



SPEAKING GIFTS

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Christian Church

**1 Timothy 4:14 - Do not neglect the gift that is in you,
which was given to you by prophecy with the laying
on of the hands of the eldership.**

**What is a “Spiritual Gift”? Special abilities, Spirit
given, to every Christian, enabling the individual to
perform a special service in the body of Christ.**

9) Discerning of Spirits (or Discernment)

1 Corinthians 12:10 “... to another discerning of spirits...”

1. DEFINITION:

- a. *Gk. Diakrisis – judicial estimation, to separate thoroughly, discriminate, judge [literally – “to separate or make a distinction, differentiate]*
- b. **DEFINITION:** *the God-given ability to recognize truth or error within a person, message or event.*
- c. **ANOTHER DEFINITION:** *The special ability to know with assurance whether certain behaviors purported to be of God are in reality divine, human or satanic. [Wagner]*
- d. *To clearly distinguish truth from error by judging whether the behavior or teaching is from God, Satan, human error, or human power.*

2. DISTINCTIVES:

- a. Distinguish truth from error, right from wrong, pure motives from impure
- b. Identify deception in others with accuracy and appropriateness
- c. Determine whether a word attributed to God is authentic
- d. Recognize inconsistencies in teaching, prophetic message, or interpretation
- e. Are able to sense the presence of evil

3. PEOPLE WITH THIS SPIRITUAL GIFT

- a. Some who have this gift may be reluctant to use it because it requires a good deal of courage.
- b. One manifestation of this gift could be differentiating between demon influence and mental illness.
- c. One is able to determine what is of divine, satanic, or human derivation to a degree that is greater than that provided by a good grasp of Bible truth, ordinary sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, plain common sense, or trained critical faculties.

4. I TEND TO...

PLUS -

- *Realize that whatever is supernatural is not necessarily of God.*
- *Find it easy to “read” others, and are most often right.*
- *know a true believer when I meet one.*
- *be able to identify what originates from God, humans, or the devil.*
- *be able to separate good from bad when they are mixed.*
- *Spot lies, even when presented by a seemingly honest person. Recognize inconsistencies in others.*
- *Spot purity and truth, and endorse it.*
- *Easily identify people’s true motives and agendas.*
- *Perceive when the truth is twisted or communicated with error.*

MINUS -

- *Sometimes believe I have all the answers.*
- *Become proud of my ability to make judgments.*
- *Rely too much on my own insight.*
- *Expect other people to rely on my insights.*
- *present my perceptions harshly.*
- *Perpetrate slander or cause division between believers.*

5. SCRIPTURAL ROLE MODELS TO STUDY

- a. Peter (with Ananias and Sapphira - [Acts 5:1-10](#); with Simon the Sorcerer – [Acts 8:23](#))
- b. Paul ([Acts 16:17-18](#))
- c. Priscilla and Aquila

6. HOW IS IT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL BELIEVERS? [Hebrews 5:14](#); [Acts 17:11](#); [1 John 4:1-6](#); [Phil. 1:10](#)

7. OPPORTUNITIES TO USE THIS GIFT: Consultant, good on a church board or steering committee, interview people seeking ministry positions, evaluate quality and maturity of an established ministry.

8. TRAITS

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| • <u>Perceptive</u> | • <u>Decisive</u> |
| • <u>Insightful</u> | • <u>Challenging</u> |
| • <u>Sensitive</u> | • <u>Truthful</u> |
| • <u>Intuitive</u> | |

9. CAUTIONS

- a. May struggle with how to express their perceptions, feelings, or insights
- b. Could be harsh when confronting others, instead of speaking the truth in love
- c. Need to confirm their perceptions before speaking
- d. If unguarded, this one could result in character assassination and harsh criticism. This will not happen if we remember that all gifts are of grace and for the benefit of the church and must be exercised in love.

10. OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THIS GIFTING

- a. Detecting insincerity and wrong motives, authenticity and honesty, in another person is part of a discerning nature.
- b. People with the gift of discernment need to be cautious in designing or implementing solutions. They may be correct in their perceptions but ineffective in their approach, unless accompanied by other appropriate gifts.
- c. People with this gift may need to work through self-righteousness and defensiveness which can easily breed.
- d. There needs to be an understanding of the difference between judging to condemn and judging to correct with mercy and truth.

References: **1 Corinthians 12:10; Acts 5:1-4; Acts 16:16-18; Matthew 16:21-23**