

# Not Trusting Our Wisdom

by Gayle Erwin

---

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of relying on God's wisdom and gifts rather than our own understanding as we embark on new journeys in faith.*

**Duration:** 37:56

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 2:1

**Topics:** "Spiritual Gifts", "Humility In Service"

---

## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of using the gifts and talents bestowed upon individuals to serve others and bring glory to God. It highlights the concept of being a friend of Jesus, doing His will, and the significance of humility and service in the Christian journey. The speaker encourages the audience to rely on God's strength, seek wisdom, and embrace the various gifts of the Spirit for ministry and impact.

---

## Transcript

What a delight to share this time with you. We all kind of cleaned up good, didn't we? Great. Well, I have a surprise in a way for you in terms of what I'm going to tell you that I want you to do as graduates.

I know that this is a very important time. It's an important time for me, and I was thrilled to have the opportunity to come back and share it with you. One of my favorite persons in the Bible is a guy named Paul.

We call him an apostle, and he wrote more of those parts of the Bible from which we tend to get church polity and so forth than anyone else. But Paul was a brilliant guy. He was the academician of the New Testament.

Maybe that's why he did so much writing. It may well have been that Barnabas was the better thinker and man and much more loved by the people, but Paul was the writer. And he goes to Asia, or well, to Asia Minor.

He goes to cities that were major cities of the world then, and they still are. And that's such a surprising thing, because if there was anyone who should have only gone to the Jewish people, it should have been Paul, because he was a Jew's Jew. He was a Pharisee's Pharisee.

God offered it, I think, to Peter, and Peter, well, I guess didn't quite live up to it. And so God says, well, I have a real sense of humor. I'm going to send the most unlikely of all people to the Gentiles.

Hey, Paul. Now Paul goes to Athens. Now Athens was the center of the world.

It was the thinker's place, man. They even had a place called Mars Hill. It isn't big.

I mean, it's just a small rock, and it's been absolutely, you can kill yourself climbing it because people have worn it absolutely slick, you know. And there, the great thinkers of Athens would gather and think and talk. Now, I like to put myself in Paul's shoes.

What might he have been thinking? I'm as smart as those guys. I'm going to go show them. So he climbs Mars Hill, and there among those intellectuals, he outthinks them, speaks to them about that unknown God that you have an idol for, a statue for over there.

I want to talk to you about him. Well, Paul, I think, later on realized, I blew it. Because you see, he was going to the people that had been the kind of people that actually crucified Jesus.

It was the common people, the Amharetz, who actually listened to Jesus in mass. And this was not the same kind of people. I've had the chance to be among some academicians.

I think I was the person that they kind of looked at and wondered about most of the time. But I'm fascinated by how their thought processes are, and how removed from reality. That's why you hear things like ivory tower.

Paul went to the ivory tower people first. And I think he won whatever argument there was, in fact, so much so they were willing to hear him again, but later. And he left there and did not plant a major church in Athens, as he did later.

Now the scripture informs us that he went from Athens to Corinth. And I want to read to you from 1 Corinthians chapter 2, the lesson he had learned when he left Athens and headed for Corinth. Here's what he says.

When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you. Now that's what I'm inviting you to.

This is your graduation time, and I'm inviting you to know nothing. Now I know you've been here for a while, you've studied, you've done a great job, and here I come along and say, now I want you to know nothing, except, well let me read the rest of this. I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

I came to you in weakness and fear and with much trembling. My message, now this is from probably the most brilliant writer of the New Testament, my message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. One of the things that Jesus informs the apostles about in the Gospel of John is that without me you can do nothing.

Now how much is that? We've got that solved. But the beautiful thing is he makes sure that we have everything we need for the journey, everything we need for our ministry, and the thing is, brilliant as you might be and as good looking as you are, that's not the thing that cuts it with God, you see, because in God's eyes everybody's beautiful and everybody's brilliant. His love for us is equal no matter what.

