



Discerning of
SPIRITS

IFE ADETONA

ABOUT THE BOOK

When discussing spiritual gifts, we cannot but make mention of discerning of spirits. It is a very pivotal gift in the body of Christ. However, there has been so many wrong teachings as regards this particular gift. In fact, some people don't really understand what the gift is and they don't know how it operates but they have refused to seek the right knowledge as regards the operation of the gift. This has given rise to so many misconception of the gift.

This book exposes in simple terms what the gift of Discerning of Spirits really is as against what some people think it is and the author took time to discuss how it operates.

It is my belief that anyone who reads this book with an open mind will find it enlightening.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ife Adetona is an anointed preacher of the gospel. He is the President of the Sons and Daughters of Zion [SADOZ] Global Harvest Ministries. SADOZ is an interdenominational and discipleship ministry which has seen thousands of people baptized in the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues and helped people develop a friend to friend relationship with the Person of the Holy Spirit. SADOZ's daily discipleship and devotional manual called Daily Communion reaches and blesses tens of thousands of people daily to the glory of God.

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Ife Adetona is an author of over 60 books that is imparting the body of Christ maximally. He is the husband of Elizabeth Ife-Adetona and their home is blessed with godly seeds.

Discerning of Spirits

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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scriptural quotations in this book are from the King James Version of the Bible.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO GIFTS

The simplest way to get imparted with spiritual gifts is through an understanding of what the gifts are and how they operate. I also need to inform you that by His grace, every time I teach this concept, there is impartation takes place. I want you to open your heart for an encounter.

CATEGORIES OF GIFTS

Basically, there are only 9 spiritual gifts according to 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 but there have been several debates on whether that passage covers all the gifts or not. 2 Timothy 2:15 emphasizes that the word of truth must be rightly divided else there will be a lot of abuse. There are *gifts* mentioned in different parts of the New Testament and we must clearly distinguish them to avoid misconceptions. There are up to four categories of gift in the Bible. They are: Service Gifts, Believers' Gifts, Spiritual Gifts and Ministerial Gifts. I want you to know that these gifts are interwoven. That is, we have some gifts that are spiritual gifts and at the same time service or believers' gifts.

i. Service Gifts: Romans 12:6-8

In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well.

So if God has given you the ability to prophecy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you.

If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility

seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

Here, the Bible lists up to seven gifts or abilities that are available for believers to serve in different capacities in the body of Christ. These gifts include: prophesying, serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leadership, showing kindness. Looking at the service abilities, you can testify that some people around you especially those in the house of God are better at certain things than others and that is why we have different departments and units in the church. Furthermore, we must understand that service gifts are limitless. As the church of Christ expands and grows, God gave some other abilities or gifts that are needed. An example is the gift of interpretation. Someone may be good at preaching but may not be good at interpreting a sermon from a language to the other. Today, we have those with service gifts in drama, music, protocol and so on.

ii. Believers' Gifts or Signs: Mark 16:17-18

God expects all believers to manifest all of these gifts. They are four in number:

*And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;
They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*

- a. **Gifts of tongues:** this is different from the gift of diverse kinds of tongues which is one of the spiritual gifts however, they are related. It is this gift of tongues that would give room for the gift of diverse

kinds of tongues. God expects His children to be baptized in the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in new tongues. If you are yet to have this experience, turn to the last pages of this book and follow the steps to receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost or contact the source of this book for help.

- b. **Ability to cast out devils:** this has been associated with the gift of working of miracles which is one of the nine spiritual gifts. I told you earlier that these gifts are interwoven. Every time casting of devils is mentioned in the New Testament, it is always associated with miracles. *Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. Matthew 10:8.* I always say that, if a believer cannot cast out the devil in another person's life, he should at least be able to cast out the devil in his own life.
- c. **Divine Health:** the Scripture gives the assurance that we can drink or hold deadly things and they shall not hurt us. It simply means that even if sickness attacks the body of a believer, he will not fall sick. That is, believers will live in good health. I am a living testimony to this believers' gift and I know of several people who are not even ministers of God who enjoy divine health. So, this gift is not only for great or big men of God; even a day-old believer can have it.
- d. **Gifts of healing:** we also have gifts of healing as one of the spiritual gifts. There is difference between divine health, divine healing and the gifts of healing. Divine health means that your

body will always be in health and you will not fall sick. Divine healing means that even if you fall sick, you will be healed without the use of medication. While gifts of healing is the ability to heal the sick. Here, the Bible says that we shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover. I usually say that if you cannot lay hands on people you should at least be able to lay hands on your children and family members.

iii. Spiritual Gifts: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

We all know that we have nine spiritual gifts. They are: word of knowledge, word of wisdom, discerning of spirits, gift of faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, diverse kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues and prophecy. By God's grace, we shall look at every of these gifts in detail in this book.

iv. Ministerial Gifts: 1 Corinthians 12:28-30, Ephesians 4:11

There are two major passages that detailed what ministerial gifts are:

And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracle, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, and diversities of tongues.

Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 1 Corinthians 12:28-30

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; Ephesians 4:11

The book of Ephesians is clear on what these gifts are: Apostles, Prophets, Pastors, Evangelists and Teachers. Some think that 1 Corinthians 12:28-30 is still talking about spiritual gifts but it is not so. If you use a Bible that divides the verses with headings or themes, you will realize that the first eleven verses were separated from the rest. The ministerial gifts are offices in the body of Christ and only few people are called into it. While every other category of gifts is for all believers, ministerial gifts are meant for only those who are called into ministerial offices.

I need to clarify that there are specific spiritual gifts that are attached to each of the ministerial offices. For instance, the spiritual gifts attached to the office of an evangelist are workings of miracles and gifts of healings. That is why 1 Corinthians does not specifically mention the office of an evangelist but the gifts attached to it.

1 Corinthians also identifies the Help Ministry. While the five-fold ministerial offices make use of spiritual gifts to function, the Help ministry uses the service gifts. You need to get my book titled *Understanding the Call and the Five-Fold offices* to gain more insight into how the ministerial gifts and each office operate.

VEHICLES OF MANIFESTATION

A major question that seems to confuse people when we discuss spiritual gift is if VISION IS ALSO A SPIRITUAL GIFT. Vision on its own is not a spiritual gift; it only serves as a vehicle or channel through which spiritual gifts are manifested. A vehicle in this context can be likened to a food served on a tray. The tray is not the food but the tray bears the food.

Vision is not the only tool in this category, dreams, perception, ability to hear in the spirit, prophecy and many others fall within this category. Prophecy is a spiritual gift and at the same time, a vehicle through which other gifts are manifested. The book of Joel says that these tools would be made available for all.

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: Joel 2:28

CHAPTER TWO

THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.

Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

For to one is given by the Spirit word of wisdom; to another word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

In understanding spiritual gifts, you need to be very calm and ready to learn. Someone defined learning as *the ability to learn, unlearn and relearn*. There are a lot of misconceptions we need to straighten out before we begin to discuss this gift. I will have to take you through a

number of fundamental issues. When these stones are carefully laid then impartation would be seamless.

Versions and Translations

When explaining spiritual gifts, I love to read from the King James Version of the Bible. Anyone who is familiar with me will know how attached I am to the New Living Translation and I also love to compare Bible translations but when it comes to discussion on spiritual gifts, the King James is the most accurate.

I need to explain that having various versions of the Bible especially in the English language is very beneficial and healthy to the body of Christ. As Bible students, you need to understand that the Bible was not originally written in the English language or in your native language; it was written majorly in Hebrew and Greek and some parts were written in Aramaic. These languages are no longer used for regular communication today. The dream of William Tyndale, one of the foremost prominent men to pursue the compulsory translation of the Bible into the English language was to make the poorest and the ordinary men in the society able to read and understand the Bible. This is because as at then, only the elites and educated ones in the society could read the language in which the Bible was written.

Translating from one language to the other is a complex exercise. You can try to translate few words in your local dialect to English. You should especially try to translate some proverbs and see how easy it is. You can carry out further research by asking two to three people to translate the same words in your local dialect to English; you will realize that there

will be variations in their presentation even if it still conveys the same meaning. That is the main reason why we have different translations or versions of the Bible. Everybody cannot translate it the same way. And these old languages: Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic are more complex than any other language spoken on Earth today. Moreover, because they are no longer spoken today, it makes it more complex. Thus, scholars keep researching and looking for better ways to translate the Bible to make it easily understood. I am taking my time to make this clarification because of the discourse sponsored by hell that there are different Bibles. **We don't have different Bibles; we only have different translations or versions of the same Bible** which was originally written in those three specific languages. I must also tell you that there are still ongoing researches on the translation for certain words in today's English thus, the reason why we say that there is no perfect version.

The devil in his cunningness is also trying to produce counterfeit translations but real Christians do not even know about them and those who do; do not use them. Some of these counterfeit translations present Jesus as a female and some state that Jesus is not the Son of God. You should have nothing to do with such heretic version. Those who say that it is better for believers to read the Scriptures in the original languages lack knowledge and wisdom; today, we have little children who started reading the Bible on their own as soon as they can read the English alphabet and I believe that is God's will.

....Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? Mathew 21:16

Spiritual Gifts

Now concerning SPIRITUAL gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

There are two issues I wish to explain here. The KJV italicizes the word *gifts* italicized. It is the same with other versions of the Bible. It means that it was included by scholars for easy understanding and comprehension; it was not actually in the original Greek text. That is however not a problem. As much as I don't want to deviate from the main discourse, I am taking my time to point these things out because of various teachings that are going around today making a big deal out of no deal thereby, confusing themselves and others.

Gifts as mentioned here, explains that the spiritual gifts are not things that a believer manifests once in a while, it is part and parcel of the individual. It is manifested on a regular basis.

The second point I want to explain is the importance of the word *spiritual* as used in the passage. The word spiritual is from the word *spirit* and the original Greek word used here is "*pneumatikos*". *Pneuma* simply means *spirit*. So, these gifts are related to the Holy Spirit. They are not carnal, intellectual, psychological, philosophical, environmental or academic. THEY ARE SPIRITUAL. They are given by the Holy Spirit and they only manifest in those who have been baptized in the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues. Many people have tried to explain these gifts in relation to a natural source but that is completely wrong.

