

Word of Knowledge, Word of Wisdom, and Prophecy

I Corinthians 12:8-11



I Corinthians 12:8-11 (NIV)

“To one there is given through the Spirit the *message of wisdom*, to another the *message of knowledge* by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another *prophecy*, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.”



Word [Message] of Knowledge Defined

Specific conviction, impression or insight that comes to a person through a mental picture, a dream, a vision or by scripture about a person or situation that could not be humanly known without revelation from the Spirit.



Word [Message] of Knowledge - Examples

- Jesus telling the Samaritan woman, “you have had five husbands and the man you now have is not your husband.” John 4:18
- Peter confronting Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5, asking “how is it that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?”



Word [Message] of Knowledge - Results

- Samaritan woman: “Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, ‘He told me everything I ever did.’” John 4:39
- Ananias and Sapphira: “Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.” Acts 5:11



Word [Message] of Wisdom Defined

Application of knowledge to a given situation through the supernatural perspective of the Holy Spirit. Gift cannot be gained through study or experience, but may call upon what we humanly possess when it is exercised.



Word [Message] of Wisdom - Examples

- Jesus' response to the Pharisees' efforts to trap him by asking a question about paying taxes to Caesar, to which Jesus ultimately responded, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." Matthew 22:21

Word [Message] of Wisdom - Examples

- James addressing the Council at Jerusalem in Acts 15 concerning what requirements needed to be placed upon the Gentiles coming to Christ. “[W]e should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood.” Acts 15:19-20



Word [Message] of Wisdom - Results

- People's response to Jesus' answer to the tax question — “When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.” Matthew 22:22
- Gentiles' response to James' decision from the Jerusalem Council — “The people read it [letter from the Council at Jerusalem] and were glad for its encouraging message.” Acts 15:31



Prophecy Defined

A divinely inspired and anointed utterance in a known language that represents a supernatural proclamation from God for a person or a group of people. It may involve both foretelling and forthtelling. There is both the gift of prophecy and the office of prophet within the church.



Prophecy - Examples

- Jesus' response after Peter confesses Jesus as "the Christ" — "And I tell you that you are Peter and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." Matthew 16:18



Prophecy - Examples

- Paul addressing immoral conduct in the Corinthian church — “It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father’s wife. . . . When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.” I Corinthians 5:1, 4-5

Prophecy - Results

- Peter addresses the crowd on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-41) — “Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.” Acts 2:41



Prophecy - Results

- Restoration of the immoral brother — “The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. The reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything.”
II Corinthians 2: 6-9



Priestly Functions vs. Prophetic Functions

- Role of the Priest was to represent the people before God.
- Role of the Prophet was to communicate God's message to the people.
- Examples of words of knowledge/wisdom and prophecies prevalent in the Old Testament.



Cautions

- Exercise of these gifts may not be instantly verifiable.
- Subject to abuse and used to control and/or manipulate.



Guidelines

- 1. Does it glorify Jesus Christ? (John 16:14; I Corinthians 12:3; I John 4:1-2)**
- 2. Does it agree with scripture? (Isaiah 8:20)**
- 3. Are the prophecies fulfilled? (Deuteronomy 18:22) – Note: Not all fulfilled prophecies are from God.**



Guidelines

- 4. Is the prophecy disjointed or confused? (Isaiah 28:13)**
- 5. Does the prophecy produce liberty or bondage? (Romans 8:15)**
- 6. Do those holding the office of prophet in the church affirm it? (I Corinthians 14:29, 32)**

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