

THE GIFTS OF K N O W L E D G E AND OF

W I S D O M -A SPEAKING GIFT TEXT: I CORINTHIANS 12:8

EXPLANATION

I. WHAT WAS INVOLVED IN THESE GIFTS

- A. These two gifts seemed to be closely associated with one another although they are distinct one from another (I Cor. 12:8).
- B. The gift of knowledge was evidently the God-given ability to discover, organize and clarify spiritual truth through a concentrated study of God's Word.
- C. The gift of wisdom on the other hand was the God-given ability to apply the knowledge of God's truth to life situations.

EXERCISE

II. HOW THESE GIFTS WERE EXERCISED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- A. The gift of knowledge was used to distinguish between truth and error and to direct one's zeal or desire to serve the Lord.
 - 1. We see this is what the Corinthians were lacking in and no doubt why Paul prayed the prayer he did for them in I Cor. 1:5. These folks had all the gifts and they no doubt had a desire to serve the Lord but they were certainly going about it in the wrong ways.
 - 2. Notice the apostle Paul prayed a similar prayer for the Colossians (Col. 1:9). Their church was plagued by the heretical teachings of gnosticism and this had led to questions about the deity of Christ, worshipping of angels, and unwarranted and unmeaning-ful asceticism.
 - 3. We also find a good example of where this gift was lacking among the religious Jews (Rom. 10:1,2). This of course is understandable because these folks were not saved and apart from salvation there is no impartation of spiritual gifts.

B. The gift of wisdom was used in a variety of ways and we see it involved applying what was known to different circumstances.

1. One exercise of this gift was before unreasonable and hostile courts. In this connection we see that Peter exercised it before the Jewish Sanhedrin (Acts 4:19; 5:29). Stephen did the same (Acts 6:10). Paul no doubt exercised this gift on many occasions: at Damascus (Acts 9:22); at Jerusalem (Acts 9:29); before Felix (Acts 24:10); before Festus (Acts 25:6); before Agrippa (Acts 26:1),
2. A second way this gift was exercised was in answering the arguments of those unsaved. In this connection Paul used it on Mars Hill in Athens (Acts 17:17); at Ephesus (Acts 18:19) and among the Jews on many occasions (Acts 17:2,3).
3. A third way this gift was exercised was to solve various problems. We see this used in Acts 6 when seven men were chosen to settle the matter of certain gentile widows being neglected. These men had the gift of wisdom. Another example of this gift being exercised was at the council at Jerusalem (Acts 15).
4. Finally we see that this gift exercised in connection with making the proper choices in how to best serve the Lord (Eph. 5:15,17; James 3:13).

EXTENT

III. HOW THESE GIFTS OPERATE AND APPLY TO INDIVIDUALS IN OUR DAY

- A. Both the gift of knowledge and the gift of wisdom is still given to many of the Lord's people in our day. We have many examples of men who have been given a great degree of depth and understanding in the things of God. Dr. John Walvoord and Dr. Dwight Pentecost are outstanding examples. However these gifts are not just limited to a few. I would say Pastor Lester Roloff exercised it before the civil courts of Texas. I believe it is possessed by many pastors as well as others in our day. Many are able to answer wisely the arguments of those unsaved. Many use it to settle or solve various problems.
- B. The gift of wisdom is seen today in the teacher who can apply the principles of God's Word to the problems people face, in the Christian counselor who is able to

help those who have developed problems they can't handle, and in the pastor who is able to lead his people through various and difficult circumstances in this world.

ERROR

IV. WHAT IS SOMETIMES WRONGLY ASSOCIATED WITH THIS GIFT

- A. Some may suppose since they do not possess this gift they should make no attempts to study God's Word and become more knowledgeable. But all believers are exhorted to study and to grow (II Tim. 2:15; II Pet. 3:18).
- B. Oftentimes individuals with this gift can commit sin in becoming proud of what they know especially if they look down on others and offend them who are weaker in the faith (I Cor. 8:1; 10-12).
- C. There are several things we may discern about these particular gifts and those who possess them. Many folks want to serve the Lord and have great zeal but they lack the knowledge to go with it. Knowledge without zeal results in unfruitfulness. Zeal on the other hand without knowledge results in error. The person who possesses the gift of wisdom is not a know it all or one who tries to do all the talking or direct everything -this leads only to problems. But rather the things spoken of in James 3:13-18 will be evident in the life of the person whom God has so blessed with this ability. With these things those with this gift are able to answer the arguments of the unsaved, settle problems and make proper choices.