Switch

Another point we must clarify is that these gifts are spiritual, they are not mechanical. That is, they are not controlled by the individual but by the Spirit. Anyone who has these gifts can tune in spiritually but he doesn't determine if it will be in operation or not, it is the Spirit that determines that. I may minister in a place today and have a high unction of a gift and minister in another place tomorrow with lesser or no unction of the same gift. I don't determine the flow, the Holy Spirit does.

Enhancers not Controls

I have said that anyone who operates in any of these gifts can tune in to the spirit realm but the Holy Spirit holds the control however, there are things we can apply which enhances or reduces the degree of their manifestations. For instance, good music is known to enhance the manifestation of the gift of prophecy. When we take note of and operate these enhancers, we can have a higher manifestation as the Spirit permits.

Potential not Kinetic

Another question that causes confusion is if every believer has these gifts. If you say that all believers have these gifts, I may agree. If another person says that not all believers have the gifts, I may also agree but one thing is certain, all believers can have and manifest all of these gifts.

If a woman gives birth to a baby boy and she says "I have given birth to a man", She is right because the baby boy has the potential to become a man but if what she means is that she has given birth to a full grown man then we know that it is practically impossible. In the same vein every believer has the potential to have and manifest all these gifts but it

doesn't mean that we all have it already. To say you have a gift means it does not manifest once in a while or that it has never been in use. It must be something that is common with you and easily identified with you.

It is with this same perception that many have misconstrued several Biblical discourses for instance, eternal security. Eternal security is a potential heritage of all believers and it is not unconditional. Just like salvation, every unbeliever including the vilest sinner out there is a potential saint but it doesn't mean that they are saints already even though Christ has died for them long ago. There is a condition before they can become a saint and the condition is that they must accept and confess Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

God expects that all believers are able to manifest all of these spiritual gifts. And I believe that as you read this book, there shall be manifestations of the gifts in your life. However, take note that you must be baptized in the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues before any of the spiritual gifts can be yours.

To Profit Withal

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

The spiritual gifts are given to us so that we can help one another in the body of Christ. Even if I manifest all the nine spiritual gifts, it doesn't make me an island. Each of these gifts has degrees and depths; there will always be someone who is higher than you in the manifestation of some gifts. And you may be higher than some in manifesting some gifts. I know

of people including my spiritual children who are doing better than me in some gifts. I rejoiced when I saw the fruits of our *School of the Prophetic*. I was the one God used to bring a number of them into the manifestations but I see the Spirit come on many in higher dimensions than it has been on me in some areas. It eventually benefited not only them but me and the ministry at large. These gifts are given to us to help each other.

As the Spirit Wills

But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

The gifts are given by the Holy Spirit as He wills, they are controlled as He wills and they are operated as He wills.

CLASSIFICATION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

For to one is given by the Spirit word of wisdom; to another word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.

Scholars have classified the gifts into three. They are:

- i. Revelational Gifts: these are gifts that reveal things in spiritual or supernatural ways. They are word of knowledge, word of wisdom and discerning of spirits. They are also called the eyes of God.

- ii. Utterance or Inspirational Gifts: these are gifts that have to do with speaking forth as prompted by the Holy Spirit. They are diversities of tongues, interpretation of tongues and prophecy. They are also referred to as the mouth of God because they have to do with speaking.

The revelational and inspirational gifts are also called the prophetic gifts. This implies that when a believer has these gifts, they become prophetic which is the desire of God for all believers. You can apply to our *School of the Prophetic* for more understanding and impartation in this.

- iii. The Power Gifts: these gifts that have to do with performing signs and wonders. They includes, gift of faith, gifts of healings and the working of miracles. These gifts are also called the hand of God because they relate to the DOINGS or ACTS of God.

Covet Earnestly

But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way. 1Corinthians 12:31

The last verse in the book of 1 Corinthians admonishes us to covet earnestly the best gifts. I believe the definition of best gift is relative. It depends on what is best to you or what is most needed in your life or in the local body of Christ that you belong. It is good to desire good things

and spiritual gifts are good things. The Apostle also said that there is a best way to desire those gifts and that is the way of LOVE. We must have good intentions for seeking these gifts. It must be for love and to bless the body of Christ.

I need to also emphasize that God wants you to have these gifts and to manifest them in a wonderful depth. It is left for you to reach out and encounter the waiting gifts of God. Can you drop this book for a moment and pray to God about your desired gifts. Tell Him to purify your heart, ask that the love of God that was shed abroad in your heart by the Spirit become dominant in you from today.

And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. Romans 5:5

CHAPTER THREE

DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits.... 1 Corinthians 12:10

In this chapter, we shall examine the third gift among the revelational spiritual gifts. This gift seems to be the least explained and the most misconceived of all the gifts. When you see or hear about the gift of discerning of spirits, what comes to your mind? I once asked a friend for clarification about a particular situation and he referred me to another person. His exact words were “go and meet Bro. Demola (not the real name), he has the gift of discerning”. Anytime I remember that incident, I feel like laughing.