So now that you begin something brand new in a way, you've reached a milestone and it's an important milestone. I wish that we could each give you stipends of \$100,000 and say, go do something, unfortunately we won't. But I can promise you this, he who said without me you can do nothing made sure that you will have everything you possibly can have.

One of the things that he says about us, he says, now I'm the vine, you're the branches. Okay, I don't know if you've ever noticed a vine, that main part of a grape vine or bush that in the wintertime before it's really doing anything, it's one of the ugliest things you've ever seen, it's just this knobby knot down there and you wonder is there any possible life there? But if you were to come to my area or any area here in the southern part of the U.S. where they happen to grow grapes, you're going to see that it is beautiful. It's absolutely lush.

That vine only exists for one thing, to make sure the branch has everything it needs and then the branch has only one thing, to make sure it produces fruit. It is so simple. It's amazing.

And so the vine, which is Jesus, of course, sees to it that we have everything we need. He only exists almost just so we will have everything and he is the giver of all good gifts. Every good and perfect gift doesn't come because, you know, well here I am, I'm 6'6 and well built and kind of ready for the world.

No. It's a dream. But it only comes because he who is the owner of everything wants to make sure that we have every gift that we possibly can to do the job that we do.

Now, I just want to read to you some gifts. I love this. It's like God's really into Christmas.

Every day. And the first gift which we have, and you wouldn't even be here if you didn't have it, but it's a gift, and that's salvation. It's not by your works because he just really doesn't want you boasting, but it's a gift of God.

Isn't that great? That way we don't have to sweat whether we really have it or not. I don't know, man, am I living up to it or whatever? He's just saying, knock it off and take the gift, okay? So he gives us salvation. And along with that is another gift that, oh boy, how the world is struggling to try to develop this very thing, and they just can't do it.

Oh, they've been able to put the average age up a few years. But what I'm thinking about is just because you live longer doesn't mean you live better. I don't want to live when I'm hanging around being nothing but a pain, well, I don't want to say that.

But, you see, everyone wants to live longer, and nothing that is alive wants to be anything but alive. But he's the only one who gives us eternal life, and this is the beautiful thing. You don't earn it, you can't figure it out, you just have to receive it as a gift.

And he also promises us the most wonderful thing. He says, I'm going to give you another gift, and that's the Holy Spirit. He will be with you just like I am.

He will be not only with you, but he will be in you. Oh, man, this is great. What else do you need? You get that, it's just like, hey, it's like praying our Father who art in heaven.

After that, it doesn't matter, it's just details, you see. And he gives us grace. It's a gift.

It's a gift. It is his saying, man, I love you so much, I am going to bless you more than you can even handle. I was, I do this, I guess maybe this is an old age thing, I don't know, but it embarrasses me sometimes.

And it happened to me even as I was flying here this morning, I just began to think about how incredibly good God had been to me, and how he had blessed me, and what I had seen him do, and you know, I forget that I'm in a crowd, and I just start crying. And I'm constantly wiping my eyes off and so forth, and I realize I am an object of his grace. He has given me as he has you.

And you don't have to say, please, give me grace, please, you know, oh, it's just his natural gift. Now, here's another one. He gives us as a gift, but he also permits us if we don't think we have enough of it to ask for more, and that's wisdom.

Now, there's a difference between street smarts and wisdom. In fact, the street smarts of this world is really foolishness, ah, but the wisdom that God gives us, and I don't know about you, but that's my main prayer now that I got this other stuff, you know, like salvation and eternal life, and the Holy Spirit. Every day I say, God, I need wisdom.

I even, I even go into stores and they'll have people say, may I help you? I say, yes. I need wisdom and understanding and discernment, you know. But I pray that every day, because I know if there's one thing I really want to have, it's God's wisdom.

And so you can ask for it. And what does he do? He doesn't slap you around because he says, you mean you don't have it? What do you, no. He gives liberally, and he upbraideth not, in other words, he doesn't yank your chain just because you feel like you didn't have it.

