

# THE SEVEN GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

## THE GIFT OF UNDERSTANDING (2 OF 7)

Understanding, in part, is the ability to discern what is from God and what is not. The spirit of understanding (binah) is connected to the ability to comprehend visions ([Daniel 8:15](#)), proverbs ([Proverbs 1:1-6](#)) and the law of God ([Psalms 119](#): 34, 73, 100, 125).

### NEW AMERICAN BIBLE REFERENCES

[Exodus 31:3](#)- The LORD said to Moses, "See, I have chosen Bezalel, son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; I have filled him with a divine spirit of skill, understanding and knowledge in every craft..."

[Luke 24:27-32](#)- With the power of the Holy Spirit, the two disciples (Cleopas and the other remains unnamed) on the road to Emmaus were given the gift of understanding to comprehend the Holy Scriptures; their hearts burned within as the Lord spoke to them: Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he (Jesus) interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures. As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning (within us) while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?"

In [Matthew 16:5-12](#), the apostles came to understand that the yeast of the Pharisees was their wicked doctrine: In coming to the other side of the sea, [4](#) the disciples had forgotten to bring bread. Jesus said to them, "Look out, and beware of the leaven [5](#) of the Pharisees and Sadducees." [6](#) They concluded among themselves, saying, "It is because we have brought no bread." When Jesus became aware of this he said, "You of little faith, why do you conclude among yourselves that it is because you have no bread? Do you not yet understand, and do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many wicker baskets you took up? Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you took up? How do you not comprehend that I was not speaking to you about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they understood [7](#) that he was not telling them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

In [Matthew 17:1-13](#), the apostles come to understand that, while Jesus is talking about Elijah, He is referencing John the Baptist: [1](#) [2](#) After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. [3](#) And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. [4](#) And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents [5](#) here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, [6](#) then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." [7](#) When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate and were very much afraid. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and do not be afraid." And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone. [8](#) As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, "Do not tell the vision [9](#) to anyone until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead." [10](#) Then the disciples asked him, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" He said in reply, [11](#) "Elijah will indeed come and restore all things; but I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him but did to him whatever they pleased. So also will the Son of Man suffer at their hands. [12](#) Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.

In [Daniel 8:15-19](#), Daniel seeks understanding of a vision: While I, Daniel, sought the meaning of the vision I had seen, a manlike figure stood before me, [6](#) and on the Ulai I heard a human voice that cried out, "Gabriel, explain the vision to this man." [7](#) When he came near where I was standing, I fell prostrate in terror. But he said to me, "Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the end time."

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As he spoke to me, I fell forward in a faint; he touched me and made me stand up. "I will show you," he said, "what is to happen later in the period of wrath; for at the appointed time, there will be an end."

In [Proverbs 1:1-6](#), King Solomon urges, "[1](#) The Proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel: [2](#) that men may appreciate wisdom and discipline, may understand words of intelligence; may receive training in wise conduct, in what is right, just and honest; [3](#) that resourcefulness may be imparted to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. A wise man by hearing them will advance in learning, an intelligent man will gain sound guidance, that he may comprehend proverb and parable, the words of the wise and their riddles."

The psalmist, King David, offers much about the gift of Understanding in the [Book of Psalms, chapter 119](#):

Psalm 119:34- "Give me insight to observe your teaching, to keep it with all my heart."

Psalm 119:73- "Your hands made me and fashioned me; give me insight to learn your commands."

Psalm 119:100- "I have more insight than my elders, because I observe your precepts."

Psalm 119:125- "I am your servant; give me discernment that I may know your decrees."

### **CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH (CCC) REFERENCES**

There are [49](#) references to Understanding in the CCC- 19, 23, 24, 38, 91, 94, 117, 119, 126, 158, 171, 217, 236, 250, 283, 286, 299, 474, 497, 712, 737, 785, 892, 1000, 1027, 1095, 1096, 1101, 1135, 1155, 1176, 1177, 1202, 1216, 1260, 1299, 1303, 1333, 1611, 1620, 1704, 1722, 1831, 1845, 1951, 1955, 2071, 2218, 2419.

Those listed below are taken from the Index:

expressions of human, [2501](#); and faith, [89](#), [143](#), [154](#), [156-59](#), [299](#); human understanding as a gift of God, [283](#); and human virtues, [1804](#); and the natural law, [1955](#); spiritual, [1095](#), [1101](#).