Not the Gift of Detecting

The word “*discern*” as defined by the dictionary is *to detect with the senses, especially with the eyes*. The gift of discerning of spirits detects but not with the natural senses. I mentioned earlier that spiritual gifts are spiritual and can only be operated spiritually. There are police officers, FBI and CIA agents that can detect crimes and lies using their natural senses. There are also psychologists and even dogs that are trained to detect crimes. Any person, believers and non-believers alike can detect falsehood by varied means and that has nothing to do with the gift of discerning of spirits.

Right Definition

The Gift of Discerning of Spirits is the ability to detect spirits in a supernatural or spiritual way. Another definition of the word “discern” by the dictionary “*is the ability to distinguish something as being different from something else*”. So, we can also say that the gift of discerning of spirits is the ability to distinguish the kind of spirit behind an operation or an activity in a supernatural or spiritual way.

We must bear in mind that there are other ways by which a person can know the spirit behind an operation or activity without necessarily making use of this gift. Just like the gift of word of knowledge, I may know your past if you or someone close to you told me. It is different from knowing the same using the gift of word of knowledge.

Not the Gift of Discernment

Discerning of spirits is not the gift of discernment and it is not the gift of guessing. This gift deals particularly with spirits and not just *anything*. I can discern if a man is lying or not without necessarily seeing a lying spirit in him but in a situation where I could see a lying spirit then the gift is in use.

Not the Gift of Discerning of Demons

This gift is used to discern spirits not only demonic spirits. There are people only see or know demons or evil spirits. If you have anyone around that is always seeing death or evil, it won't be bad to stay away from such. And if you are the one in this shoe, you need to pray that the LORD will open your eyes and heart to see other things.

Not the Gift of Suspicion

This is not the gift of suspicion. Some people claim they have the gift of discerning of spirits and all they do is suspect everybody. That's not what the gift does in you.

Discerning Spirits without the Gift

There are various ways to know the spirit in operation in a man without the use of the gift of discerning of spirits.

- a. By experience or knowledge: when you see a mad man, you don't need the gift of discerning of spirits to know that the person is afflicted by a demon. People were brought to Jesus in the Bible and those that brought them were the ones who told Jesus that they were afflicted by demons. The people at that time had various experiences of demonic possessions that they could easily distinguish between someone that was ill naturally and an illness caused by a demonic possession. There was a man who went ahead to mention the name of the demon afflicting his son by the virtue of the way his child was behaving. In the same vein if you see a man of God who is being used by the Spirit of God he might know when a demon is involved merely by the physical manifestations or by previous experiences.

- b. By the Scriptures: If a person is preaching a false doctrine, in most cases, I don't necessarily need the Spirit of God to discern that the person is speaking heresy. But in some cases, when the gift of discerning of spirits is in operation, it is helpful. The Bible says, a mature believer is able to use his senses to discern but the little children are tossed around by every wind of false doctrines. The

Bible says milk belongs to spiritual babes but strong meat belongs to those that have grown (Hebrews 5:13-14, Ephesians 4:14). It is your duty to develop in the word of God through reading, doing and teaching.

To a large extent, by the Scriptures you should be able to tell if someone is prophesying by the flesh or demon or by the Spirit of God. The Bible says that by their fruits we shall know them. Kenneth Hagin cited an example of a woman who while prophesying said: *"My little children don't be afraid but even if you are afraid, no problem, at times, I am also afraid"*. You don't need the gift of discerning of spirits to know that such prophecy is fake. But I won't be surprised if there are believers (including those who have been in Christ for a long time) who would believe such prophesy and accept it as coming from the Lord. I have seen believers who believe things that are cheaper than that.

There are a number of doctrines and false teachings that are sponsored by hell going around these days. Some of them are the unconditional eternal security, extreme immortality, abolition of tithes, condemnation of calling upon the blood of Jesus and many others. I even heard a preacher who claimed that masturbation is not a sin. My question is, how can lust be a sin and masturbation is not a sin? You see, **no matter who says a wrong thing, it is wrong!** And no matter who does a wrong thing, it is wrong. That is my principle of followership. You don't need the Holy Spirit to know that those teachings are false but if you are not careful, the more

you listen to them, the more they appear right to you. Paul told Timothy and Titus to stay far away from such.

But AVOID foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A MAN THAT IS AN HERETICK AFTER THE FIRST AND SECOND ADMONITION REJECT. Titus 3:9-10

Someone who teaches false doctrines may not necessarily be possessed by demons but his teaching is sponsored from hell and demons are involved in its propagation. I was discussing with a man who condemned so many teachings and started saying a variety of heresies. I knew already that he was preaching heresies but when I slept, in the midnight, I was troubled and began to pray, then I had a vision, in that vision I saw the demon of heresy that was influencing him. I knew that he was heretic by scriptural knowledge, I also knew by the Holy Spirit and lastly I knew through the gift of discerning of spirits. I said a little prayer that before the end of the coming year, he shouldn't be able to continue propagating his heretic messages. The next time I heard about him which was also the last time, I learnt that he was caught fornicating with a soldier's wife by the soldier. You can imagine how that turned out. You can see that; he was not living well in various areas of his life but he wanted to set the body of Christ right by raising heretic debates.

