

Spiritual Gifts: *The Three Magi*

(*Knowledge, Wisdom & Discernment*)

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Introduction

Good morning, brethren. Today we'll be covering three different, but related, spiritual gifts: knowledge, wisdom and discernment. While these three gifts are *interrelated*, they are also *distinct*. In his first letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul wrote:

1st Corinthians 12:8,10 for to one is given the word of *wisdom* through the Spirit, to another the word of *knowledge* through the same Spirit ... to another *discerning* of spirits,

Therefore, they are three distinct, though inter-related, spiritual gifts.

Three gifts in one presentation? Don't worry – I'll give you the *Readers' Digest* version. Rejoice!

Definitions

Here are a few definitions.

Knowledge = profound *insight* into godly principles – *knowing* God's Word and His deep truths

Wisdom = divine insight into the *relationship* between Scripture and life – understanding biblical *application* of His truth to life's situations

Discernment = the ability to *differentiate* truth from error

Knowledge

A person with the spiritual gift of knowledge possesses a profound *insight* into godly principles – *knowing* God's Word and His deep truths. The firm foundation for knowledge is Jesus Christ – the Word, the Truth and the Light. Indeed, knowing Jesus and Him crucified is a prerequisite for understanding all the spiritual truths contained in Scripture.

A person with the gift of knowledge is often *idea*-oriented and will diligently search the scriptures to know and understand the truth that God will show him. He may be scholarly, work in a seminary or live in a monastery. His concern is with the *discovery* of the truth. He passionately *seeks* the truth and yearns for *accuracy* in his understanding. He is alert to shades of meaning and to nuances and subtleties of expression.

Someone can know what a Scripture *says* and understand what that Scripture *means* but not know how to *apply* that Scripture to daily living.

Wisdom

While the gift of knowledge deals with *discovery* or *revelation* of the truth, the gift of wisdom deals with its *application* to life. The spiritual gift of wisdom gives insight into the *practical application* of knowledge to daily life.

In Ecclesiastes we read:

Ecclesiastes 7:12 But the excellence of knowledge is that wisdom gives life to those who have it.

Wisdom brings knowledge to life in our lives. People with the gift of wisdom are problem solvers, decision-makers and counselors. They are looked to for advice and counsel. One definition for wisdom is clarity of vision. They have been gifted with a vision to see *how* all the pieces of the puzzle fit together in a given situation and to see an answer to a problem where others remain bewildered.

The gift of knowledge is built upon knowing Jesus, and Him crucified. The gift of wisdom asks, “What would Jesus do?”

For your own Bible study into wisdom, knowledge and understanding, you can study the books of *Proverbs* and *Ecclesiastes*. Wisdom is built upon a core of knowledge but that knowledge must be correct, must be based on truth. This is where discernment comes in.

Discernment

The gift of knowledge brings us *truth* and the gift of wisdom enables its *application* to our daily lives. God also provides members of His church with the spiritual gift of discernment.

A person with the gift of discernment has the divine ability to differentiate between truth and error and to distinguish between right and wrong. Discernment recognizes the reality of God’s truth and sees the light of His Word and can recognize a counterfeit a mile away. Discernment discerns *spiritual sources* (human, satanic or divine), *personal motives* (godly, carnal), distinguishes between *truth and error* and *tests the spirits*.

The Word of God and the Holy Spirit work with this person in a special way to discern that which other members of the body of Christ cannot. This special gift from God to a select few of His children requires courage to use, but when used provides great help to the Church.

Dr. Wagner, in his book, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* (pg. 96), writes:

“The gift of discernment can operate on several levels. The most obvious is the ability to know that purportedly god behavior is in reality the work of Satan. ... Another level is that of discerning whether something a Christian brother or sister does, emerges from godly motives or carnal motives. ... A third level involves the supernatural ability to distinguish truth from error, although motives may be proper.”

Let It Be

In summary ...

- knowledge knows Jesus Christ
- wisdom does as Jesus would
- discernment sees into the heart of the matter

How many of you were at Fishnet 2001? How many of you stayed for the communion service? The song played during communion was “Let It Be.” This is one of my favorite Beatles’ songs. “Whispered words of wisdom – let it be, let it be.”

“Whispered words of wisdom” – that “still small voice” – harkens to our hearts. Let it be. May we always be *alert* to – and *responsive* to – the prompting of God’s Holy Spirit.

Let it be – let God be – in our lives. Let His Spirit grow within us and let His spiritual gifts be used daily in our lives. Let this God who loves us and lives in us be visible within us to others. And may we never neglect the precious and priceless spiritual gifts which God has given to us.

In conclusion, let me offer this prayer, beginning with words from Paul’s letter to the Ephesians.

Ephesians 1:17-19 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.

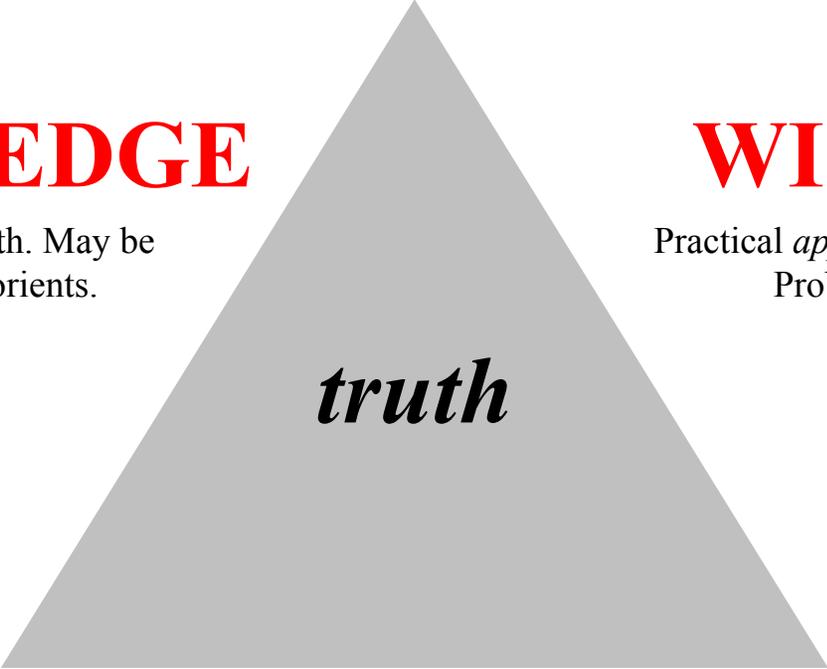
May our God whom we love enrich each of our lives. Let Your Spirit fall upon us in a powerful way – transforming our lives and our purposes according to Your will. And may we walk in the Spirit of truth and love with the spiritual gifts You has graced us with, using those gifts to nurture and edify and strengthen the body of Christ. In Jesus’ name, let it be. Amen.

KNOWLEDGE

Discovery of the truth. May be scholarly, idea-orientes.

WISDOM

Practical application of the truth. Problem-solvers.



truth

DISCERNMENT

Discerns spiritual sources, spiritual motives and spiritual truth.