But it's a gift. It's a gift. It's not something you're going to come by naturally.

Now he also kind of gets into the natural when we discover that even our food is a gift, you know. Jesus even thanked the Father for the gift of food, and that's the way he is with us. And some of us are gifted more than others with food.

But I find that he does that, you see. And you can rest in the knowledge that he has the understanding of what you need even before you do. And if the lilies are beautiful, how much more he's going to take care of you.

I love that. I've said this to you, and I want to say it again. Because there is, I've discovered a beauty in every person that is so much better than the physical.

I love to sit down, and unfortunately I won't have this opportunity with very few, but a few of you, to just sit down and say, tell me your story. And I hear what God has done in your lives and how he has brought you to this point. And I get beside myself, man, this is incredible, this, you are a, you are an absolute trophy of God and his grace, you are a book that needs to be written and read.

And I think someday I'll get to read that. Unfortunately this life is too short, I mean that's one reason why I've been married to the same woman for 52 years, I'm still trying to figure her out, you know. And read that book, it's like, some of it's written in invisible ink.

But he also, but it takes a lifetime, you know. But he also gives us peace, not as the world gives. See the best the world can do is give us a few moments of intoxication.

But oh man, he gives us peace, and it's a peace that you won't be able to understand, it just passes understanding. And I love that. But wisdom is mentioned again, and he gives us knowledge, this is, I'm going to make a little statement, a little theological statement, you can argue with someone else about it, not with me.

The thing that we sometimes call the gift of knowledge. Now I ask the question, well what would God really want me to know? What kind of gift would he want to give me relative to knowledge? And I realize the thing that he wants me to know most of all, and that all even wanted to know, was to know Christ, see. And so for me, someone who comes and gives me information more about Jesus that I hadn't thought about before, or gives me insight, I think, man, this is great, you had the gift of knowledge and you've shared it with me, and I think this is what God wants out of us, to know him better, to understand him more.

And you'll see why in just a moment, let me keep going, healing, man, that's a gift. I like to pray for the sick, I really do. And sometimes I see God do some wonderful healings.

I tried my last pastor to really teach the people to pray for each other, and not have to depend on me, I wasn't the special person, God heard their prayers just as much as mine, and I saw more miracles than I had ever seen in my life, as the people just simply prayed for me. I didn't even have a hospital ministry, because my elders would be there first, and by the time I got there, the people were healed. But one of the things I really came to understand was that I didn't understand healing, see, all I knew is that I was supposed to pray for the sick, and then they're God's problem.

But it's a gift anyway. One thing that really kind of upset me, I went to pray in a military hospital for one of the wives of one of our military guys who was at our church, and there was someone else in the room that wanted me to pray for her, too, and, you know, so I prayed for the lady, and I just kind of in passing prayed for this other person who had a curvature of the spine, they were going to have to operate the next day. God did not heal my person, but just in passing, he healed the other person.

And I think, wait a minute, this is a saint, a special saint over here, and you didn't heal her. She healed this person, I don't even know if they were saved, and now they were straight. But anyway, miracles, you can't work up a miracle, folks, but it's a gift, see? This is all gifts, this is nothing you can work up.

Prophecy is a gift. Now, I'm not too interested in people telling me what's going to happen tomorrow, I'm interested in people teaching me the word in a way that it's like it's prophecy to me, it's giving me fresh understanding. And that's the one gift of all the ones that Paul mentions, that's the list of gifts, that's the one gift that is in all of them, so it must be pretty important.

And discernment, oh Lord, how we need discernment in our day and age. I fear that from what I see, we don't have much, but I'm not talking about you. So you have discernment, I'm going to show you why in just a minute.

And then God lets us speak beyond our own capability to understand and interpret that too. And all of that is a gift, and he gave even more gifts, he gave apostles. Now some organizations think being an apostle is something you finally work up to and they now declare you to be an apostle, nah, it's a gift, it's a gift,

because you can't work anything up yourself.