- c. By Spiritual Intelligence: Through spiritual intelligence, you can discern a spirit in operation. This comes by growth in the Spirit and

by paying attention to details as you carry out spiritual activities. A son of mine once asked me how to know if a person is demon-possessed during a healing or prayer session. Some people fall under the anointing not because the Spirit of God came on them but because there is a demon in them. So, he was asking how to know the difference. I couldn't find any suitable answer than to tell him what the Holy Spirit told me when I asked Him the same question. He said "*continue ministering, with time, you will know how to differentiate between both*". And today, I can easily tell the difference even though at times, there are some intelligent demons, but God still reveals them. That's why we need the gift of discerning of spirits because everything works hand in hand.

- d. By their fruit: The Bible says by their fruits, you shall know them (Mathew 7:20). You can detect heresy, wrong doings, lies, evil things by obvious things. I watched a movie where a man was cast as a preacher. He could recite some scriptures but I saw some marks on him and that made me suspicious if he was a true preacher or fake. Eventually, he was shown in his temple holding snakes and giving them to people to also hold. He claimed that he was casting the spirit of fear out of them. At that point I concluded that the man was demonic and occultic. You will be surprised that if such a man exists in the real world, he would have followers some of whom would claim to be Christians.

There are so-called churches and prophets everywhere today that where rituals are carried out. Many of them sacrifice live birds, they place calabash containing food items at T-Junctions. They burn

incense, engage in river bathes and many others. You don't need a man of God or the Holy Spirit to tell you that they are fake and false. Some may be convinced by the manifestations and testimonies. Testimonies my foot! The kingdom of darkness will not war against itself; they will lift little bondages off their victims and give them bigger problems.

- e. By the Holy Spirit: I mentioned earlier that when the Holy Spirit tells us the past, present and future, it is one of the ways through which word of knowledge and word of wisdom are manifested but that is not the same for the gift of discerning of spirits. The Bible says the Spirit would tell us all things. He can tell you if a person is lying or not, He can even tell you when a lying spirit is in operation that doesn't however mean that you have the gift of discerning of spirits operating in you.

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. John 14:26

OPERATIONS OF THE GIFT OF DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

a. It enables you to see spirit beings:

The first question that should come to mind here is that what are spirit beings? Hebrews 12:22-24 gives a list of some spirit being

But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

The Spirit beings include:

- i. God Himself
- ii. Jesus Christ: the day Jesus died and resurrected, He put off His earthly body. When He was on earth, He was physical but now, He is spiritual and when He returns, He would be back physically with His resurrected body.
- iii. The Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit was not mentioned here but we know that He is part of the Trinity.
- iv. Angels: we all know that angels are spirit beings.
- v. The spirits of just men: this includes the patriarchs of faith Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Paul, Peter, Ayodele Bablola, Kenneth Hagin and others. They that have all died in Christ and are watching us as a cloud of witness (Hebrews 12:1).
- vi. The spirits of living men: man is a spirit being.
- vii. Demons or evil spirits also exist.
- viii. There are many other spirits mentioned in the Bible like the Seraphim and Cherubim. Many of us believe that they are a type of angels. The book of Revelation also mentioned the 24 elders who some assume are the 12 patriarchs of Israel and the 12 Apostles of the Christ.

The gift of discerning of spirits enables a man to see into the spirit realm and see spirit beings just as they are in the spiritual realm. It is not all the spirits mentioned earlier that often interact with men on earth. The Holy Spirit relates with men always, angels and demons also relate and interact with men. Jesus Christ interacts with men as well from time to time. I discussed more on spirit beings in our *School of Deliverance* and in my teaching titled *Angeology*.

With the gift of discerning of spirits, Ezekiel saw into the spirit realm and saw what he called living creatures which were later described as Cherubims. Isaiah on the other hands saw Seraphims.

This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river of Chebar; and I knew that they were the cherubims. Ezekiel 10:20

Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar. Isaiah 6:6

In Acts 8:26, Philip saw an angel.

And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

These are instances where the gift of discerning of spirits operates in the dimension of seeing spirit beings as they are in the spirit realm. Cornelius also saw an angel but that didn't mean that he had the gift at that time because he was not even born again, his eyes were only opened

temporarily. For a person to claim to have a spiritual gift, the gift must have been used often.

