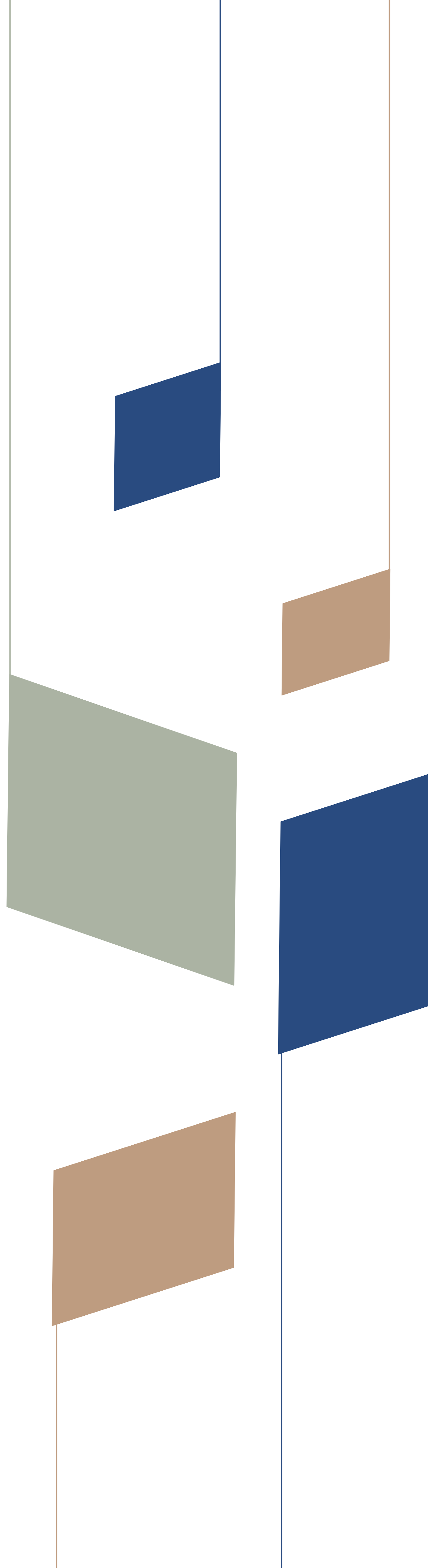


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DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS

Victor L. Brown



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"DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS"

Eph.4:7, But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. V.8, Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts onto men.

In these verses Paul is referring to the gifts of the ministry. These gifts were given to men to build the church.

1 Cor.12:7" But the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withall."

Here again Paul is showing that these gifts are to be used to profit or edify the body.

Psm. 68:18, "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive thou hast received gifts for men."

Jesus had to first gain control of himself before he could receive the gifts and give them to his disciples. Jesus said, " Or else how can one enter a strong man's house and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man?"

Jesus was casting out devils by the spirit of God. He had gained control over his natural human spirit and the spirit of God was reigning in his mortal body.

Psm.18:17, He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me. The strong enemy is the nature of the flesh, this is the captivity that Jesus took captive.

The thought to remember is that before Jesus went to preach to spirits in prison he was put to death in the flesh. He used the word of God to destroy his carnality. We must use the word of God and the spirit of God to discern and destroy our carnal spirit like he did.

When we learn to rule and reign with Christ in our body, then that rule will spread outward and our example will start to help others.

In other words we need to find out what is wrong with us before we can help anyone else effectively.

Mt.7:3-5, And why beholdest the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou ^{say} to thy brother, let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

2 Cor.10:3-7 For though we walk in the flesh; we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled .

These scriptures should give us an idea how the spirit of discernment will begin to manifest itself in the body of Christ. We need to mature spiritually to be ready to handle this important gift. Certain members of the body will begin to manifest discernment as they grow spiritually.

Heb.5:12-14, For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their sense exercised to discern both good and evil.

I believe that these scriptures show that the gift of discernment is a gift that is developed in a member of the body over a period of time.

1Cor.12:7-8, Concordant Version: Now to each one is being given the manifestation of the spirit, with a view to expedience. For to one, indeed, through the spirit, is being given the word of wisdom...ect.

This translation helps us to understand that these gifts or special spiritual faculties are not something that you get like a present, that you all at once "have it"!

* Some are going around the country telling young christians that they have this or that gift. I am not trying to say by this article that these gifts do not exist, on the contrary "the gifts and callings of God are without repentance". God has never repented and taken these manifestations out of the world. But I do see a danger that some may be making a mistake in following after the gifts, signs, and wonders so much that they are forgetting the perpose that God intended them for. God intended for the body of Christ to be complete and full of the power of God. The spiritual manifestations are for the edification of the body, to help the people of God or to help people find the people of God.