And being an evangelist is a gift, I know, I have gone to training sessions on how to be an evangelist. And then I realized that Jesus said, eh, follow me, I will make you to become fishers of men. And I realized the more I am happy about Jesus, the more I enjoy him, the more that makes him attractive to other people in ways that I can't even understand.

Now I've been around people who had this kind of philosophy, you know, it's really hard being a Christian. That's why there aren't very many Christians, because it's so hard being a Christian. Would you like to be a Christian, too? And you think, no, I have enough problems now, you know.

But I think in a very real way, what we often call missionary is what they're calling evangelist here. It's just that you are so excited about who God is and the fact that you're living for him, you can't wait to get in situations where you can share him more, and you share him because you're excited about it. I once in a while have people, you know, with string tie thingies, maybe you know who I'm talking about, that'll come to my house, that not as many of them come as used to, but when they'll knock on my door, and I greet them, and I'm very nice to them, and they're wanting to inform me that there are some other ways to think about Christ, you know, and I say, well, you've got to understand, fellas, I am a deliriously happy Christian.

I am so happy that I know Jesus, I can hardly stand it. What I see of him, the word, and what he has done in me, I'm just beside myself. What do you have to tell me? And you know what? They'll say, well, maybe there's another way, and I say, well, let me see now.

I have the most wonderful wife in the world. She was a gift of God to me. Hmm, what if I were to say to her, honey, you are wonderful, I am so thankful God gave you to me, I'm really happy being married to you, but maybe there are some other women.

And you know what? They get real embarrassed, because they've never thought of it that way before. But I think an evangelist really is someone so delighted to be a follower of Jesus they can hardly stand it. And pastors, they're gifts, they are gifts.

If God chooses you to be a pastor, you are a gift. He's given you that, and he's also given you to some people to mistreat. But then you become, it happens sometimes, I'm sorry about that.

There's even a gift called helps. Now I like that. That's kind of like pretty general, but don't you know, I hope you see it here, there's not a gift of gathering to yourself, there's not a gift of grab, but there's a gift of giving.

Isn't that interesting? Sounds like Jesus. And a gift of helps, that means, man, I'm going to look for ways to help people, I'm going to do something that will make life better for other people. That's a gift.

How do I know it's a gift? Because it ain't natural. I'm a guy that likes to be helped. Helping is not my natural thing.

It was on the plane coming here, there was a lady that brought in something heavier than her to put overhead, and her arms were not long enough or strong enough to put it up. So, you know, I didn't help her then because somebody else got to her first, but then they left immediately. They didn't want to handle that thing anymore after we got here.

And so the plane was just about empty, and she's just kind of looking at it, and I reached up and I grabbed it and handed it to her, and she said, thank you, and went on. Now, wasn't that nice? Well, let me tell you, that is not the natural me. The natural me would say, you know, lady, you should think over what you bring on the plane.

Let me tell you, if you can't get it overhead and it's heavier than you, don't bring it on the plane. You'd become a pain to the whole place. That's the natural me.

But it's the supernatural that it says, okay, I'll get it down for you. I know my wife does things like that, too, and I'm thankful that somebody helps her. And then there are gifts of administration, but the thing is, all of these are gifts, see? There's nothing here.

Well, I'm going to work my way up to administrator. I don't want you, if you're working your way up to it, I want you gifted. And did you know that there is a thing that's called the fruit of the Spirit, but that could also be called the gifts of the Spirit, because it's not something that you earned or invented.

He just gave it to you. And you can ask him, oh, you know, God, I don't think I'm loving enough. Well, okay, ask me.

I'll see that you become that way. Really? Is that it? I can't take courses on love? Nope. Just look at me and ask.

And joy. Now, that's one of the things I really like about just following the Lord. There are all kinds of places.

Well, even Paul says, I want to be a helper of your joy. You're going to become that. And joy is a gift from God.

