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The Word of Wisdom
12: 8a

Paul begins with two **gifts** that sound very much alike: the **word of wisdom** and **the word of knowledge**. **They** apparently were of particular interest to **the Corinthians**. The Greek word for **wisdom** is *sophia*. Some of **the Corinthians** worshiped "the wisdom" of the world. In Gnosticism, a heresy in the early Christian church, Sophia is sometimes portrayed as a divine being superior to **God**, who reprimands **God** for arrogance. In other Gnostic texts, Sophia is a mischievous spirit who indirectly creates a world so evil that **God** has to rescue it by sending another person named **Yeshua**. According to these texts, **Yeshua** taught that we are rescued from evil and returned to **God** through knowledge (*gnosis*).

More recently, the Shakers have understood Sophia as the fourth person of the Godhead. A Russian Orthodox priest named Sergei Bulgakov has taught that Sophia is the essence of **the Trinity**, the glue that binds **Father**, **Son** and **Holy Spirit** together. Thus, Sophia has been gaining popularity in some pseudo "Christian" circles for many years. For a growing number of misguided "Christians," Sophia is the feminine symbol of divinity desperately needed to balance the patriarchal emphasis of the Church and is worshiped as a goddess!

The gift of wisdom clearly takes us back to the problem addressed at the beginning of the letter (**to see link click Am – False Wisdom vs the Good News**), where on the basis of worldly **"wisdom" the Corinthians** were rejecting both **Paul** and **His** gospel. Indeed, in contrast to their own criterion for "spiritual" excellence, **Paul** says **he** deliberately rejected coming to them either in **"wisdom" that consisted of mere rhetoric (1:17),** or **the eloquence of human "wisdom" (2:1** and **5).** With a considerable stroke of inspiration from **the Spirit**, **Paul** now used one of **their** own terms to begin **his** list of **gifts** and redefines that term in light of the work of **the Ruach** so as to give it a significantly different context than **their** own.[363]



The word of wisdom is a broad term. The use of **word** (Greek: *logos*) indicates this is a speaking ability. In the apostolic age it may have been revelation at times. In Bri't Chadashah, wisdom is used most often to refer to the ability to understand **God's** will and to apply it obediently **(Matthew 11:19** and **13:54; Mark 6:2; Luke 7:35; Acts 6:10; James 1:5, 3:13** and **17; Second Peter 3:15)**. Therefore, **the word of wisdom is the God given ability to apply practical biblical truth to daily life situations for yourself or others. Wisdom** doesn't end with knowledge, but is expressed in transformed hearts and lives. It is an ability a counselor must have in order to apply **God's** truth to the questions and problems brought to her. It is a feature of **the gift** that **a shepherd of the flock (Ephesians 4:11),** who must know, understand, and be able to apply **God's Word** in order to lead **his people** as **he** should.[364]

People with this **gift** are able to take from their own life experiences and share what **God** has taught them through those things. They can easily recognize where a decision of action may lead and can warn against those that may be harmful or unfruitful. They can see through the confusion of a situation and can give direction that would help an individual or a group obtain a **God**-glorifying goal. The Church needs those with **the word of wisdom** to guide Her through uncertain or difficult times.

*Dear Wise Heavenly **Father, Your** perfect knowledge **(Job 37:16)** is such a comfort! Praise **You** that **You** so generously give **wisdom** to some of **Your** children as **a gift**. Praise **You** for giving **Your wisdom** in many ways **(Hebrews 1:1)**. Praise **You** that when **wisdom** is needed right away – you are only an arrow's prayer away. How awesome it is that **You**, who rule the universe, always have time to listen to those with this **gift** and to guide their path. Thank **You** for having such a deep and caring heart and for generously giving **Your** presence and **wisdom** for **Your** Church. In **Yeshua's** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*