



Discerning Spirits, Spiritual Gift

The temporary spiritual gift of Discerning Spirits was the gift of detecting heresy in the early Church or the gift of distinguishing true from false doctrine and to recognize false teachers. If the message was not correct, the one with the gift would say the message was not correct to those near him. They would tell others that they should not listen to what was being said. With the completion of the Canon of Scripture in 96 AD, this gift was no longer necessary, since the New Testament contains true doctrine and thereby exposes false doctrine. 1 Cor. 12:10.

"and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues." (1 Corinthians 12:10, NASB)

In the Pre-canon period of the Church Age, they needed to have the gift of discerning spirits. When the New Testament Canon of Scripture was completed, there was no further need for this gift. All our discernment now is from the intake of and obedience to the Word of God. We are to be stabilized. We are to have great confidence in God. Why? Because we can discern what is right and what is wrong based on the *epignosis* Bible doctrine resident in our souls. We can differentiate between the erroneous and the accurate through spiritual growth. That's what gives us confidence in the Lord. This is not confidence in ourselves or building ourselves up because we can tell spiritual right from wrong. That leads to a type of academic arrogance where you look down your nose at others who disagree with you. It is simply in great appreciation for the Lord and what He has provided. This is discernment, confidence, and stability through the Word. This really enables us to fulfill our destiny in the plan of God.

Our discernment today is based upon our growing up spiritually under the truth of God. There are no more functioning spiritual gifts of discerning spirits today. We have the completed Canon of Scripture today and receive all of our discernment from the Word of God only.