



Spiritual Gifts
Continued
Part 4

Gifts for *Strengthening*

- ❖ Exhortation/Encourager
- ❖ Healing
- ❖ Mercy
- ❖ Prophecy
- ❖ **Discernment**



Discernment

The unique, God-given ability to detect whether the actions and/or intentions of others are from a heavenly, a human, or a demonic influence.

(1 Corinthians 12:10; Acts 16:16-18)

What is the gift of **Discernment**?

A special ability to distinguish between the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error to discriminate between that which is raised up by God and that which pretends to be.

Characteristics of a person with the gift of **Discernment**:

- He/she has the ability to spot a phony before others see through the phoniness.
- He/she can read a religious book and almost immediately detect any subtle error.

- He/she can hear a sermon and put his/her finger on any deficiency of truth.
- He/she can listen to some new cultic teaching with mixture of truth and error and not be taken in, but soon sense the area of aberration.

- He/she can tell whether the atmosphere in a service is mere emotion, or emotion based on biblical truth.

Peter affirmed the deity of Jesus, the latter recognized the divine source of his declaration. *"Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven"* (Matt. 16:17).

A moment later when Peter rebuked Jesus for talking about His coming death, Jesus readily discerned the satanic source of Peter's words.

"Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art an offense unto Me: for thou savourest not the things that be of those that be of men" (v. 23).

Peter's gift of discernment enabled him to see right through the deception of Ananias and Sapphira, who pretended to bring the entire proceeds from the sale of their land but in reality were turning over only part to the apostles.

Peter said, *"Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?"* Ananias and his wife were stricken dead.

(Acts 5:1-10)

Simon of Samaria was baptized on profession of faith. Later, he tried to buy the power of the Holy Ghost.

Again the ***discerning*** Peter saw the evil in his heart, and said, "*Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.*"

Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness...For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity."

(Acts 8:20-23)

On his first missionary journey, on the isle of Cyprus, Paul's presentation of the Gospel to the deputy was interrupted by a sorcerer named Elymas, who opposed Paul and tried to turn deputy from the faith.

But Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit and doubtless exercising the gift of ***discernment***, reprimanded the sorcerer:

"O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?"

Elymas was stricken with blindness for a season (Acts 13:10-11).

In Philippi a girl possessed with a spirit of divination, who brought her masters much gain, began to follow Paul and his day after day, crying out, "*These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.*"

Paul ***discerned*** this to be an unclean spirit and ordered it out of her in the name of Jesus.

Her resultant healing removed her money-making powers, which in turn incurred the wrath of her masters and brought on the arrest and beating of Paul and Silas (Acts 16:16-22).

The church of Ephesus was commended because it had tried professing apostles and discerned them liars (Rev. 2:2).

But the churches of Pergamos and Thyatira were rebuked for failure to discern and root out the doctrine of Balaam (2:14) and the teachings of false prophetess Jezebel (2:20).

Perhaps this gift had greater significance in the Apostolic Age when the New Testament was not yet completed than it does now.

How necessary it was to have those with this divinely bestowed ability to distinguish between the divine and the demonic, between truth and error.

False teachers were not to be supported.

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed" (2 John 10).

Still necessary today, this gift helps protect the church against the wiles of Satan who in every age transforms himself into an angel of light in the person of false teachers.