It's not something that you can work up. I've seen places where they try to work it up. And I think, oh, man, I'm already there.

Why are you working it up? I'm so happy I can't handle it now. And peace and patience, ah. You've heard the statement, don't pray for patience or you'll really go through trouble.

Hey, folks, patience is a gift. It's right there. It's one of the gifts of God.

It comes through the fruit of the Spirit. You don't have to go through tribulation. You can just say, Lord, I do.

I want you to give me some patience. I really do. And he wants you to have it.

He's not thinking, well, I don't know. Let me make you wait just so you'll learn patience. No.

He's delighted to gift you with this. And goodness, oh, man, that's a gift. We are not by natural means good.

And faithfulness, that's another gift, folks. And gentleness. It's a gift.

Ah, I'm Irish, so this is an important part. Irish people have to ask for this. You don't get it, do you? That's okay.

But I love this last one because it sounds like something that we do ourself, but it is not. And that's self-control. Isn't that amazing? Oh, if I could just get in control of myself.

Good luck. It's a gift. It's a gift.

Now, on top of this, here's the thing I love. You are a gift, really. I want to end this with a couple of things, and then I have a little gift of my own to give you.

I want to read to you from 1 Peter 4, verses 10 and 11. It says, each one should use whatever gift he has received. Now, how many people are each one? Didn't they teach you that here? I mean, each one should use whatever gift.

Now, that means that you've got a gift, at least one, maybe a lot more. I think you do. But whatever gift or gifts you have received to show others how gifted you are, no.

To serve others, that's what it said. There we go. The whole thing is about others, you see.

Use whatever gift you have received to serve others, administering God's grace in its various forms. Now, I'm convinced that whenever two Christians meet each other, there's an exchange of gifts. That there is something about meeting you and knowing you that causes me to be better off having discovered more about God than I would otherwise.

You reveal, literally as it says here, revealing the facets, the various facets of God's grace. There are things about what God does I can't know until I see what he's done for you in that facet of his grace. It's just awesome.

That's why I like to hear your stories. I come away, oh man, I've just received a gift. And he says, he goes on and says, if anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God, the oracles of God.

I was teaching at a place called Azusa Pacific University once during a series of conferences they had for youth workers. One of the times, I guess it was the last time, I think I might have done it in. They had all of the speakers in one room for a lunch time just to get acquainted with each other and I'd appreciate that.

But then they did something that always kind of sends me up the wall. I want you to tell us your name and what you do. Well, the first guy says, well, I'm so and so and I'm in charge of the western half of the United States.

And the next guy, of course, he's in charge of the whole United States. By the time it got to me, the universe was gone. What am I going to do? Well, you know what I'm like.

So I stood up and I said, I'm Gale Irwin and I lip sync for the voice of God. Yeah, they laughed too. But I wasn't kidding.

Because that's what it says here. If I speak, speak as if I am speaking his words. Because you are.

If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides. Ah, with the strength God provides. See, keep in mind, he says, come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart and my yoke is easy and my burden is light. I have finally come to the understanding that if it ain't an easy yoke, it isn't his. And I find

myself sometimes taking on things that God didn't tell me to take on and I end up eating crow.

You know what eating crow means? Is that a lost thing? How many of you know what I mean by eating crow? They didn't teach you. You didn't teach these folks. Eating crow is when you really have kind of, not necessarily done bad stuff, but you just got out of what God told you to do and it's time for you to really apologize.

Crow does not taste good and it's protected anyway, you can go to jail. So, I've learned to do those things that God says, hey, this is you, I've gifted you for that, do that. So that in all things, how many things might that be? Thank you.

So that in all things, God may be praised through Jesus Christ, to him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen. Ah, your role now, the thing that God has you doing, is going to bring glory to God and that's the only reason for it.

You don't even have to ask yourself, man, can I find a verse that will authorize this? If it isn't for the glory of God, then don't do it. If it is for the glory of God, enjoy. But here's the thing, I love this.

