

The Word of Knowledge



Gifts of the Spirit (Part 3)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again. This week I'm sharing with you on the exciting and important theme of spiritual gifts. I've explained that these gifts can logically be divided up into three groups each containing three gifts: three gifts of revelation, three gifts of power, three vocal gifts.

Yesterday I spoke about the first of the gifts of revelation, the word of wisdom. Today I'm going to speak about the second gift of revelation, the word of knowledge.

Yesterday I pointed out that there's a close relationship between wisdom and knowledge and yet they are distinct. And I tried to define the difference in simple terms. I said this, "Wisdom is directive; knowledge is informative." Knowledge gives us the facts; wisdom tells us what to do about the facts. In each case it's a word, a word of wisdom or a word of knowledge. God has all wisdom and all knowledge. Praise to His name. He doesn't dump all His wisdom and all His knowledge out on us because we would collapse under the strain. But when we are in a situation where we need to know something or need direction and it is not available to us through our natural ability or education or through our senses, then God in His sovereignty gives us a word of wisdom or a word of knowledge. Just a little part of His total wisdom or His total knowledge.

Now I want to read to you an example of the operation of the word of knowledge in the ministry of the apostle Peter as recorded in the book of Acts. I am going to read from Acts 4:34–35 and then I'm going to go into Acts 5, the first part of the chapter. This is the story of Ananias and Sapphira. I want you to notice carefully at how God the Holy Spirit, through Peter, dealt with that situation. It's a description of life in the early church in Jerusalem. Acts 4:

> "For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales, and lay them at the apostles' feet; and they would be distributed to each, as any had need."

Acts 5:

> "But a certain man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bring a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back some of the price of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it now under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God.' And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came upon all who heard of it. And the young men arose and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him. Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter responded to her, 'Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?' And she said, 'Yes, that was the price.' Then Peter said to her, 'Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they shall carry you out as well.' And she fell immediately at his feet, and breathed her last; and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all who heard of these things." (NAS)

That's a remarkable example of God giving knowledge to one of His servants. This couple, Ananias and Sapphira, were trying to cheat God. As Peter pointed out to them, they weren't lying to men, they were lying to the Holy Spirit. Now the essence of their guilt was this. They were claiming to give God the whole price of the property they had sold, whereas they were actually withholding a part of it. Peter told them they were free to keep the whole price, but what they were not free to do was to try to deceive God. And Peter very clearly pointed out to them that it wasn't man they were dealing with, but God. And so by this supernatural word of knowledge he made it clear, first to Ananias and then to Sapphira, that he knew that they were lying, they were not telling the truth about the price. The impact of this revelation of God's omniscience, His total knowledge, brought such tremendous conviction upon both Ananias and Sapphira that they actually could not live. The life went from them.

Let me just point out certain things about this to illustrate the operation of the word of knowledge. First of all, Peter received his knowledge direct from the Holy Spirit. There was no human source. He didn't have a detective agency, he didn't carry out investigations, he got it direct from the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, as I have already indicated, the results were dramatic and powerful. There were two main effects. First of all, the operation of this gift in this context preserved the church from being infiltrated with hypocrisy. It kept the church pure and honest and upright before God. Secondly, it brought tremendous conviction upon the unbelievers. It showed them that God really was in the midst of His people.

In the Song of Solomon 6:10, the church is prophetically presented in these words: "awesome as an army with banners." I think we sometimes forget that one aspect of the church is that of an army, an army that will put fear and dread in the enemies of God. And one of the things that is fearful and awesome about that army is its banners. And some of the banners that make the church so awesome to the enemies of God are these supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit. It was the word of knowledge, there, through Peter that brought fear, not only upon the church, but upon the whole surrounding community. This is one of the functions of the gifts of the Holy Spirit to enable us to deal effectively with God's enemies and to make the church indeed awesome as an army with banners.

Now I want to give just a couple of examples from my own personal experience of how the word of knowledge has operated in my experience. I remember some considerable number of years ago now, I was introduced to a Christian lady. I didn't know anything about her. There was nothing very strange or peculiar about her appearance. In actual fact, she had deep problems. She was a diagnosed schizophrenic. But I knew nothing about that. Normally, I would have just greeted her, but before I knew what I was saying, before I spoke another word to her, out of my lips came these words, "Your problem is your mother."

