

4 Ways You Can Grow the Gift of Spiritual Discernment

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 (MEV) says, *“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for the common good. To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. But that one and very same Spirit works all these, dividing to each one individually as He wills.”*

It is the wonderful Holy Spirit who gives these gifts to empower people to share God’s grace. Each spiritual gift is for the “common good,” which means that they are for the body of Christ. The chapters that follow this list in 1 Corinthians elaborate on how these spiritual gifts are used within the local body and how each gift is needed for us to grow as a church into Jesus.

Within this list is the “discerning of spirits,” and this spiritual gift needs to be understood and practiced as well as the others in our day and age, as culture seems to be influencing and mixing within the church and sermons become more motivational rather than biblical. As a spiritual gift, it cannot be neglected but it can correctly used.

In the context of 1 Corinthians 12, the discerning of spirits is to distinguish what is trying to look like it is from God but is not. One needs to take into consideration that the Corinthians were a Spirit-filled church, but needed correcting in their practice of using spiritual gifts and that not every prophetic utterance or preacher or message in tongues originated in the Holy Spirit. Some people were competing for

accolades and were operating in the flesh, while there were others demonically influenced. A process for discerning and judging prophecies and manifestations was needed, which is why Paul set protocols in place (1 Cor. 14:29).

The use of this gift is to be centered in God. Discernment is identified with the Holy Spirit, so it recognizes where He is moving and what He wants to do, flowing out of friendship with Him.

The purpose of this gift is to rightly distinguish the work of the Holy Spirit from other spirits. Being firmly grounded in Scripture, it leads people to be more intimate with the Savior of the world, glorifying Him, canceling evil that is trying to stop God's work or the interference of man's selfish agenda within the church. Discernment is part of making sure the Spirit of God has His way, and is an incredible privilege to be part of.

A discerner identifies the presence of God, but also identifies where His presence needs to manifest. When the discerner is well-versed in Scripture, the powers challenging God will be obvious to them, and they are present to be a conduit for God's power.

The discerning person is to be deeply rooted in Christ, loving Him so much that His love flows out of them toward others. The great "love" chapter of the Bible, 1 Corinthians 13, is within the same context as this spiritual gifts list that includes "discerning spirits."

Here are four basic points you can apply in your life to grow in this spiritual gift:

1. Spend time with God every day. His presence needs to be cherished and valued, and the fruit of the Spirit is evident. Discerning spirits is to be exciting as one knows their identity in Jesus and operates in love from a position of knowing they are seated with Christ in heavenly places (Eph.

2:6-7). Their posture is one of victory because of what Jesus won at the cross.

2. Read and study the Bible daily. Scripture is God's Word and needs to be read (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Being immersed daily in Scripture makes one more sensitive to the wonderful Holy Spirit. When a person knows the Spirit of truth, they quickly identify the source that is attacking and follow the biblical guidance and locally established procedures to ensure Jesus is glorified.

3. Make everything a place for God's presence. Be intentional in saturating your home and car with worship music, teachings, Scripture and interactions with others (Eph. 5:19-21). This keeps your heart pure as you seek the presence of God. Maintaining worship makes it possible to identify when something wrong tries to interfere and take focus off of God, but the discerning person knows how to continue praising and worshipping God to break the powers trying to interrupt.

4. Be an active member within a local church. Your gift will grow as you maintain relationship with your local church (Heb. 10:24-25). Discerning spirits benefits the local church, ensuring truth is upheld in its message and methods, and protecting the church from any people the enemy will try to use to malign the ministry. A discernor is actively engaged with ministry and knows the process set in place by the leaders, enhancing the move of God. {eoa}

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