Many are using the Spirit to gain a following and build thier own house. "Stolen waters are sweet, bread eaten in secret is pleasent." If a man will not let his doctrine be tested and won't build his people into the body he is building his own house. People must be taught to put their trust in the ministry of the body of Christ and not in one individual.

The gifts cannot save you, you must come to the knowledge of the truth, and be brought to perfection. We need the influence of all five gifts of the ministry working in conjuntion with the Holy Ghost to bring us into life. If a young Christian begins to manifest the beginings of a gift it is best not to tell them too soon. But rather give instruction in such a way to expose them to the dangers of personal ambition. They must be made aware of themselves and then given free space to excercise and develope. This must be done without harming their faith or hindering their own personal contact with God. This takes a wise patient man of God void of personal ambition himself.

Discern, discerner, discernment NT:Strongs #1252 Diakrino, from 1223. (dia denoting the channel of an act, by reason of, because of.) and #2919 Krino to distinguish decide, conclude, judge, to seperate thoroughly, to withdraw from or oppose. To discriminate, to decide, contend, make to defer, discern, doubt, be partial, stagger, waver, Gr. thru-judge.

Greek text:

Mt.21:21 Amen I-am-saying to-you if-ever may-be-having belief and no may-be-being THRU-JUDGED not only of the fig tree ye-will be-doing but and if ever to-the mountain this ye-may-be-saying be-being lifted and be cast into the sea it will be-becoming.

Mk.11:23, Amen I-am-saying to-you that if-ever may-be-saying to-the-mountain this be-being lifted and be being cast into the sea and no may be being THRU-JUDGED IN THE HEART OF HIM but should be-beliving that which he-is-talking is-becoming.

1Cor.11:29-31 KJV."For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and damnation to himself ^{damnation} not discerning (thru-judging) the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge (thru-judge) ourselves, we should not be judged.

Greek text:

1Cor.12:10, To other yet in-act-effects of abilities to other yet before-averment to other yet THRU-JUDGING of spirits.

Heb.5:14, The solid nourishment of-the-ones through the habit the sense-keepers having been-exercised haveing toward THRU-JUDGING of-ideal besides and of evil.

Sense-keepers= faculties, senses. #145 Aistheterion, An organ of perception i.e. judgement senses.

Psm.119:7, I will praise thee with uprightness of heart when I shall have learned thy righteous judgements.

Vs. 25-26, My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word. I have declared my ways and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes.

V.59 I thought on my ways and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.

If you will be honest with God and be willing to admit your faults God will help you understand how to use his word to cleanes your life.

Psm. 119:97-100, O how love I thy law it is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy comandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.

V.105, Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

Heb.4:12, For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper then any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is the discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

* Discernment is the spiritual ability to judge motives, how can we do this if our motives are not pure? How can we judge others unless we understand and are conformed to the righteous principles of the word of God?

We must let the sword of the spirit cut us open and let us see our motives and straighten us out. Jesus used the word of God on himself when he was tempted in the wilderness. This was where he was put to death in the flesh. He destroyed the influence of his by using the word of God on himself. He than had power to accomplish what God had sent him to do. We must do the same thing. We must use the word and the spirit to rend the veil of our flesh while we are going through the fire. Then and only then will we be able to see the true reason for a persons actions and be able to use the word to help the brother or sister get free from the spirit that has them bound.

1Cor.2:14-15, But the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

1Cor.3:1-3, And I brethren could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

Jms.4:1-3, From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not here even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

* People have a lust for power and influence. Nowhere is this more evident than in the the Kingdom of God. Some people who have had little or no recognition or honor in this life seem to develop an overpowering desire to succeed at something. They reason that you are nothing in the Kingdom of God unless you are a preacher, prophet, or have certain spiritual gifts. They are the people that sometimes get the cart before the horse and try to push themselves into these "positions" when God has not called them to function in that place.

1Cor.12:18, But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

There are no big I's and little yo in the body of Christ, we all have our place and are needed. We don't need to envy someone who seems to be doing something that we think is more important than what we are doing.

Discern, Old Testament:

#5234, naker; a prim root; prop. to scrutinize, i.e. look intently at; hence (with recognition implied), to acknowledge, be acquainted with, care for, respect, revere, or (with suspicion implied), to disregard, ignore, be strange toward, reject, resign, dissimulate, (as if ignorant or disowning): could, deliver, discern, dissemble, estrange, feign self to be another, know, take knowledge (notice), perceive, regard, (have respect), behave (make) self strange (-ly).

Gen.23:23, And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy,...

