

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT - PART III

DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

Text: I Corinthians 12:10

Key Word: Discerning

Key Thought: Understanding the Gift of Discerning of Spirits

Anyone who begins to read the first few chapters of the Bible realizes that it is important to be able to discern the difference between good and evil. Eve, the mother of mankind was searching for the difference between good and evil. She did not avail herself to God's knowledge and therefore, sinned.

The Gift of Discerning of Spirits is the 3rd and final gift in what we have titled the "**Revelation Gifts.**" We will see by the end of this sermon how everything within the realm of knowing - facts, events, purposes, motives, origins - human, divine or devilish, natural or supernatural, past present or future comes within the range of these 3 Gifts.

I. DESCRIPTION/DEFINITION

Whereas the Word of Wisdom and Knowledge cover a vast field of information, the Discerning of Spirits is like a microscope that restricts its view to a limited area in order to expose something with great detail.

"The Gift of Discerning of Spirits gives supernatural insight into the realm of spirits/Spirit."

Harold Horton
"Gifts of the Spirit"
p. 70

It will reveal the kind of spirit that is involved in any manifestation of supernatural knowledge or power. **Through it we can tell whether the source is human, divine (God or angel) or satanic.** It is **NOT** the Gift of Discernment - it **IS** the Gift of Discernment of Spirits.

II. POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS

A. It is NOT the Ability to See Faults in Others

"Not one of us requires the baptism in the Holy Spirit to endow us with the gift of criticism and faultfinding."

Harold Horton
"Ibid."
p. 73

The Holy Spirit has come to destroy the "gift of criticism" and replace it with a god-given forbearance for others. This gift discerns SPIRITS not character or faults.

B. It is NOT Spiritist Phenomena

Clairvoyance, hypnotism, magic, occultism, witchcraft, sorcery and spiritism are all supernatural phenomena BUT are Satanic in origin. Discerning of spirits strips the mask of these manifestations off and exposes their source.

Mediums and spiritists make use of lying or familiar spirits. Those who communicate with the dead are simply working with these fallen angels. It is a hoax.

"The Old Testament has frequent references to what is called in older versions 'familiar spirits,' or in modern versions, 'mediums, fortune tellers, wizards, sorcerers, or witches.' Other Biblical designations include: demonic spirits, spirits of devils [or demons], spirit of error, seducing spirits, or lying spirits. Natural human insight is certainly incapable of judging in this realm."

Kenneth Hagin
"The Holy Spirit and His Gifts"
p. 78

People who read minds do NOT have the Gift of Discerning of Spirits. God's gifts are not for entertainment or public sensation.

C. It is NOT Related to Psychiatry

Psychiatrists follow trained patterns of human behaviour to discover why people may be emotionally disturbed. Often a person's childhood is probed to reveal certain answers to mental blocks. Secular Psychiatrists are not Christian and do not use Christian principles.

III. USES OF THE GIFT

There is probably more need for this gift today than we could ever come to believe. The Scriptures show how the gift was used to expose the source of people's problems. Today, I wonder how many people are being treated for their symptoms while the causes of their true sicknesses are overlooked?

A. To Heal the Demon-Possessed

In Mark chapter 5, Jesus was approached by a man who had lived in tombs and had been able to brake chains that had bound him (Mark 5:3,4). He would cry out and cut himself at night (Mark 5:5). After the spirit manifested itself, Jesus said,

"Come out of this man, you evil spirit."

Mark 5:8

The result of Jesus using this gift as well as other spiritual gifts was that the man was restored to good health.

"they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid."

Mark 5:15

This man was set free from cruel and tormenting spirits.

B. To Expose Unclean Spirits

We have a nation that is being swept off its feet by unclean spirits. Our youth are being viciously attacked in their minds.

"Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil [unclean] spirits, and all of them were healed."

