

How to Expose a Critical Spirit

One of the most vital gifts of the Spirit that a believer can walk in is the gift of discerning of spirits.

The discerning of spirits is a revelatory spiritual operation that partners several spiritual senses to rightly identify the spirit working through a person or behind a situation. It can be a life-saving manifestation of the Spirit that peels back the curtain and creates an open window into the realm of the 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” (1 Cor. 12:10).

In my own life, I can think of countless times when this gift has manifested in the form of a warning about a person or situation. A prophetic minister must have the discerning of spirits in operation. Many people with improper motives and even strange fire will come at apostolic and prophetic leaders.

These leaders must discern the spirit that is operating undercover. This happened in the life of the Apostle Paul in Acts 16, when the girl with the spirit of divination followed him around. What she was saying was not scripturally or morally wrong, but there was a foul spirit behind her declaration. This spirit wanted to derail the apostolic mission of Paul, but he rightly discerned and broke it.

There is a genuine prophetic operation of discovering spirits and avoiding deception. Yet there are many offended, wounded and misguided believers and ministers who believe that they are being prophetic when, in fact, they are actually just

manifesting a critical spirit. They continually find fault and identify perceived flaws with everyone except themselves. I have seen this foul spirit partner with a religious spirit to choke out the prophetic anointing and replace it with a disempowering deception.

While we are called to be a prophetic people, we are not called to be a critical people, and there is a vast difference!

“For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sound judgment, according to the measure of faith God has distributed to every man. For just as we have many parts in one body, and not all parts have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and all are parts of one another. We have diverse gifts according to the grace that is given to us: if prophecy, according to the proportion of faith” (Rom. 12:3-6).

A critical spirit is empowered by pride. People step beyond the boundaries of their particular assignments and through pride begins to judge what they are not called to steward. This often happens in ministry when prideful leaders elevate themselves in their own minds. Those leaders then begin to point fingers of judgment against others because what they do may look and sound different.

The reality is that there are different levels of authority that God gives, and it is key to “stay in your lane.” There are many different flows and functions of the Holy Spirit and His multi-faceted ministry. Just because someone has a ministry that looks very different from ours does not mean that it is wrong.

There are major differences between the discerning of spirits and a critical spirit. The discerning of spirits is not based in the mental realm. It will often uncover something that is

contradictory to a person's natural thoughts or understanding because it is a prophetic gift.

A critical spirit finds fault. A critical spirit is often rooted in insecurities or offense. The person that manifests a critical spirit may be overcompensating for their own insecurities, hurts and wounds. A critical spirit identifies things that are bothersome to a particular person's own preferences or ideas. It is a soulish and carnal manifestation that is totally disconnected from Holy Spirit leading. It is not based upon spiritual leadings but carnal impressions or thoughts.

A critical spirit often partners with a slanderous spirit to release vile accusations and tear down godly people. A critical spirit undoes the work of the Holy Spirit by blocking kingdom connections and releasing word curses. We know that to swing open spiritual doorways, words are keys in the spirit realm.

Word curses release demonic forces upon the minds, ministries and lives of people. An evil counterfeit spirit does the exact opposite of a prophetic spirit by declaring vile and slanderous things in order to disrupt and disturb.

A prophetic anointing is filled with hope and redemption because true prophetic ministry releases the heart of the Father. Even when a warning or correction is released, there is still the loving nature of the Father present.

"...for whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and scourges every son whom He receives" (Heb. 12:6).

A critical spirit manifests through pure negativity with no measure of hope or redemption. A person with a critical spirit can be very two-faced, smiling in front of you and ripping you apart behind the scenes. This spirit has no honor and justifies its wrong actions with a false understanding of the prophetic.

“Let no unwholesome word proceed out of your mouth, but only that which is good for building up, that it may give grace to the listeners” (Eph. 4:29).

Our words carry a lot of weight in the spirit realm. We have to make sure that we are building up, walking in love and using wisdom before we speak.

The best way to get free and stay free from a critical spirit is to pray a radical Psalm 51:10 prayer: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.”

Let the Holy Spirit shine His spotlight upon the crevices of your heart and reveal anything that does not look like the Father. One of my mentors told me that it is critical to do a daily heart check-up. A radical and honest Psalm 51 prayer exposes your heart to the healing and cleansing power of God.

If you are honest and humble before the Lord, you will not remain influenced by a critical spirit. {eoa}

Ryan LeStrange began in ministry after training under his spiritual father, Dr. Norvel Hayes. The apostolic call on his life led him to build multiple ministries in various geographical locations, the foremost being Ryan LeStrange Ministries. Ryan, a modern-day Revivalist, moves strongly in the power of God, traveling the globe to ignite revival fires. His crusades and services are alive with prophetic declaration, miracles, healings and powerful preaching. Ryan is one of the senior leaders of New Breed Revival Network, a network of ministers committed to see revival birthed in America and the nations. He is co-founder of , a media channel created to host revival-inspired services, featuring ministers and messages both past and present. Ryan has authored several books and is presently working on several more. The fire of revival and releasing the prophetic have inspired believers to press for more of God. He is the founder and Apostle of Impact International Apostolic Fellowship, an organization created to

father and network ministers around the world.

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