

1 Corinthians 12:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

Analysis

For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom—Logos sophias (λόγος σοφίας, "word of wisdom") likely refers to Spirit-given ability to apply divine truth to complex situations, offering wise counsel and practical insight. This differs from natural intelligence—it's supernatural wisdom for navigating life's challenges according to God's perspective. **To another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit**—logos gnōseōs (λόγος γνώσεως) perhaps means Spirit-revealed understanding of divine truth, doctrinal insight, or supernatural knowledge of facts otherwise unknowable.

The distinction between sophia (wisdom) and gnōsis (knowledge) is debated—possibly wisdom applies truth while knowledge grasps truth, or wisdom is practical while knowledge is theoretical. Paul's main point: **by the same Spirit** (dia tou autou Pneumatos)—different gifts, identical source. He begins listing specific charismata (grace-gifts), emphasizing verbal gifts first, perhaps to balance the Corinthians' overemphasis on spectacular sign-gifts like tongues.

Historical Context

Corinth was obsessed with sophia (wisdom) and gnōsis (knowledge), evidenced by their pride in human philosophy (1 Cor 1-3) and knowledge (8:1). Paul redirects their attention to Spirit-given wisdom and knowledge, which differs radically from worldly intellectual achievement.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Spirit-given wisdom differ from worldly intelligence or academic knowledge?
2. When have you seen 'a word of wisdom' provide supernatural guidance beyond human reasoning?
3. Why might Paul emphasize verbal teaching gifts before spectacular sign-gifts?

Interlinear Text

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|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|----------|----------|-----------|
| ᷄ | μὲν | γὰρ | διὰ | τοῦ | πνεῦμα | δίδοται | λόγος | σοφίας |
| to one | G3303 | For | by | G3588 | Spirit | is given | the word | of wisdom |
| G3739 | | G1063 | G1223 | | G4151 | G1325 | G3056 | G4678 |

| | | | | | | | |
|------------|-------|----------|--------------|-------|-------|----------|--------|
| ἄλλω | δὲ | λόγος | γνώσεως | κατὰ | τὸ | αὐτὸ | πνεῦμα |
| to another | G1161 | the word | of knowledge | by | G3588 | the same | Spirit |
| G243 | | G3056 | G1108 | G2596 | | G846 | G4151 |

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 1:5 (Parallel theme): That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge;

2 Corinthians 8:7 (Parallel theme): Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.

Psalms 143:10 (Spirit): Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.

Proverbs 2:6 (Parallel theme): For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

Nehemiah 9:20 (Spirit): Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldst not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst.

1 Corinthians 1:30 (Parallel theme): But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

Isaiah 59:21 (Spirit): As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.

Isaiah 50:4 (Word): The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.

Job 32:8 (Spirit): But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

Exodus 31:3 (Spirit): And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,