Acts 5: 16

III. USES OF THE GIFT (Contd.)

C. To Release the Mouths of the Mute and Cause the Blind to See

During our Lord's time many people were unable to speak because they were being dominated by a "mute spirit." Jesus discerned the source of the problem before healing them.

"Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see."

Matthew 12:22

D. To Open the Ears of the Deaf

Some people were unable to hear. Jesus drove out the demon that caused them to be deaf so they could hear.

"You deaf and mute spirit," he said, "I command you, come out of him and never enter him again."

Mark 9:25

E. To Heal from Limb Distortions

There were people who had been born or "picked up" a disease which caused their limbs to be distorted.

*"On the Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues,
11. and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all.
12. When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, 'Woman, you are set free from your infirmity.'
13. Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God . . .
16. Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her."*

Luke 13:10-13,16

III. USES OF THE GIFT (Contd.)

F. To Uncover a Servant of the Devil

Paul was "filled with the Holy Spirit" when he exposed Elymus the sorcerer on the island of Cyprus. This was a **"discovery"** not a **"deliverance."** Elymus had willingly subjected himself to demonic authority. Paul was shown the truth through the Gift of Discernment of Spirits.

"You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord?"

Acts 13:10

G. To Stop the Advancement of Divination

While Paul was at Philippi he had to deal with a young girl who could have destroyed his ministry.

"Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling . . . 18. Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, 'In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!' At that moment the spirit left her."

Acts 16:16,18

H. To Expose Error

"There are many a foul demon under a clerical cloak today preaching with pleasing voice and specious illogic lies instead truth; denying the divinity, the virgin birth, the miracles, the saving blood of the Lord; denying the reality of sin, the devil, divine wrath, coming judgment and eternal hell.

And when these devilish doctrines are accompanied as they are in many forms of spiritism with devilish signs and wonders there needs to be this blessed Gift to discern the evil talon in the soft wool."

Harold Horton
"Ibid."
p. 76

III. USES OF THE GIFT (Contd.)

H. To Expose Error (Contd.)

Paul makes it very clear that these will be the kinds of things we will have to face in the last days.

"The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

2. Such teaching comes through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron."

I Timothy 4:1,2

I. To Unmask Demon-Working Miracle-Workers

Wherever there is something which is true and of value, there is always the strong possibility that a counterfeit will try to gain from it.

"The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders."

II Thessalonians 2:9

This gift will unmask those who try to imitate the working of God. **Not everyone who has this gift has the power to cast out the spirits.**

*** Back in the late 1980's I was given a cassette tape of John Todd to listen to. He claimed to be a converted Satanist High Priest.

On the tape he described a number of things that were being done in the dark world of Satanism. He travelled throughout the USA and Canada with his message to the Church. Many large churches from Pentecostal background were welcoming him to speak from their pulpits.

Within 5 minutes of listening to the tape my stomach was in knots. I couldn't understand how the Church was being deceived. I was told that I was not understanding him or his message.

God gave me an instantaneous discernment of the spirit behind that was leading this man. I knew that I was not wrong. Within a few months he was exposed as never having left Satanism. He was working for the church of Satan while all the time posing as a Christian. His messages of fear were unable to sway what God was telling me. ***

I believe that this is one of the most important gifts required by the Church in the days we are living in. We must know the source of what is being portrayed as from God today.

Satan will try to use every tactic he can to destroy God's Church. I know he is active today in his deceit. Not everything in the Church today is from God.

God will let us know what is from Him and what is not. We need to listen carefully to His voice and follow His discernment of spirits. Long term fruit will usually indicate the source of the matter.

Lets be open to allow God to work through His spiritual gifts. ***If you have been given or are given this gift in the future, use it with caution and maturity.*** Most will not understand your concerns. Be gracious and use it for the glory of God and the protection of His Church.

C:\Documents\WPWin(X9)\Sermons.2020\Gifts of the Holy Spirit\I Corinthians 12:10.wpd

Date: Mar 8/20

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: Build Your Church - F