

DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

Outline from VIDEO: DISCERNING OF SPIRITS ([Wanda Alger](#) & Stephen Powell)

DISCERNMENT

But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. (Hebrews 5:14 ESV)

FACTORS IN GROWING IN DISCERNMENT ("[Roadblocks to Discerning Truth](#)" Blog):

- Reading the Word
- Be aware of presuppositions/presumptions/familiar beliefs
- Confirmation of 3 witnesses
- Freedom from Fear
- Common Sense and Good Counsel

Discernment must be the foundation. Sound doctrines are the standard.

GIFT OF DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

...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. (1 Corinthians 12:10)

Do ALL possess this gift? No – given by Holy Spirit

All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. (1 Corinthians 12:11)

There are different kinds of spirits which we will be exploring.
We have to know why this gift is needed...

Four purposes of the gift (from [Derek Prince YouTube Video](#)):

1. To lift the veil that covers the unseen spiritual world.

2 Corinthians 4:18 – “So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”

2. To enable us to see as God sees (1 Samuel 16:17 - For God does not see as man a sees)

3. To protect us from deception.

1 John 3:7-9 - Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning

4. To enable us to diagnose people's problems and help them.

Luke 13:10-13 - Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your disability." And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and she glorified God.

- Usually given for INTERCESSION
- Most effective when one has "trained themselves" in the real thing – God's presence.
- Some will "feel" them, others will "see" them.

Four types of spirits:

- 1) Spirit of God. Holy Spirit
- 2) Angels - Ministering spirits
- 3) Demons and unclean spirits
- 4) Spirit of man. Human spirit

1 John 4:1 - Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

By discerning the spirit, it doesn't mean we make a judgment call about that person. We are merely given a piece of the puzzle from which to make a better determination. (For intercession – to avoid deception). The Lord is helping us to SEE INTO THE HEART of an individual – WHAT MOTIVATES THEM.

1) SPIRIT OF GOD

Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." (John 1:47-48)

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." (Luke 3:21-22)

And he (Samuel) sent and brought him in (David). Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him, for this is he." Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward. (1 Samuel 16:12-13) Though OT, a foreshadowing of what Holy Spirit can reveal to anyone.

- Spending time in the presence of the Lord empowers this gift even more.
- There is a PURITY revealed when the Spirit of God is present.
- One is drawn into a greater revelation of the Lord.

2) MINISTERING SPIRITS – ANGELS

Then Elisha prayed and said, "O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see." So the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. (2 Kings 6:17)

And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. (Luke 1:11-13)

- Though the angel "appeared" – note how it "felt" to Zechariah.
- Note the purpose of the angel – to bring a message (often the case when they show up)

And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his hands. (Acts 12:7)

- Purpose was protection and safety (answered prayer)

And there appeared to HIM an angel from heaven, strengthening Him. (Luke 22:43)

- Ministering angels
- The "angel of the Lord's presence" that led the Israelites out of Egypt.

3) DEMONIC SPIRITS (Can be various kinds: Unclean, Infirmary, Witchcraft, etc.)

As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination ("python") and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. She followed Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." 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. (Acts 16:16-18)

And someone from the crowd answered him, “Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. ...Bring him to me.” And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth... And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.” And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out. (Mark 9:17-26)

- Opposition is felt or seen; unrest and even agitation.
- Lack of purity and holiness; defiled.
- Lack of openness and vulnerability; can feel heavy or oppressive.

4) **HUMAN SPIRIT** (One’s own thoughts and imaginations)

And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.” And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming.” But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, (perceived their thoughts in Luke 5:22) said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he then said to the paralytic—“Rise, pick up your bed and go home.” And he rose and went home. (Matthew 9:2-7)

- Jesus sensed their unbelief.
- Knew their questions.

But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man. (John 2:24-25)

“know” – same word Nathaniel used when asking Jesus, “How did you KNOW me?”

But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? (Acts 5:1-3)

- Could be a word of knowledge, as well?
- Main point is that Peter KNEW HIS MOTIVATION (WHAT spirit was driving him)

And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?” But He turned and rebuked them, and said, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.” (Luke 9:54-56)

- They were allowing their own ambitions to lead them.

SIGNS OF OPERATING IN THE GIFT OF DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

Wisdom in stewarding the gift

1. Heightened sensitivity to the atmosphere (as if your five senses are on high alert). One can even become overwhelmed in certain settings where a lot of spiritual activity is taking place (either good or bad).
 - a. May get criticized for being “too sensitive.”
 - b. Guard your heart from offense
 2. Stronger feelings than most about situations or people. Things bother you more than other people (being around certain people; questioning more; picking up on small things, etc.)
 - a. Be aware of overstimulation.
 - b. Don’t allow pride. Be aware of responsibility in stewarding the gift.
 3. Desire for authenticity and truth (love for purity and holiness).
 - a. Make sure to feed rightly on the Word of God and His presence.
 - b. Use the information to call others UP (instead of being critical of what’s wrong).
 4. A desire to pray more concerning what you see/feel. Powerful gift in intercession.
 - a. Use wisdom in sharing the information (when demonic spirits are at work).
 - b. Ask the Lord what to do with it – how to apply.
 5. Often a desire to help others find that same reality of purity and power. Can be an effective tool and gift in deliverance and inner healing ministry.
 - a. Encourage others when you see God’s Spirit at work in their lives.
 - b. When appropriate, reveal any demonic interference as an enemy coming against them and not a character flaw (“I believe the enemy is oppressing you,” “I see a spirit of fear trying to take you out,” “I don’t think this problem is about you, but something the enemy is doing.”)
- Quote by Mike Miller ([Remnant Radio](#)): *You can’t cast out a sickness or crucify a demon. You don’t need the gift to cast out demons. That is part of everyone’s commission.*
 - Categories don’t matter. **Focus on Holy Spirit.**

(For more [resources, go to wandaalger.me](http://wandaalger.me))