

THE DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

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The third gift of revelation is the gift of discernment of Spirits.

Discerning of spirits is God's revelation, or insight into the realm of spirits to detect them and their plans and to read the motives or intentions of people. This is illustrated in Luke 13:16; John 2:25; Acts 13:9-10; Acts 16:16; 1 Tim. 4:1-4; 1 John 4:1-6.

THE DISCERNING OF SPIRITS IS THE DIVINE ABILITY TO SEE THE PRESENCE AND ACTIVITY OF A SPIRIT THAT MOTIVATES A HUMAN BEING, WHETHER GOOD OR BAD. THIS REVELATION COMES TO THE CHURCH THROUGH THE FUNCTIONING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND GIVES MEMBERS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST INSIGHT INTO THE SPIRIT WORLD. THIS GIFT WILL PENETRATE AND REVEAL THE SOUL AND SPIRIT OF A PERSON.

LET'S LOOK AT EXAMPLES IN THE SCRIPTURES:

- A. Simon, the Soothsayer – He went to the apostles and said, *“I'd like to give you money for that power”* (referring to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit) Acts 8:18-19. Peter rebukes Simon *“...For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity – Acts 8:22-23.”* Simon wanted to use the gift to make money.
- B. Elymas, the Sorcerer – Paul discerns evil tendencies in Elymas *“...thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways to the Lord – Acts 13:9-18.”*
- C. Ananias and Sapphira – This couple was looking for popularity in the church and wanted the same recognition that Barnabas received. They sold property and gave a sack of money to the church, but held some back for themselves. The problem was that both declared that they gave all the money. Peter gave Ananias three chances to tell the truth, but Ananias lied three times. By lying to the Holy Spirit both fell down dead – Acts 5.

TESTIMONY

I was speaking at a chapter of FGB in a smaller city in Oklahoma. I was very familiar with this chapter and had spoken there before. Because there was no restaurant or hotel facilities available, the chapter met in a recreation building with the chapter furnishing the meat and bread and the ladies furnishing the vegetables, salads and deserts. My wife and I really enjoyed visiting this chapter because the food was excellent.

The president's wife was undoubtedly one of the most charming hostesses that you could imagine. She was very open and friendly in greeting you and while you were eating, she was eager to serve you in any way. You might say, she was **THE HOSTESS WITH THE MOSTESS.**

At the close of the meeting, several people came forward with different needs and the Lord graciously met those needs. Then, as quite often I do, I called different individuals for a Word of Prophecy or an undisclosed need which quite often required the **DISCERNING OF SPIRITS.**

One of the persons that came forward was the president's wife, this wonderful, beautiful hostess. Almost to my surprise and to the surprise of everyone in attendance, I discerned a

spirit of timidity. Then I ask her to cooperate and demand the SPIRIT OF TIMIDITY to leave her and never return. She cooperated completely and agreed that that spirit would no longer control her life. She returned to her place in the audience and her very best lady friend said, "John is good, but he sure missed it with you, didn't he?" Of course, I did not know of this remark until later.

A few weeks later I crossed paths with this charming president's wife and she reported this information to me. She said, "When I was a girl of 13 or 14 years of age, I was so afraid and timid that when friends or relatives would come to our house, I would hide. If I could hide behind the curtains I would and sometimes I would even go upstairs and hide under the bed until they would leave. Of course, I knew that this was not right and by the age of 15 going on 16, I determined that I would force myself to greet people and not run from them. It was really hard at first, but I have practiced this for the past 30 years. Most people thought that I was a natural at being gracious, but after we prayed together the other night at our chapter meeting it is natural for me now and such a pleasure to be hospitable." She can now function fully in her God given natural gift.