

The Gift of Knowledge

A Gifted Story: He was not particularly interested in religion, but the campus Christian group gave him a chance to make some friends. They were all talking about the Bible, and he really couldn't offer anything on the subject because he had never even touched a copy. Curtis figured he'd better take a look at it before the next meeting. He began reading the Bible one evening, and he literally couldn't put it down. All through the night he poured over the pages and on through the next day. Day after day he lived and breathed scripture. His thirst for the Word of God was insatiable from that day on. Curtis has the gift of knowledge, and today he is a publisher of Christian books.

Biblical references:

Romans 12:2 - Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God - what is good and is pleasing to him and is perfect.

Col. 1:10 - Then you will be able to live as the Lord wants and will always do what pleases him. Your lives will produce all kinds of good deeds, and you will grow in your knowledge of God. 1 Cor. 12:8 - The Spirit gives one person a message full of wisdom, while to another person the same Spirit gives a message full of knowledge.

1 Cor. 14:6 - So when I come to you, my brothers, what use will I be to you if I speak in strange tongues? Not a bit, unless I bring some revelation from God or some knowledge or some inspired message or some teaching.

Definition and comment:

The gift of Knowledge: the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to discover, accumulate, analyze, and clarify information and ideas which are pertinent to the growth and well-being of the Body. This gift builds understanding in an exceptional way of the great truths of God's word and gives insight into their relevance to specific situations in the church. A person with this gift will be driven to learn, analyze and uncover new insights with regard to the Bible and faith. The spiritual gift of knowledge may well be revealed through certain characteristics - a bent for scholarship, a love of reading, contentment with study, at home wrestling with ideas and engaged in problem-solving. Undoubtedly people involved in Bible translation have this gift, as do those who often find revelation in the words of scripture. The particular kind of knowledge inherent in this gift is tied to God's revealed word and it's applicability to the moment at hand.

Since the major source of knowledge being employed by this gift is the Bible, there will most certainly be a high level of comprehension and internalization of scripture. It is said that immersion in God's word readies a person for most any circumstance as the Spirit will then call forth a message of truth as needed from the storehouse of passages held in the heart. The person with the gift of knowledge will understand the living nature of God's word.

Affirm that you have this gift; questions to ask yourself:

1. Have you been able to help others distinguish key and important facts of scripture?
2. Do you enjoy studying and reading material that expands your understanding of the Bible?
3. In your personal study do you frequently discover new insights in scripture?
4. Do you feel compelled to share with others the biblical insights you discover?
5. Do biblical passages come to mind when you seek to know God's will in a particular situation?

Areas for study and personal growth:

1. Full familiarity with the Bible is critical for effective exercise of the gift of knowledge. More than likely you will be at home with scripture for the rest of your life. A regular disciplined excursion through the pages will become an on-going visit with a friend. A rule of life of daily scriptural reading will help to develop your gift of knowledge.

2. Seek to build a library of biblical reference materials (such as Barclay's daily study Bible series; guides to help with interpretation of idioms, parables and allegories, symbolism and figures of speech; and a concordance to assist in the finding of passages).
3. Develop a regular prayer discipline that you might be led by the Spirit to the knowledge that is needed for situations that arise. Trust not in your own intellect for God's knowledge; instead, trust him to give you knowledge through prayer.
4. If your ministry calls you to work with others as you impart knowledge, strengthen your skills for presentation, whether teaching, mentoring or reading - all of these areas require skills of message delivery that can be learned. Consider attending appropriate workshops. For example, a workshop on techniques for being a lector could help you maximize your effectiveness in oral reading; a workshop on storytelling could help you relate the Gospel stories more dynamically.
5. Discover ways to share your knowledge with others, and be sensitive to where a message of knowledge may be helpful in the building up of the church. For instance, you may become better equipped than most to lead a bible study or to help develop a good curriculum.

General ways to use the gift of knowledge:

- Personally: share biblical truths with family and friends; tell stories from scripture whenever they seem applicable.
- Within the church: find ways to offer the knowledge you have gained in decision-making, instruction, and through writing (see more specific church service opportunities in the Booklet *Channels for Using the Gifts*).
- Within the wider community: seek ecumenical involvement and help reveal Christ's hope "that we all may be one."

For reflection:

We Christians grow in our faith by many avenues and the best spiritual growth occurs when we build up our faith in multiple ways. Tradition, the sacraments, heartfelt belief, and reason all combine to enrich our experience as children of God. All of these together complete our armor against the dark forces of this world and set us in forward movement on our pilgrimage as we seek to know our Maker. Sometimes, through ill preparation or lack of opportunity, we fall short in our reasoning powers when it comes to our faith. Many feel that faith can only truly be known by sheer belief. The thought is that reason should not be employed because one cannot absolutely prove the existence of God. That, however, leaves the believer vulnerable to a loss of faith in a time of trial or attack of disbelief in depression. Actually, reason is as important as any other component in faith building, and the gift of knowledge is the chief gift that can be employed to help Christians see their faith in reasonable terms. Your gift of knowledge is crucial in helping others to see and understand God's truths in intellectual ways that will stand the test of dispute. Knowledge of our faith holds us together when weakness cools our hearts. We stay the course because our minds tell us with surety that the path we are on is correct, despite any feelings of despair that may grip us. Our grounding in knowledge and our consequential reasoning give us mental as well as heartfelt conviction. It is a case where our minds carry our hearts through the turbulent periods of our lives until our hearts can be rekindled again. Use your gift to help strengthen our minds for Christ in the certain and reasonable knowledge of the enduring quality of his love.