

# The Gift of Discernment

by G.W. North

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*The gift of Discernment is a special ability conferred upon the Church to recognize the presence of foreign spirits, particularly evil spirits, and is a key component in the Church's ability to apply Wisdom, Knowledge, and Discernment in a way that is of Love.*

**Scripture:** Romans 12:6, 1 Corinthians 2:15, 1 Corinthians 12:7, 1 Corinthians 12:10, 1 Corinthians 13:2, Ephesians 6:12, Philippians 1:9-10, Hebrews 5:14, James 1:5, 1 John 4:1

**Topics:** "Discernment", "Spiritual Gifts"

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## Description

G.W. North emphasizes the significance of the gift of Discernment in the Church, distinguishing it from the grace of spiritual discernment that all believers possess. He explains that while Knowledge provides insight into various subjects, Discernment specifically enables the recognition of spirits, particularly evil ones, thus enhancing the Church's spiritual capabilities. North highlights that these gifts, when combined with Wisdom and Knowledge, empower the Church to be the most understanding community on earth. He warns that without the application of these gifts through love and understanding, they risk becoming mere tools of pride rather than instruments of blessing.

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## Transcript

To this supreme trio of God's mental attributes which are first openly revealed in scripture and then shown in full development in the person of Jesus Christ, the Lord has added to the Church the gift of Discernment. This power is a similar kind of gift to Knowledge. In function it is somewhat like it and is sometimes confused with it. This is quite an easy mistake to make, for in a sense it is knowledge gained as a result of 'sight', which is why it is called Discernment. This gift is specially conferred upon the Church for the purpose of discerning spirits, and must be distinguished from the grace of spiritual discernment which to some degree is commonly the property of every member of Christ's Body.

Paul speaks of this grace in 2:15, telling us that it is part of the spiritual life which all the children of God inherit, and is bestowed so that we all may discern all things. Here let us again note that none but the spiritual retain the ability. The obvious distinction between the different functions of the grace and the gift is nicely brought out by a comparison of 'things' with 'spirits'. Recognising this, and acknowledging God's great wisdom in bestowing the grace, we can also see His reason for bestowing this further ability upon the Church as a special gift added to the grace.

The main functional difference between this gift and the Word of Knowledge lies in this: the latter is the means granted by the Lord to some members of His Body so that they may pronounce with His knowledge upon any subject, object, need or state; the specific function of Discernment is to recognise the presence of any spirits foreign to the spirit of the Body, and more particularly of evil spirits. According to scripture its function is limited to this definite end and does not cover the whole field of knowledge of subjects about which the Church may need to have definite, divine information.

Added to the trio mentioned above, this gift of Discernment helps to form with them an invincible quartet of advanced powers, and when these four are held and used together in spiritual life as God intends, their combined force makes the Church a body of unrivalled ability in the world of men.

Contemplating the three which are called gifts, namely Wisdom, Knowledge and Discernment, it becomes obvious why the Church should be the most understanding company on the earth. These wonderful abilities lie chiefly in the mental realm, which is to say that, although they are spiritual gifts, they operate from the mind of the head and in a particular way are associated with the glories of that mind.

However, beyond these, the Body has also been endowed with gifts which in thought are associated with the body rather than the head. In order to be demonstrated as attributes of Love, all this Wisdom, Knowledge and Discernment must be applied in wealth of Understanding to human need, else they will do nothing but puff up. There would be no wisdom in having knowledge and discernment without ability to meet the ignorance and need they expose, else these gifts would not be of Love. Instead they would only be highly developed means of self-applied agony, instruments of curse and torture instead of powers to impart blessing to those who possess them.

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