

Remnant Life Church  
April 27, 2014  
I Corinthians 12:10

*“Distinguishing Between Spirits – Who is Responsible?”*

- **At all times there are three active spirits all around us**
  1. The spirit of man (**Gen. 2:7**)
  2. The spirit of God (**Gen. 1:2**)
  3. The spirit of evil (**Mark 5:8**)
  
- Since the spiritual gifts are given to encourage, exhort, and edify the church, satan will always attempt to pervert those **by introducing counterfeit gifts**
  - Counterfeits, in order to be effective, are close to the genuine but ultimately false
  - Churches have been destroyed by false gifts being allowed to operate through a lack of discernment
  - It is of critical, even eternal importance that there is the ability present within the church to discern or tell the difference between the 3 active spirits.
  
- **NOTE** - Because everything is created by God, every spirit is under God’s headship
  - Evil spirits do not operate outside of God’s authority
  - They are bound to obey God and, when done in His name and in accordance with His will, obey His children
  - The spirit of man, while given full choice in this life, is still under God’s authority
  
- **Discerning of Spirits:** enables a believer to distinguish or determine – through spiritual insight – the motivating spirit behind certain words or deeds. Specifically, is the origin of God, human, or demonic?
  
- **What is a spirit?**
  - It is a living personality that is without physical form but still active among us
  - The spirit of evil is not omnipotent but it is crafty
    - It will not introduce itself as what it actually is, and it is never what it seems
      - We are, right now, experiencing an all-out assault on the church, led by Hollywood, to confuse, desensitize and enamor us with the things of the demonic spirit world – it is aimed primarily at our children and young people
      - These things will all lead into the sins of the flesh (**Gal. 5**)

- It often comes as an angel of light
    - This is in regard to what is seen on the outside
    - Too many churches have been devastatingly injured by welcoming someone to their pulpit or into leadership who were spectacular on the outside but, because of their appearance were never examined on the inside.
  - The Bible gives three forms that satan attacks God's people
    - The subtle serpent – (Gen 3:1)
    - The roaring lion – (I Peter 5:8)
    - The angel of light – (2 Cor 11:14)
- **This gift is not about keen insight into human nature and in fact has nothing to do with your perception, feelings or observations of a person**
  - The greatest danger to the bearer of this gift is they begin to set themselves up to judge other people rather than focusing on the spirit
    - The words of Paul in I Cor. 12:4-6 are of great importance in keeping this and all the gifts in right perspective
  - This is much less about what we see happening than what the Holy Spirit is revealing as to who is behind the manifestation
- **What is the ultimate purpose behind the discernment of the spirit?**
  - To answer the question: Is it truth or is it deception behind the activity?
  - NOTE: Be careful to care for and guard the person while dealing with the spirit
- **A person does not have a “gift of discernment”**
  - The Bible never talks about the gift of discernment
  - There is the discernment of spirits and the ability to be prophetic or a seer; even those who have an especially sensitive spirit to the things of God
  - The counterfeit gift of discernment will always focus on the person rather than the spirit
    - Satan will use this false perception to manipulate and control God's people within the church
    - It is a counterfeit of the discernment of spirits
- **Discerning is being able to see into the spiritual realm**
  - **Isaiah 6:1** - *...I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple.*
  - In the writing of the book of Revelation John, while on the Isle of Patmos, wrote of being able to see the Holy Spirit as seven spirits before the throne. (**Rev. 4:5**)

- **Acts 16:16-19** – Paul recognizes and rebukes (or drives out) a demonic spirit of divination in a girl. He addresses the spirit and NOT the girl.
- **Luke 4:31 and Matt 17:18** tell of us of Jesus recognizing the demonic influence in two people’s lives and rebuking the spirit NOT the person.
- **What are the measures we use in discernment?**
  - Is the manifestation (a word, supernatural event...) one that is supported by the Word of God?
    - There are events that may appear to be genuine but they can never be contrary or absent from the Word
    - We cannot be drawn in by “parlor tricks”
  - Does the gift give glory to God or focus attention on the person?
    - There have been many influential figures in the past who have allowed counterfeit deceive themselves and others
      - John Alexander Dowie – Scottish evangelist and faith healer in the late 1800’s
      - Believed and told other that he was the return of Elijah (**Mal.4:5**)
      - Shortly after he embraced this he died of a stroke
  - What is the impact on the church?
    - Does it edify, encourage and exhort
    - Does it elicit fear?
      - Not the hesitation that comes from the unknown
      - Fear that is born out of the spirit
- **At Remnant Life Church...**
  - We will seek to discern every word spoken to the church and every gift witnessed through the authority of God’s Word and those who God appoints to lead
  - We will not allow someone to come and give counsel or direction to us without careful prayer, consideration and discernment
  - We will not allow the appearance of a person to sway our wisdom and our desire to care for and guard one another
  - We will be bold in our desire for the things of the spirit but we will always embrace the caution of wisdom