

Reference: Knowledge, Wisdom & Discernment



Knowledge - *shares what you'd never know*

Definition: Spirit-given understanding of truth, doctrine, or divine mysteries that builds up the Church

Picture: a divine download from the Holy Spirit

Biblical example: John 4:17-18 - Jesus and the Samaritan woman

Key Scriptures:

1. Colossians 2:2-3

"...that they may know the mystery of God, namely Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

- Christ is the source; the implication is that knowledge is spiritually revealed through Him.

2. Romans 15:14

"...you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another."

- A pastoral gift of knowledge enabling ministry and instruction.

3. 2 Peter 1:2-3

"Grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord."

- Spiritual growth is closely linked to increasing in this Spirit-enabled knowledge.

4. Daniel 2:21-22

"He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding... he reveals deep and hidden things."

- An Old Testament example of revelatory knowledge granted by the Spirit.

Wisdom - *shows which way to go*

Definition: Spirit-given ability to apply God's truth in practical or pastoral situations

Picture: a divine compass for when the way seems unclear

Biblical example: 1 Kings 3:16-28 - Solomon and the dispute about the baby

Key Scriptures:

1. James 1:5

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given to him."

- Wisdom is given by God to the believer—it's not merely learned but divinely imparted.

2. James 3:17

"But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason..."

- Contrasts earthly vs. Spirit-inspired wisdom - this heavenly wisdom clearly reflects a gift of the Spirit.

3. Colossians 1:9

"We have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding."

- Points to wisdom as a spiritual attribute received through prayer and the Spirit.

4. Exodus 31:3

"I have filled him (Bezalel) with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, understanding and knowledge..."

- One of the earliest mentions of Spirit-given wisdom for service in God's house.



Discernment - *helps the truth to show*

Definition: The supernatural ability to distinguish truth from error, good from evil, safe from unsafe attitudes/behaviours.

Picture: a divine MRI scan to reveal what's under the surface

Biblical Example: Acts 16:16-18 - Paul and the fortune-telling woman

Key Scriptures:

1. 1 Corinthians 2:14–15

"The spiritual person judges all things... For who has understood the mind of the Lord?"

- Spiritual discernment contrasts with the natural man's inability to understand spiritual truths.

2. Philippians 1:9–10

"That your love may abound... with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent."

- Suggests a Spirit-led ability to assess what is best in moral or doctrinal matters.

3. Hebrews 5:14

"But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice..."

- While partly developed, it is also a fruit of spiritual maturity and the Spirit's work.

4. 1 John 4:1

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God..."

- Encourages the Church to exercise spiritual discernment, a vital gift especially in contexts of teaching and prophecy.

Where **knowledge** reveals facts,
and **wisdom** applies truth,
discernment unveils the spirit behind the facts.

Summary Table:

Gift	Definition	Helpful Picture	Key Texts
Knowledge ...shares what you'd never know	Revealed understanding of truth or doctrine	Divine download from the Holy Spirit	Col. 2:3 Rom. 15:14; 2 Pet. 1:2–3 Dan. 2:21–22
Wisdom ...shows which way to go	Insightful application of God's truth	Divine compass for when the way seems unclear	James 1:5 James 3:17 Col. 1:9 Ex. 31:3
Discernment ...helps the truth to show	Ability to spiritually judge & distinguish	Divine MRI scan to reveal what's under the surface	1 Cor. 2:14–15 Heb. 5:14 Phil. 1:9–10 1 John 4:1

Notes:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....