supernatural gift that many times is used so naturally we do not even recognize it until after the fact, until we get more information about the situation. Then we are amazed and wonder how we did it! We did not do it, God did by giving to us the word of knowledge, let us not forget that.

Listen once again to what happened in the life of Charles Spurgeon. We are told, When Charles Spurgeon was pastor at New Park Street in London, God used his words to bring about amazing changes in the lives of people. A man who was on his way to get some gin saw the crowd at the church door and pushed his way in to see what was going on. At that moment, Spurgeon turned and faced the man and said that there was a man in the gallery who had a gin bottle in his pocket and had come with no good motive. The startled man listened to the rest of the message and was converted. One evening a prostitute, on her way to Blackfriars Bridge to commit suicide, stopped at the church, hoping to hear some word that would prepare her to meet her maker. Spurgeon was preaching from Luke 7:36-50, the story of the prostitute who wiped Jesus feet with her tears. His text was verse 44; "Seest thou this woman?" As Spurgeon preached, the woman saw herself but also saw the grace of God and trusted Christ.

- W. Wiersbe, Wycliffe Handbook of Preaching and Preachers, p. 231

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!***