

40 Days *WITH* the HOLY SPIRIT

Small Group Curriculum

Session Three

THE REVELATION GIFTS (B)

The Gift of the Discerning of Spirits

*1 Corinthians 12:10 (nkjv) to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another **discerning of spirits**, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.*

The Gift of the Discerning of Spirits is:

- The divine ability to identify the presence and activity of a particular spirit operating.
- Recognising the '*spirit*' that is motivating or influencing a person, whether it be the human spirit (carnal man), an evil spirit or the Spirit of God.

It is a supernatural gift to gain insight into the spiritual realm (*spirit world*), where our natural five senses cannot understand or grasp.

It is important to remember that the gift of discerning spirits is not gained through human reasoning, or séances, meditation but through Holy Spirit revelation!

A person's attitude and behaviour can be an indicator to what is motivating them.

What the Gift of Discerning of Spirits is not:

There is no gift of discernment! God's wisdom equips us to discern.

- It is **not** the gift of '*discerning people*' - it is the gift of "*discerning spirits*."
- It is **not** analysing a person's character.
- It is **not** a license to criticise or to judge.
- It is **not** discerning the faults of others.
- It is **not** mind reading.
- It is **not** a gift of suspicion.

Word of Caution!

Be careful not to become 'flesh detectives' and to develop a critical and judgmental attitude! There is no fault-finding gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Greek word for discerning is **diakrisis**, which means, "judging through, summing up, or assessing." The idea is a **piercing of all that is outward and seeing right through.**

The gift of Discerning of Spirits can also separate (to distinguish) one spirit from another, or others.

How to use the Gift of Discerning of Spirits.

In short; prompted by the Holy Spirit and activated by the individual's faith!

This gift of Discerning Spirits is experienced in much the same way as prophecy.

- It may be in the form of a kind of spiritual hunch or inner feeling, an impression.
- It can be a flash of revelation in our thoughts,
- In picture form (vision).
- A word or a phrase that comes to our mind, like a 'word of knowledge'.
- A verse of Scripture.
- In the form of shadows or shapes, etc, especially in the case of demonic influence.

It is important to remember that: **It is not human reasoning but Holy Spirit inspired revelation!**

DISCUSSION

- Ask questions for clarification or provide comments from the teaching and discuss as a group.
- Share with your group examples of your own experience of discerning of spirits.
- Discerning of spirits is rarer to witness than the gifts like prophecy, healing or speaking in tongues. Why do you think this is so?
- As a group, you may wish to discuss some of the points in the 'Further Study' section below to generate further discussion.

PRAYER

Please take time before you finish your discussion to pray for any needs that those in your group may have.

FURTHER STUDY

Biblical examples of Discerning of Spirits.

1. *Matthew 16:15-23.*

Jesus rebukes Peter for denying that He was going to die. Jesus discerned that Peter was speaking from the wrong spirit and said, "*Get thee behind me, Satan.*"

2. *Acts 13:9-12.*

By the unction of the Holy Spirit, it is revealed to Paul that Barjesus is a child of the devil and opposed to everything that is upright. Paul speaks judgement against him, and he is blind for a season.

3. Genesis 3:1.

As this story continues, we know that Eve failed to discern the true identity of her tempter. The result of this failure was sin, and separation from God's presence. Therefore, we can see the importance of this gift.

Common purposes for the gift of Discerning of Spirits are:

- To protect, guard, guide and properly feed the flock of God, especially in the area of testing prophetic utterance (*1 John 4:1-6, 1 Thessalonians 5:21, 1 Corinthians 14:29*)
- **Ministry of Deliverance:** To determine if a person is suffering from a physical affliction, or from a demonic influence. This gift will reveal the nature of the demonic influence and the number. (*Mark 5:1-16; Luke 4:31-37; 9:37-42; 13:10-16; Acts 16:16-18; 13:10-12*)
- To expose the "wolves among the sheep" (*Acts 13:4-12*).
- To identify all kinds of counterfeit signs and wonders and deceptions of wickedness. (*2 Thessalonians 2:1-12*).
- To discern the good spirit of a person. (*John 1:47*)
- **Assessing Spiritual Gifts:** Revealing if someone is speaking or acting from the natural mind or under the impulse of the Holy Spirit. (*1 Corinthians 14:29 nkjv*)