Now I am normally a fairly well conducted person and I wouldn't greet a stranger with those words. Afterwards I felt embarrassed. I thought, "How wrong of me to come out and make that assertion to a woman I didn't even know." But actually that was the key to her total deliverance and healing. It transpired later that it was a wrong relationship and a wrong attitude to her mother that had opened the door to all her personal and emotional problems. And by the Spirit of God, without even understanding what I was doing myself, I put the finger right on the problem. And when she saw the nature of her problem, she was open to the subsequent counseling and prayer that brought her to complete restoration.

I met her again a number of times later and she was a perfectly normal healthy woman. No evidence of schizophrenia left in her life. But it took the diagnosis of the Holy Spirit to go to the root of her problem.

In the gospels, the Holy Spirit is called "the finger of God." That is one of the titles. And you see how God, through that Holy Spirit finger, through the word of knowledge, reaches out and touches an area in a person's life or background that is just the key area which has to be opened up before real help can come.

Now let me give you just one more example in my own experience of how I was helped myself through the word of knowledge. Just recently I was conducting a conference in Jerusalem. I had concluded my teaching and I had suggested to the people that they could come forward for prayer if they had personal needs of healing or other needs. While we were standing there just waiting to see what the people would do, a sister in the Lord whom I knew and respected said this, "There's a man here with a problem in his right eye. It's a chronic problem and he's taking medication for it. If he will come and be prayed for he will be healed."

Well, there was a kind of pause. Who was the man with the problem in his right eye? And I was just looking around at the people wondering who it was. Suddenly, I thought to myself, "That could be me. I've certainly had a chronic inflammation in the corner of my right eye and I've been taking one of these medications for it. I really believe it must be me!" So I just said to the lady and the other ministers there, "You know, I think that's me. I'm the one with the problem in my right eye." And I just asked them to pray for me. Nothing very dramatic happened, but by the next day my eye was completely healed. So you see God again reached out with the finger of the Holy Spirit through the word of knowledge in that sister and just showed me my problem, brought it to my attention, and showed me that that was the moment for me to be healed. That created the faith in me to receive the healing which God wanted me to receive.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be speaking about the third gift of revelation: the distinguishing or the discerning of spirits.

Radio Program

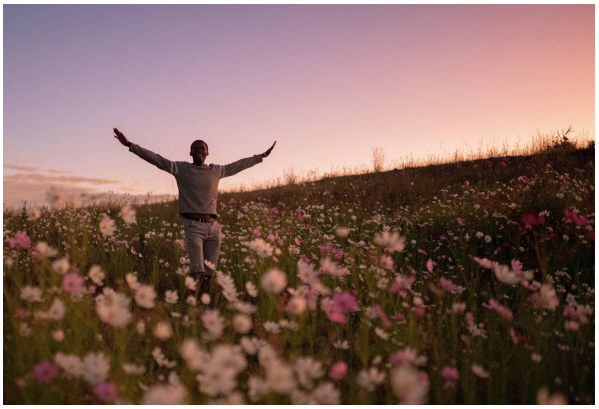
Transcript: TS-R007-103-ENG
Last Updated: 12 Apr 2023
Website: derekprince.com

Bible Teaching Resources



Books

Illuminate and expand your understanding of the Bible with the Derek Prince collection of Christian books.



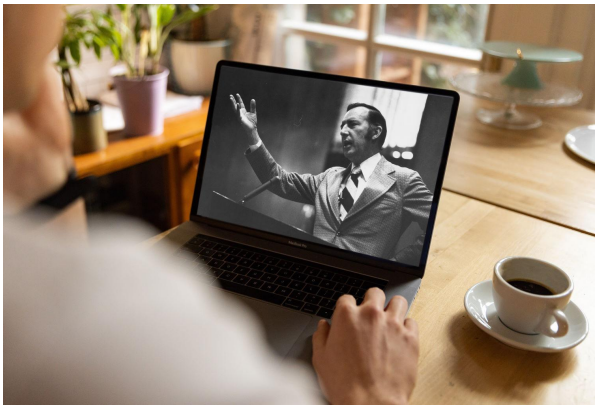
Daily Devotionals

Browse free biblically inspired daily devotionals by Derek Prince for practical teachings to uplift your Christian faith.



Legacy Radio

Listen to inspiring 10-minute messages and connect faith to life with the Derek Prince Legacy Radio podcast.



Sermons

Watch original and digitally remastered sermons by Derek Prince. Includes full message transcripts (free download).



Official App

Available free, download the official Derek Prince Ministries app and equip your faith, anywhere, anytime.



Proclamations

Declare life and experience the transformative power of God's Word with our bible-based Proclamations.

Copyright © Derek Prince Ministries