Neh.6:12, And lo, I perceived that God had not sent him; but that he pronounced this prophecy against me: for Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him.

Pro.20:11, Even a child is known his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.

Neh.13:23-24, In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab:

Psm. 119:97-100, O how love I thy law it is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy comandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.

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Pro.20:11, Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.

Neh.13:23-24, In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab:

And their children spake half the speach of Ashdod and could not speak (lt. discern to speak) in the Jew's language,...

There are many that cannot speak in the spiritual (Jew's) language of the bible. They are not able to discern the Lord's body.

#8085 Shama, to hear intelligently, listen carefully, consider, discern, understand, obey, hear, hearken, heareth.

Pro.22:17, Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge.

Isa.50:4-5, The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.

If the Lord wakens your ear to hear he will first tell you your problems, and when he does don't be rebellious and turn back!

Pro.15:32, He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.

1Kings 3:9, Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

#3045 Yada, to know (to ascertain by seeing); perceive, understand, mark, be learned, have knowledge, discover, discern, instruct, acknowledge, be acquainted with, be aware, comprehend, feel, be diligent.

Deu.8:5, Thou shalt also consider in thy heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.

Ecc.8:5, Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgement.

Deu.1:39, Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil,...

As it was in the old testament it is today babes in Christ have little or no discernment.

#995 Biyn, a prim root; to separate mentally (or distinguish), i.e. (gen.) understand: attend, consider, be cunning, discern, feel, have intelligence, know,

mark, perceive, be prudent, think, view, wise man, deal wisely.

Psm.139:1-2, O Lord thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thoughts afar off.

Pro.14:15, The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.

Pro.7:7 And I beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding.

Isa.5:21, Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight.

Psm.19:12, Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.

Isa.28:9-10, Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

Pro.17:10, A reproof entereth more into a wise man than a hundred stripes into a fool.

* Solomon was the wisest man in the old testament. He asked the Lord for wisdom and the ability to discern, and gave him what he asked for but not overnight. If you study the book of Ecclesiastes you will see that Solomon had to seek after wisdom. He was given the ability to recognize folly and wisdom by observing the things that hapened to him and to others around him.

I believe that discernment will grow in the body of Christ as we learn to be observant and alert to the things that happen to others and to us because of what we do. You reap what you sow!

We all need to pray that God will be gracious and help us to learn by our mistakes. And that He would let us understand how to take instruction so that we could avoid the pitfalls and sorrows others have fallen into.

#7200 raah; a prim root; to see, lit. or fig. advise self, appear, behold, have experience, perceive, cause to see, mark, gaze, stare, view, visions, consider, look upon one another.

Ecc.1:16, I communed with mine own heart saying, lo, I am come to great estate and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge.

Pro.24:30-32, I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction.

I believe that the proper way to look at the gifts is that God allows certain members of the body to develop in different ways. Much the same way as the development of our natural abilities develop over the years. I do not believe that these gifts will be fully functional until we learn to work together as a body.

Also if I have noticed people that have a certain measure of discernment. They are able to see certain things in people but are unable to see other problems in the same people. For instance someone who has a religious spirit or a selfrighteous spirit will either not see any thing wrong with someone that has the same spirit or they will be highly offended by that person. The reason is that they are blind in that area. Some people have an uncanny ability to see others faults but very little insight into their own problems.

If you see someone else that is proud you ought to ask yourself a few questions.

Do I walk into church and look around to see how many have noticed that I have arrived? Am I a little put out if they don't? Am I willing to be a member of the body and keep myself in the background, or do I always have to be in the forefront do I have to get up and say something every service?

Do I always have to make sure that my opinion is heard no matter what the subject? Or can I yield and let someone else have the last word? Do I readily admit my faults, in public if necessary? Do I find it easy or hard to apologize?

"COUNT THE COST"

Count the cost, the Master said,
If you a mansion would build,
Would you work and save and sacrifice
And your right to pleasure yield?

Don't start to build with half
enough,
For the rest just hope and wish,
Your treasure will not larger grow,
While you just hunt and fish.

You must know how much it takes,
And work, and toil, and save,
Till enough material on the site is
stacked,
To fulfil the boast you gave.

Lest haply, when you've begun to
build,
And a wall or two is raised,
That all the boards and stones
are gone,
And from your work you've ceased.

How will you feel when men shall say,
AHA! Just look at him now,
His talk was big, He promised much
But could not fulfil his vow.

But if you count, and know the cost
Provide till you have to spare,
Then with faith you may be assured
ABUNDANT ENTRANCE THERE.

Victor L. Brown

1956

William Livermore
May, 12, 1985.