Apostle Paul also saw the Lord Jesus Christ

*Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?
Are not ye my work in the Lord? 1Corinthians 9:1.*

b. Knowing the spirit behind a thing or an operation:

This gift does not only operate by seeing spirits; we can also know the spirit behind an operation through other means which I am going to explain shortly. You can know when a person is in the Spirit, when he is in the flesh or when he is possessed by a demon. In the *School of Healing*, we believe that all sicknesses are caused by the devil but we understand that some sicknesses may not have the direct involvement of evil spirits and those ones can be cured medically but some sicknesses are directly caused by evil spirits. Until the evil spirit is detected and cast away, there may be no cure whatsoever.

a) You can know by perceiving: I have explained perception when we discussed the gift of word of knowledge and word of wisdom. You may know the presence of a spirit being or a demon in someone by perceiving in your heart or spirit.

b) You can know by hearing the voice of a spirit in the spiritual realm. This may or may not involve vision. I preached some messages on spiritual or prophetic sense organs especially in the *School of the Prophetic*. Our spiritual ears can pick the voice of the

Lord which is not necessarily the still voice of the Holy Spirit or the audible voice of God. You can also hear the voice of demons without necessarily seeing them. I know demons speak audibly at deliverance sessions but not all the time, they also speak in the spirit.

c) You can know by smelling a spirit in the spiritual realm: The Scripture establishes that God has a scent. The presence of God can be detected by perceiving His sweet smelling scent. On the other hand, evil spirits have offensive odour which can also be perceived with the nostrils. Your nose can be empowered to smell when a person has a wrong spirit or when they have done something wrong.

I am going to establish everything I have just wrote from the Scriptures shortly.

i. Seeing

When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. Mark 9:25

I have given instances of men who saw into the spirit realm and saw Jesus, angels and so on. In Mark 9:17 downward, a man brought his child to the disciples to cast out the sprit in him but they could not do anything. When Jesus arrived at the scene, the man explained everything to Him. When Jesus was to cast the spirit out, He addressed the spirit directly and went further to call it by name “deaf and dumb spirit”.

With the way it played out, it can be deduced that Jesus saw the spirit in the spirit realm and that is a description of the gift of discerning of spirits in operation. The father of the child knew that his son was under a demonic possession and he even named it a dumb spirit according to how the spirit operated in his child but he never saw the demon. Jesus could see all things and knew that it was not only a dumb spirit but a deaf and dumb spirit.

ii. **Hearing**

And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea. Mark 5:12-13.

When Jesus was to heal the mad man of Gadarenes as recorded by Mathew, Mark and Luke, a study of the conversation between Jesus and the demons in the man, would reveal that the demons spoke to Jesus through the mad man but upon a careful study, you will realize that the Bible says “...and all the devils besought Him”. Mathew 8:32 says “...so the devils besought him”. Luke 8:31 says “...and they besought him”.

Note that there was a Legion of demon in that man. Going by the Roman military term at that time, a Legion consists of a total of 6,826 soldiers. That means more than 6,000 demons were begging Jesus at the same time. He couldn't have heard them physically but spiritually in the spirit realm. That is the gift of discerning of spirits in operation.

I remember the case of someone who came to me to pray with her, as soon as I held her hand; I heard the voice of the demon speaking in my ears and not through her. I could hear it loud and clear. The demon stated why it was still oppressing her and why it could not leave.

In Revelations 1:10, Apostle John said “*I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and heard...*” He heard into the spirit realm then he turned and began to see things.

iii. Perception

And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying. The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour. Acts 16:16-18

Some people believe that Paul did not know that the girl in Acts 16:16-18 had an evil spirit while she followed them but I disagree with that submission. Paul and those with him knew the girl was possessed because they understood the environment. They were the first person to take the word of God to that place and the only way that girl could have known the things she said was either by the Spirit of God or by a demon and of course it was by a demon.

In verse 18, the Bible says *Paul was grieved in the Spirit*. He knew all this while that the girl was possessed but at that instant, the gift of

discerning of spirits was in operation and it manifested with a grieving in his heart or spirit and then he addressed the demon and cast it out.

*iv. **Smelling***

All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad. Psalms 45:8

And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done. Genesis 8:21

The Trinity has sweet smelling fragrance, a pure Christian life also smells nice to God but demons and sinful lives smell awful to God. Spiritual men can perceive all of these smells. One of the privileges God gave to me is the ability to perceive the character of people with my spiritual nose. We can also perceive the presence of God and angels. Demons can also be perceived.

DISCERNING OF SPIRITS AND DELIVERANCE

When you detect the presence of a demon by the gift of discerning of spirits, it is very easy to cast out such a spirit. Paul had the full authority to cast out the demon out of that girl all these while but at that moment, he did not only have the authority but he got permission from the spiritual realm. We need to learn how to tune to the timing of the Spirit of God if we will not fail. Jesus says He does things as He sees His Father do them.

Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. John 5:19

From the passage quoted above, it is safe to say that Jesus always watch out for the right time and that was why He took His time before visiting His friend, Lazarus. Remember that the master of the girl in *Acts 16:16-18* caused trouble for Paul and Silas after that incident but were miraculously saved from prison. If Paul had cast the spirit out earlier he and his men would probably have been killed or they may not have been able to do much in that town and of course, after casting out that spirit, their mission ended.

We must learn to cooperate with the Spirit of God in the use of these gifts at all times. Many people have lost their lives by acting on Biblical authority without waiting for the Spirit's permission.

