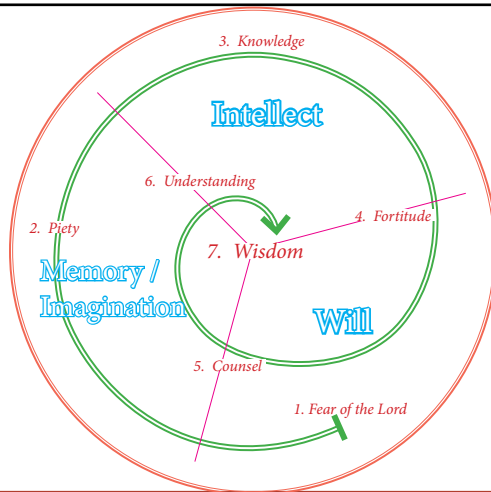
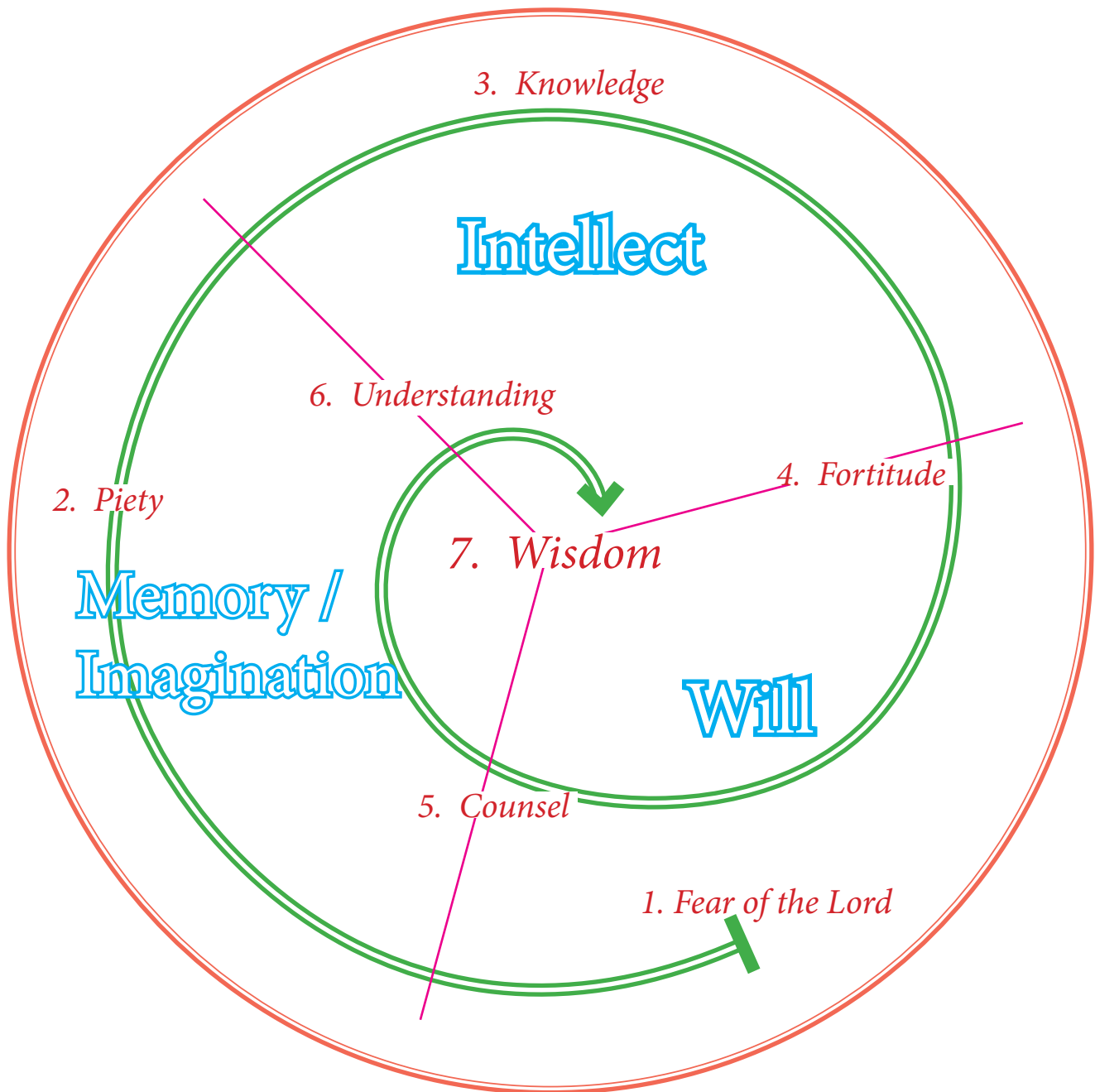


The Sevenfold Gifts of the Spirit as perfecting the three powers of the soul

1. Fear of the Lord	This is the first motion of the soul towards the reverent stillness that is essential to an appropriately obedient relationship with our creator. It is not primarily an intellectual motion because it is not based on rational considerations, except possibly the recognition of a supreme being. It is not an imaginative motion either, because memory and imagination play no specific part, except that it does involve a change in consciousness. It is a change in the will which now chooses to stand by, to hold itself in readiness for this relationship. It is not emotional-anxiety-fear, but it is an inner quiet. And it is the beginning of wisdom.
2. Piety	Piety is entering into a consistent and personal relationship with God. Such consistency requires the maintenance of a relational image, a father, creator, king — and of appropriate habits of approach to and presence before God. These are the acts of piety.
3. Knowledge	Knowledge generally refers to the gathering and holding of units of information, but as a spiritual gift, it means that these units are received from the Spirit. Also through the Spirit, information is recognized as belonging in relationship to revelation and a specific aspect of the whole of religious life. As a charismatic gift, knowledge refers to the spiritual and intuitive recognition of truth in a specific situation or relationship.
4. Fortitude	In Fortitude, the will is again the primary recipient of grace, a power to remain strong in the decisions that belong to our vocation. But precisely that qualification means that the growing intellection of the divine plan is in the immediate background of fortitude. So fortitude means both holding to a decision and holding to the rational recognition of our vocation which has demands and consequences.
5. Counsel	In the spiritual gift of Counsel, memory and imagination are active within the movement of the Spirit, to enable us to choose a right course of action in relationships, or to help us help another person choose his course. We see and can communicate what is best to be done. This gift perfects the memory and imagination as they urge the will into service.
6. Understanding	As the elements of life in the Spirit are developed, there also develops a larger image of the full life of God, so that the divine cosmology gradually comes into focus on a field of awareness that is both intellectual and imaginative. We see truth as fields or as a whole, not only in bits, however significant. We see with imagination and intellect.

7. Wisdom
All powers of the soul converge and are perfected in the gift of wisdom. This brings the unified powers of intellect and memory to bear on issues of practical decision-making and the soul responds with the perfection of all its powers.





Actually, I learned the seven gifts in the order that would go from the inside out: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. I always knew that wisdom was the ultimate and “fear of the Lord” was the “beginning” but wondered why it was seven and not some other number, and whether the gifts fit into a larger

picture or whether they were just seven because people like the number seven. Seven has a mathematical relationship with three: it’s the number of combinations you can make with 3 objects. In the course of writing my psychology book, I revisited my questions and this fact, and came up with a scheme that made sense to me.