

The following article is provided primarily as an aid to those who are using the UNBOUND model of deliverance. It is not intended to be complete in itself. Reading *UNBOUND: Practical Guide to Deliverance*, attending an UNBOUND conference and/ or listening to the conference CD's is recommended.

Discernment of Spirits

To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.

1 Corinthians 12:8-10

Discernment is a gift from the Lord. By this gift, God enables us to understand the motives of one's heart and to recognize where an action comes from. Is it from the Spirit of God, the human spirit, or an evil spirit? Does it flow from truth or a lie?

Since it is a gift of the Holy Spirit, we need to continually rely on the Lord to lead us and not operate simply on our own knowledge. As with any gift, discernment is not isolated from knowledge. The gift develops in the context of reflection, study and experience. Whether we have a strong spiritual gift or small gift of discernment, we can learn to be more effective in using the gift we have been given.

The context of discernment must be love and humble service. The gift of discernment used by immature or wounded individuals may become a means of self-protection or control. Under a spirit of self-deception, one may disguise judgment, criticism, gossip, and even slander as the gift of discernment. It can be a weapon: "You are filled with pride." "You need deliverance." "You need to renounce rebellion." "She has a spirit of division." "He has a spirit of envy." "You have a controlling spirit." Statements like these can cause great harm. Anyone seeking to grow in the gift of discernment should be aware of these dangers. The best preparation for using the gift of discernment is self-knowledge. The Holy Spirit brings us through a process of brokenness in which God reveals to us our hearts. The first book I wrote was *The Older Brother Returns*. This is my story of how God exposed my heart and what I learned from it. Being aware of our own weakness enables us to serve another humbly.

Spirits are Related

In the interview process that we use in the Unbound model of deliverance, spirits, lies, and/or bindings are revealed. We are aware spirits work together as a means of hiding the root entryway or root spirit, deepening their binding of the person, and building a pattern of thinking that is a stronghold. It is helpful to become aware of typical groupings of spirits. For example: anger, rage, hatred, revenge, retaliation, bitterness, resentment, violence, murder, unforgiveness... Consider how these spirits are interrelated. Think about how similar and different they are. We cannot name and gain authority over hatred by calling it anger. We cannot have victory over a spirit of violence if we do not name it but simply call it something else. If we are in denial about one member of an interrelated group or we are simply blind to it, God in His mercy will help us to see. But we still need to take responsibility and name our enemy.

Superficial vs. Significant

Many times the spirits that seem most superficial are really important because they are present to cover up and disguise or hide the more significant ones. Freedom will come when the deepest bondage is uncovered and renounced.

Some ministries have listed groupings of spirits and have emphasized discovering the “strongman” or the most powerful spirit that holds the rest together. Our approach is to have the person renounce all the spirits, lies, and bindings that can be identified and then take authority over all spirits that have been renounced. The person will generally know which one had the deepest hold on him.

Naming Your Enemy: The Importance of Precision

Humans have developed numerous words in order to communicate experience more precisely. For example, in Greek, there are four words for love, and in Arctic regions, there are many words describing the different qualities of snow. It is important to use the words that most precisely identify our experience. Knowing the identity of our enemy will help us to have ongoing victory. If we are vague about our enemies, we will have trouble standing in the truth and freedom Christ has given us. Satan will want to steal it. If we know clearly the identity of our enemy, we will be prepared to recognize any attempts to deceive us and regain access or to take back ground we have already taken. Spirits are identified by what they do. They are attached to a sin and/or deception that Jesus has taken to the cross. Once we have surrendered to Jesus and we repent, confess, and renounce the sin and deception we have been in agreement with, the spirit behind it no longer has a place to rest and must leave when commanded in the name of Jesus to go. Jesus is the one who broke Satan’s legal right to us when he died for our sins and forgave us for acting on the enemy’s deceptions.

Common Associations of Spirits

Becoming familiar with common associations of spirits will help you grow in understanding, but it will not replace the need to listen carefully to the person’s story and receive guidance from the Holy Spirit as you help the person name their enemies. Commanding spirits to go based on the list and without personal discernment is a mistake. The enemy may remain hidden regardless of how many spirits are renounced and cast out if we fail to create a safe atmosphere of love and acceptance as we listen to the person’s story. **The person must be helped to connect their experience to the identity of the spirit that is influencing or binding them.**

Becoming familiar with groupings as you pray with people is similar to being introduced to a new set of inter-relationships. When you first come into the group, it may not be so clear how the group functions. But over time, you get to know the individuals in the group; you see how they interrelate. You discover the real leader, find out who makes things happen and who get things done, and you learn how the group operates. Growing in understanding of groupings of spirits will increase your God-given gift of discernment. But study is not the primary means to gain understanding. You can study about a person and read books about them and yet you will not really know them until you meet them. In order to grow in discernment, one needs to spend time helping people take hold of their freedom in Christ. Once you encounter a spirit binding a person and see how others are interrelated, you will then be much quicker to recognize the spirits and understand how they work in the future.

I have compiled a list that is intended as an introduction, not a manual. You can use it to reflect upon what the Lord is teaching you as you seek to set the prisoners free. The list is called “Samples of Related Spirits”. It can be found in Appendix B of the *Unbound Ministry Guidebook*, or on our website, www.heartofthefather.com.

I encourage you to look at the list I have compiled and become familiar with it. See how the words connect or are similar to one another. Each person the Lord sends to you to help is part of your training. You will learn as you serve. You will understand the spirits behind the words below as you connect them to experience. I purposefully do not look at a list when I minister to someone; I prefer to trust the Holy Spirit and be engaged in the process of discovery with the person. You may choose another approach.

The intention of this list is to help you listen to another person's story. If you just drive out spirits without the process of helping the person identify their enemies, it is less likely they will be able to hold their freedom. As you put the groupings together, you are helping each person understand the patterns of deception the devil has used to try to keep them from knowing the love of God.