SYMBOLIC DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

There is something called *symbolic discerning of spirits*. **In this case, you may not necessarily see the spirit but a symbolic representation or form of the spirit.** At other times, it could be feelings that will let you know about the presence of a spirit. In this case, you are not seeing things exactly the way they are in the spirit but in a form.

John the Baptist did not see the Holy Spirit as He is but like, he only saw Him in the form of a Dove coming upon Jesus. Who did he see? He saw the Holy Spirit but in the form of a Dove. That is what I mean by symbolic discerning of spirits. It is still the gift of discerning of spirits in

operation. Many of us might think it was everybody standing there that saw the Spirit as it came like a Dove and heard the voice but it was not so. It was only John the Baptist and probably Jesus Christ that saw it in the Spirit realm.

Then John testified, "I saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove from heaven and resting upon him. I didn't know he was the one, but when God sent me to baptize with water, he told me, 'The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and rest is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' I saw this happen to Jesus, so I testify that he is the Chosen One of God.

John 1:32-34

You must have heard men of God including Prophets claim that they see spirits or angels. For example, they may say "there's an angel here". Oftentimes, they didn't see the angel in his actual form. They may perceive the scent, or feel fire in a certain part of their body or see some signs and symbols that tell them that an angel is present.

Another biblical example is that of Elisha and his servant, when the king of Syria wanted to arrest him. His servant saw the army of Syria and he was afraid. Elisha assured him that they had more people with them than the army of Syria then he prayed that God should open the eyes of his servant, and the boy saw the mountains around them filled with chariots and horses (2Kings6:17).

The chariots he saw do not necessarily mean that angels of God came with chariots- No! What he saw was a symbolic appearance of battle

angels. If that incident happens in today, you may not see chariots but modern war gears like war planes, armour tanks, snipers and so on.

Most times, these symbols appeal to our background knowledge, that is, we are shown things or we see things in a way we can easily relate and identify with. When Jesus taught with parables, some of his illustrations were about farmers and shepherds. That was because those were the things people around him were familiar with.

Today, if you ask those who claim they saw Jesus to describe the Jesus they saw, they would probably describe the Jesus they see in calendars and portraits but of course, that is not what Jesus look like. Some may see the kind of Jesus they saw in a movie about Jesus. Many may even claim that they saw Jesus on the cross but the truth is that Jesus is no longer on the cross. Moreover, when Jesus was nailed on the cross, He was stark naked but for the sake of decency, the pictures we have today, portray Jesus with a cloth tied around his waist and that's exactly what many see in visions and dream. Take note that I am not against those things, all I am trying to say is that we can see or discern spirits in a form not exactly the way they appear and it is very valid and acceptable.

Some who claim to have been to heaven claim that they saw gates, streets, estates and many other things. Do you really think that there are real gates or doors in heaven? Why would God need a gate? To keep armed robbers away? Those things were only revealed to them symbolically. It doesn't mean that when we get to Heaven, we will see it the same way they said they saw it. They were just symbols. Even John saw many symbols. He saw candlesticks that represent the seven-fold

Spirit of God and some other symbols like a Lamb that was slain and he also saw things in the actual form they are.

Many of us have had encounters with God but God appeared to us in the form of a pastor or someone that we are familiar with and that we trust. In one of such experiences that I had, I saw an elder in our church but in that vision, his skin was glowing! When people tell me that they saw me in their dreams or vision giving them instructions or praying for them, I tell them, you have seen God. I am not God and I can never be God. God only appeared to them in a form. God appeared to Moses in a form of a burning fire.

Talking about seeing angels, many of us claim that we saw angels but can you give a vivid description of the angel you saw? Many only saw a white garment, some would even see wings but in the real sense the angels that relate with men don't have wings. The spirit beings that have wings are the Seraphim and the Cherubim and they don't relate with men as such, they are often with the throne of God. But we see angels in a form with wings because that is what we are really familiar with. Real angels in their actual form are just like men. You may even mistake them for men. Joshua saw an angel in the actual form and approached him like a man. It was until the man introduced himself as an angel that Joshua realized that he was before an angel.

When Joshua was near the town of Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with sword in hand. Joshua went up to him and demanded, "Are you friend or foe?" Neither one," he replied. "I am the commander of the Lord's army."

Joshua 5:13-14 NLT

The mother of Samson saw an angel but told her husband that she saw a man of God. Abraham also saw angels as men. The Bible tells us that we might be entertaining angels thinking they are men. *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Hebrews 13:2.*

However, angels can also take on other forms aside their original forms. And there are other ways to discern the presence of angels without necessarily seeing them. You may see a part of their form. It maybe their clothes, feet, back etc. You may also have sensational feelings like fire or breeze. Take note that the Holy Spirit can also be felt through fire and breeze.

I remember ministering at a place. I saw cups and a jug. Those items could not have been there alone so it must have been an angel or even angels bearing them but I didn't see them. At that same moment, I was in the spirit and though I did not see them, I knew everything that was happening and what they were doing. I started saying and describing it to my audience. After the session, a sister testified that as I was saying those things she saw angels acting them out.

