

Discerning of Spirits

I Corinthians 12: 7- 11 *To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*

8 For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,

9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,

10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

11 All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

Our previous lessons have dealt with two of the three gifts that reveal something: the Word of Knowledge and the Word of Wisdom.

In this message we will cover the third revelation gift: the gift of discerning of spirits.

The most important of the three revelation gifts is the Word of Wisdom.

Everything within the realm of knowledge, whether facts, events, purposes, motives, origins, or destinies – human, divine, or satanic, natural or supernatural; or past, present, or future – comes within the focal range of one or the other of these three revelation gifts.

The discerning of spirits gives supernatural insight into the spirit world.

“To discern” means to perceive by seeing or hearing.

So, discerning of spirits is the same as seeing or hearing into the spiritual realm.

The discerning of spirits actually has a more limited range of operation than the other two revelation gifts, the Word of Wisdom and the Word of Knowledge.

This is because its revelation is limited to a single class of objects, spirits.

The revelation that the Word of Wisdom and the Word of Knowledge brings is broader and applies to people, places and things.

The discerning of spirits gives us supernatural insight only into the realm of *spirits*.

Remember, the discerning of spirits is seeing or hearing into the spirit world.

It also reveals the kind of spirit that is in operation behind a supernatural manifestation.

What the Discerning of Spirits is *Not*.

Someone once said that the best way to find out what something is, is to find out what it is *not*.

It is not discernment.

I've heard people say, "I believe I have the gift of discernment."

Actually, there is no such thing mentioned in the bible as a gift of discernment.

Let's call things by their bible name.

It's called the discerning of spirits.

Furthermore, many times what people call a gift of discernment is the gift of a word of knowledge in operation.

In other words, sometimes people know things by the Spirit of God, and they call it discernment.

But that doesn't make it an accurate statement.

It is actually a word of knowledge.

The discerning of Spirits is not a kind of spiritual mind reading.

The discerning of spirits is not psychological insight nor is it some of mental penetration.

It is not the supernatural power to discern the faults of others.

You will find that the power to discern the faults of others is possessed by believers as well as unbelievers.

You don't even have to be a believer to possess that gift.

Even though the way we are talking about this gift, is forbidden in the bible.

Matthew 7: 1 "Judge not, that you be not judged."

As a matter of fact, one of the purposes of the baptism of the Holy Ghost is to destroy this particular so called gift of discerning faults of others, which is nothing more than criticism, then to replace it with the gift of gentle forbearance.

So, the gift of discerning of spirits is not faultfinding.

If people who believe they have the gift of faultfinding would just turn on themselves for about fifteen seconds, they would most likely never use it again.

The discerning of spirits is not a spiritual gift to uncover human failures.

Christians should walk in love, and the bible says that love covers a multitude of sins.

1 Peter 4: 8 Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

No, discerning of spirits is not discerning of character or faults, it is not even the discerning of people.

Once again, it is called the discerning of spirits, and it deals with spirits that exist in the spirit realm, whether they are divine, satanic or otherwise.

Discerning of Spirits is not simply Discerning of Devils or Evil Spirits

To say that the gift of the discerning of spirits has only to do with demons is misleading.

This gift has to do with the entire class of spirits, including good spirits, bad spirits, even human spirits.

It is a supernatural insight into the realm of *spirits*.

The discerning of evil spirits is included, of course.

Too many times people have believed that seeing demons is all this encompasses.

As you will in the Bible, this thought is limiting to the truth.



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We Must Maintain Balance when dealing with Demonic Forces

The way that some people teach about demons and casting out demons troubles me because it's sometimes out of line with the Word of God.

This can sometimes bind people instead of delivering them.

For example, many times what people call a demon, is nothing more than the works of the flesh.

The works of the flesh are listed for us in;

Galatians 5: 19-21 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality,

20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions,

21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

This passage of scripture proves that there are many things that people would like to blame on demons, however, its old fashioned flesh that must be dealt with or these people are warned that they are in danger of missing the ride home.

You may ask, how do we deal with this?

Look at these scriptures, ***Romans 8: 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.***

Colossians 3: 5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

We need to be careful about these things.

Some people become more devil conscious than they are God conscious.

As a result, they give too much credit to the devil and then he defeats them in life.

Don't be mistaken, the devil does try to take advantage of us in the area of the flesh, but not when we die to the flesh.

Then what does the devil have to work with if we reduce the inventory.



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Romans 12: 1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Romans 6: 13 Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

If you practice these truths, the devil won't have any place in you to grab a hold of.

At times, when an evil spirit is in direct cause of a problem, a believer might see the evil spirit that is affecting the situation when the gift of discerning of spirits is in operation.

But as I said before, the discerning of spirits encompasses much more than just the discerning of evil spirits.

Discerning the Similitude of God

Look at ***Exodus 33: 20-23*** ***But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live."***

21 And the LORD said, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock,

22 and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by.

23 Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen."

Moses was seeing into the spirit realm.

He was able to discern the similitude of God by the manifestation of this gift of the Spirit of God.

What about ***Isaiah 6: 1*** ***In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple.***

Throughout the Bible, we see that there were those who saw the similitude, or a vision of God through the gift of discerning of spirits.

So, we see that the discerning of spirits is not just relegated to seeing evil spirits.

Discerning the Risen Christ

1 Corinthians 15: 1-8 Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand,

2 and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,

4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.

7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.

8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

Paul saw Jesus through the Gift of the Holy Spirit known as the Discerning of Spirits.

Discerning the Spirit Behind the Operation

Supernatural manifestations can come from different sources.

We must remember that Satan is also a supernatural being.

Too many times, people are ready to follow anything that is supernatural or spectacular, whether it is proven by the Scriptures to be of God or not.

Acts 16: 17 She followed Paul and us, crying out, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.”

18 And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And it came out that very hour.

19 But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers.

Beware of Fraud in the Kingdom of God

Leviticus 19: 31 ESV “Do not turn to mediums or necromancers; do not seek them out, and so make yourselves unclean by them: I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 19: 31 KJV Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God.