

“The Weapons of Our Warfare”

Part Four

Text: 2 Corinthians 10:3-5/1 Corinthians 12:7-11

Intro: I want to start this lesson with just a little review. There are three gifts of Revelation (The Word of Wisdom, The Word of Knowledge, and Discerning of spirits). These gifts reveal something. The three power gifts are (The Gift of Faith, The Working of Miracles, and the Gifts of Healings). These gifts do something. Finally, there are the inspiration gifts (The Gift of Prophecy, Diverse Kinds of Tongues, and Interpretation of Tongues). These gifts say something. For the last two weeks we have been dealing with the Revelation Gifts. Today I want to deal with The Gift of Discerning of spirits.

Specifically, in this lesson we will define the gift of Discerning of Spirits, give some Biblical examples of this gift in operation, and some practical application of this gift.

- I. What is discerning of spirits?
 - A. The Discerning of spirits is the supernatural revelation by the Holy Spirit giving certain insights into the spirit world.
 1. To discern in the Greek is **Diakrisis** from *diakrino* denoting separation. To distinguish and to Judge. To separate one from another.
 2. It is the supernatural ability to discern the spirit behind certain teachings and activities. Note: That it is listed next to prophesying.
 - a. Some suggest that this grouping should be tongues and interpretation of tongues, prophecy and discerning of spirits.
 - b. The root word is to *judge* but I would like to say more about this in a moment.
 - c. However, the point is, it has a great deal to do with judging of a message - but there are other aspects of how it is used as well.
 3. The word Discernment is in the plural so it is really discernments.
 - a. It indicates different kinds of discerning of different spirits.
 - b. Is this from the Holy Spirit, from evil spirits, or from the human spirit?
 - B. This gift does not give us license to become a judge of others.
 1. We are not to have a judgmental attitude which is really a supercritical attitude.
 - a. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus condemned this type of attitude.
 - b. Matthew 7:1-5
 2. This gift does not give someone the power to go around looking at people and telling of what spirit they are.
 - a. It is not seeing devils under every rock and around every turn.
 - b. It is a specific gift for a specific occasion.
- II. Biblical Examples of Discernments of spirits.
 - A. 1 John 4:1.
 - B. 1 Corinthians 14:29
 - C. Acts 8:18-23
 - D. Acts 13:9-10
 - E. Acts 16:16-18
- III. Possible Origins of a Prophetic Utterance
 - A. It may be precisely God’s message
 - B. It may be an evil spirit’s message
 1. 2 Peter 3:16

2. We test the message against the Word of God, but sometimes it is complicated.
3. The test is found in 1 John 4:2, 6.
 - a. Jesus came in the flesh- involves atonement and resurrection (v. 2)
 - b. Subjection to the Apostles Doctrine (v. 6).
- C. It may be the message of a human being.
 1. They may desire a certain thing for the recipient
 2. Sometimes it's our own deep feelings or a person's excessive zeal.
 3. The spirit of man is often the chief offender.
- D. It may be that God gave the message to a person and he/she then added his/her own interpretation or human desires to the message.

IV. Conclusion:

Illustration: Hundreds were gathered for the closing session of a training conference. Except for the keynote speaker, all the participants were seated on the stage. When the keynote speaker walked across the stage and sat down beside the moderator, he immediately asked the moderator, 'Who is that man on the third seat from you?' The moderator explained that the man was scheduled to give a testimony of an occurrence in Vietnam. The speaker said, 'Something is wrong. Please don't allow him to speak today.' In spite of the warning, the man was allowed to speak. His speech was passionate and persuasive. Because of the warning, however, the person was investigated and found to be a fraud. He had never even served in Vietnam. The gift of discernments of spirits was operative, but unfortunately not heeded quickly enough. Many people who heard the speech became confused when they later heard about the fraudulent nature of the speech. Some of them asked themselves, 'How could I have been swayed by him?'" (John A. Lombard Jr. & Jerald J. Daffe, 1982, *Spiritual Gifts*).

Today we need this gift in operation more than ever.