There are some angels that are at work with me, I have seen them and I know the feeling their presence brings. I don't need to see them all the time but anytime I sense their presence; I can boldly say that they are around. For instance, there are angels that work with me whenever I am praying people to be baptized in the Holy Ghost. I know their presence by feeling fire gushing out of my palm. To some people, they may know the

presence of certain angels by flashes of light or by having a particular feeling on a part of their body. The presence of demons can also be discerned this way and they can also be discerned by seeing them in a vision in the form of some animals like serpents.

Rev. Hagin said Jesus appeared to him and told him that the gift of discerning of spirits will begin to operate in his life and that anytime he lay hands on a sick person he would know when a demon is present when fire jumps from one of his hands to the other without passing through the person. And there was a prophet who could tell the presence of demons in people by his wrist watch. The watch would stop.

God may not necessarily tell you what and how you will feel or discern most of these things but experience will teach you. By experience, I have known how to discern spirits and there are more that I am still learning by careful observation. We must also understand that God cannot be fixated, He is dynamic. He may not take the same route all the time and that is why we must grow and outwit the devil that may want to camouflage those experiences.

You may be wondering if you have the gift of discerning of spirits just because you usually have certain sensations or feelings. I need to remind you that when I talked about how it operates, I mentioned seeing, hearing, perceiving, smelling before I talked about the symbolic dimension. You can have this gift by trusting God for it but having it in operation just once in a while does not mean that you have it but it is a pointer to the fact that you can have it. Receive it in Jesus Name!

DISCERNING OF SPIRITS AND CASTING OUT OF DEMONS

But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Matthew 12:28

When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick. Matthew 8:16

I want to admonish anyone who has interest in discovering facts about spirits, demons and deliverance to apply to our *School of Deliverance*. The gift of discerning of spirits is primarily associated with the deliverance ministry. In the above passage, there are two ways Jesus cast out devils all through His ministry on earth:

v. **By the word of God.** Matthew 8:16.

vi. **By the Spirit.** Matthew 12:28. Casting out devils by the spirit is the gifts of discerning of spirits in operation.

ACTIVATION

1. You must be baptized in the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues.
2. The Scriptures says “*and the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me*”. *Ezekiel 2:2*. As you read this chapter on discerning of spirits with total attention, the Spirit has entered into you and you will begin to see the manifestation. If you didn't read it carefully, I will advise you start all over.

END NOTE

I believe that the eyes of your understanding has been enlightened on what the Gift of Discerning of Spirits is and how to operate it. You are also imparted. Go in this thy might. Make this book a part of your library and you revisit it from time to time.

There is more to learn about spiritual gifts so, I urge you to get other titles in this spiritual gifts series to learn more about each spiritual gift and their operations. Or you can get the complete book *Impartation for Spiritual Gifts* where all the nine spiritual gifts are discussed in details.

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Receiving Salvation

You were born a sinner condemned to hell but Jesus Christ died for your sins, gave you power to sin no more and to enjoy life here on earth and hereafter. All you need to do is to believe and accept His works by declaring Him as your LORD and Saviour. Do you believe this? Say: Lord Jesus Christ, I accept that you died and resurrected for the remission of my sins, I declare you as my LORD and Saviour. Amen.

Steps to Receive the Baptism of the Holy Ghost

1. You are not to ask or beg God for it, just expect it.
2. Believe He has given you and you will manifest it.
3. Don't hate tongues. That some people misuse it doesn't mean it has lost its power.
4. Don't pretend not to need it. Holy Ghost baptism is not just about tongues, it is about empowerment but tongues is the initial sign that you are baptized.
5. Clear your minds of doubts. God will give you but if you think that any sin can hinder you, ask for forgiveness now and now. (Isa 1:18 *Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool*). And forgive everyone in your heart.
6. As I pray for you, you will be baptized and you will speak in new tongues.

7. As I pray for you, the Holy Spirit will give you utterances and you will speak it out. Note that utterance means any sound produced with the mouth. That means the utterance could be one syllable or two. It could be one word or more. Understand that you are the one that will pronounce the utterance in anyway it comes to your mind as the Holy Spirit gives you utterance.
8. When I pray for you, the utterance would come. Don't think you are the one thinking it, it is not you. Don't think you will be unconscious or lost, it is not so. Don't be bothered if you don't know the meaning just speak it. And keep repeating whatever comes to your mind.
9. Daddy thank you because you are a faithful God, you always hear me and you are eager to give us more than we are eager to ask. I pray for you: receive the Holy Spirit right now in Jesus Name.
10. Open your mouth and began to speak those tongues.

Steps to Receive Healing

1. **1Peter 2:24 says:** *He personally bore our sins in His [own] body on the tree [as on an altar and offered Himself on it], that we might die (cease to exist) to sin and live to righteousness. **By His wounds you have been healed.***
2. You have been healed. You have been healed even before you had that illness, what I'm about to do by praying with you is to proclaim your healing.
3. As I do that, the pains and symptoms will be no more.
4. After I pray for you move that part of your body just as though it was healed already because it is an instant healing.

5. I proclaim you healed and whole right now in Jesus Name. The last time you had that illness is the last you will ever have in Jesus Name.
6. Check it out and share your testimonies.

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