Jesus said to the apostles at one point, he said, you know, I don't call you servants anymore because a servant doesn't know his master's business. Now I call you friends because I have told you everything. Now I think they probably told you everything except eating crow, which I hope you never have to do.

But you see, you've learned many things here and I think that you have an understanding of Jesus and his nature and your roles in life and what God is putting in your heart to do. And God has given this to you, you see. You know the master's business.

You know what he's up to. So now, if someone asks you who you are, you can say, I'm a friend of Jesus. I'm his friend.

How do you know? He told me. He just told me that he had told me everything, and now I'm his friend. In fact, if you really want to have some fun, Jesus, when his mother came to get him in Mark chapter 3, because they really thought, and his brothers, they thought he had lost his mind.

That is the most fascinating thing to me, let's go get God and bring him home and get him well. It's true. It's true.

It's what they thought. It was because he couldn't eat lunch, by the way, which I found fascinating. But when they get there and they bring word to him in the middle of the crowd, say, your mother and brothers are here for you, and he makes a statement or asks a question that's kind of shocking.

Who is my mother? Now, if I were Mary, I'd say, come here, boy, I'll show you. Who are my brothers? See, Jesus is asking this question, strange question. And he looks around and he says, here is my mother and my brother and my sister.

Whoever does the will of my father is my mother and my brother and my sister. So if you really want to have some fun, then someone says, just who are you? You say, well, I'm the mother of Jesus. See, I mean, have fun.

That's what he said. I'm Jesus' sister. Didn't know he had one.

Well, he told me. I'm his brother. That's what Jesus said, you see.

Why? Because you're doing his will. So you're graduating to friend. I want to tell you another story.

Then I have a song I want you to hear. Just a moment. There's the best song I think ever written in my lifetime.

I want you to hear it. Changing cultures and tastes have caused this song to drop out of our knowledge, but you're going to hear it today in, I think, its very finest form. When I first started going to Africa, in a country that was then called Rhodesia, I was befriended by a doctor.

He was an orthopedic surgeon. He and I became very good friends. He was sort of a morose guy, and I would insult him purposely and get him into a fight, you know, a verbal fight.

His wife thanked me so much for doing that. She said, he's never so alive as when you're here. Please keep it up.

Don't worry, I have a game plan. But the last time I saw him, we were seated around the dinner table. He was at one end, I was at the other.

His name was Bill McGowan, and I said, Well, Dr. Bill, what is your latest malpractice? I'm such a sweet guy. And he didn't smile. He said, Call me Mister.

I said, Mister? Oh, they found out about you. Taking away your doctor, huh? Call me Mister. And then his wife jumped in and told me something I had never known.

She said, No, truly. Call him Mister. She said, In our country, and this isn't true of just there, when you have reached the height of your profession as a doctor, and there is no higher, and he couldn't go higher.

He was a member of the Royal College of Surgeons, which they don't give it to people like me. He had every award one could give him. He was the most highly recognized man.

When you made that point, and they could not honor you any higher, they would restore to you the title of Mister. And I'm thinking, How strange. How strange.

But then it hit me. Let's say you're looking in the yellow pages for a doctor. Doctor so-and-so, Doctor so-and-so, Mister so-and-so.

Go to him. Because he's the best one there, you know. And what's happened here is you have gone from student, to friend, to brother, to sister of Jesus.

May your blessings so rest on these folks who are your friends. Ha, ha, ha, Lord. Overwhelm them with your goodness.

Overflow them with your spirit. Lord, put them in situations where they absolutely have to depend on you, and then discover your awesome greatness even more. Keep them in your love.

Keep them in the palm of your hand. We thank you for this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Video: [https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/v\\_L\\_Kw4f4Fw.mp4](https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/v_L_Kw4f4Fw.mp4)  
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/gayle-erwin/not-trusting-our-wisdom/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**