

Past Discipleship Papers:

1987: No 9 - Spiritual Gifts

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1- The Obedience of Faith

We have seen from the earliest statements in Romans (1.5), that Paul set out to bring the nations to obey Jesus Christ - the Jewish Messiah. Consequently, Paul set out to explain how a man may be accounted righteous in God's sight - it was through faith in the finished work of Jesus on his behalf. Further, we have seen that not only is a person righteous in God's sight by faith, he is also called to live from then on by faith. And this we saw was true right up through the studies in the eighth chapter of Romans. As to power the work was that of the Holy Spirit, as to means to lay hold of it the work was that of faith (simply trusting for the power).

So this lays the base for the way the Christian life is to be lived powerfully within each individual (Romans 6.12 - 8.30, 12.1-2)

2 -"Power Through Faith" For Personal Living (Romans 6.12 - 8.30, 12.1-2)

We have seen, in the DS1987 No 8, how Paul has set out the problem of the personal Christian life. It is centred in the fact that we are redeemed yet we live in a body which is not yet redeemed.

This calls for the power of the Holy Spirit to be used by us every moment of the Christian life. The whole life we live now has to do with the decision, made moment-by-moment, to simply trust for power to do what we have decided to do (because it is right).

This state of affairs has come about through the mercies which God has showered upon us. So, this presentation of our bodies as a living sacrifice (12.1) i.e. as a living thing which is continually being put to death by the power of the Holy Spirit (8.13) is acceptable to God, and is our reasonable service of worship to God.

By way of exhortation, Paul encourages us not to be conformed to the world, but, as a contrast, to be transformed by the renewal of our mind. This is something we may claim, by simply desiring it, trusting for it, and believing that we have it. The purpose of this renewed mind is to enable us to discern, and test, what the will of God is. It allows us to have a testing mechanism for the hearing of God. For there are competing voices (viz. the world, the flesh, the devil, our past, our spirit.) and we need to have a new mind (soaked in the Scriptures) to actually sort out the differences. In this way the function of our mind is that we use it to critically test - therefore, we never turn our mind off, blank it out, or such like - for that is to turn off our critical, God given, faculty for testing.

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3 - "Power Through Faith" For Corporate Living (Romans 12.3 - 8)

Significantly, now that he has each Christian personally put together as to how to live and win the victory in their everyday life, Paul now turns to the life of the Christian in respect of the body of Christ.

He makes a series of opening points before he gets down to the central theme:

(a) how to think about yourself in respect of the rest of the Christians. One should be humble, and not to think more highly than he should. He is to exercise sound judgement, and yet, this judgement is to be according to his measure of faith. i.e. even how we think of what we can do within the body of Christ is not a matter of simple self-thinking, but a matter to exercise faith about. This is because there are "functions" which God has given for each person within the body of Christ, all of which require a person to trust God for the doing of them.

ACTION

This thinking about yourself according to your measure of faith is not a complex business. Rather, it simply asks that you understand what it is that you can believe for: each of us knows what it is that we have confidence in God to perform, both for us and for others. This is our measure of faith. So, if you can see something being needed to be done in the body, and you believe that with the help of God you can be used by Him to perform it - then, trusting Him for the power, you are in the position to work within your measure of faith.

(b) the many have a unity, yet their functions are diverse. In this way we are to understand that we are one body, yet, we will do something which is personally different from one another.

(c) we are individually members of one another. This principle is very important. For it means that the local body of Christians are to understand themselves as functionally interconnected like the members of a human body are. The analogy requires us to think of a body which has mutually complementary functions, so that the whole body acts in a co-ordinated way, yet, in such a way that you can see the individual members also functioning.

His central theme is that, Christians are members of one another "having" different "things of grace" (charismata). The grammar here makes the 6th verse dependent upon the main verb of verse 5. We "are" many in Christ. We "are" members of one another - and the participle "having" goes on to say functionally how this being members of one another actually works out in what we do. And here we see that the actions described are called things of grace. They flow from God's gift to us for one another. Insofar that all of the Christian life is a miracle of the power of God at work within us, from the personal life laid out in Romans 6-8, to the corporate life stated here in Romans 12, we are to live by faith in what God has given. And this will include such things as:

- (a) prophecy
- (b) service. (A personal type of service such as a waiter gives at a table - caring for others)
- (c) teaching
- (d) exhortation (Stirring people up to good works, as well as encouraging them in their living)
- (e) giving (sharing), the style of this is liberally.
- (f) leading, this is to be done diligently
- (g) mercy, this should be done with cheerfulness

These "things of grace" are to be exercised in an environment where the church is loving one another without any hypocrisy, it is hating evil and holding fast to good, where the Christians honour each other, and put each other first. They have a devotion to one another. They have spirits that are fervent, they serve the Lord. They have a joy in trusting God for the future, they are a church persevering in the midst of pressure, they are devoted to prayer, they are great contributors to the saints, they practice a hospitality, they are blessing those who oppress them, they have a strong empathy with those who weep or rejoice. They are a humble church, they are not intellectually proud. They attempt to live at peace with all.

What is intriguing here is that the statement of the Charismatic gifts, as it is also the case in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, is accompanied by the need for the body life of the Christian local congregation to be very loving and very caring. This is of utmost importance when we come to see the impact of the 1 Corinthians material.

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4 - "Trusting" for the Ability to Perform a Service

What is involved here in Romans, in order to "function" in the service of the brethren, is the need to consider the following:

ACTION!

- 1. Have I had a good look at myself to check whether I am thinking more highly of myself than I ought to think in respect of the local body? (12.3) I need to not put myself down, yet I need to know what is a sober judgement of myself in respect of others. Put succinctly - am I humble or proud? (You may need to confess your sin here.)*
- 2. My judgement of what I do does not arise from my pre-committed ideas about what I am good at, but rather, as to what I can believe I can/ought do.*
- 3. Notice that we have gifts...."to exercise" them. We therefore need to consider the places where they need to be done in the body. It maybe we shall discover such gifts as we see the needs and begin to trust God for them to serve the body we have taken our humble, but faithful, place within.*
- 4. Consequently, do not ask what gift you have, but rather, what are the needs which need to be met within the congregation. Then see if God gives you a burning desire to meet that need - and this will quickly translate into a desire for the gift, which will then cause you to exercise your faith for that function. Then you wait and see. But this is the way to start.*

Notice here, that the key to the Christian life, all the way through, for personal life and for the life in the body of Christ, is **faith**. For this reason, we shall be not correct if we think of people "having" a gift, but rather we need to speak of them dynamically acting with faith in God for the particular ministry. This will also save us from another error or relationship. We shall not value our brothers and sisters for what they can do among us, rather, we shall value them because of who they are, and as to what they do, that is a manifestation of God at work amongst us. In this way the Source is recognised and He gets the glory which is only right. See how this is, for us a particular problem which arises from the way our present psychology has set the descriptions of persons; this is the area under discussion in Boan, D.T.C.,[1980] 'The Framework' [Sovereign World] See page 17, in reference to Genesis 1-3:

5 - What are "Spiritual Gifts"?

The First Letter to the Corinthians is a letter which Paul wrote concerning matters which he had heard were wrong in the Corinthian church and also matters about which they had written to him.

So, in the first four chapters he addresses the problem of the way they are regarding their leaders, particularly in respect of the divisions which are happening - they had divided into parties based on personalities.

In chapter 5 he addresses the problem of the man living incestuously with his mother. And he refers (1 Cor. 5.9) to the fact that he had written to them a letter before he wrote the letter which we know as 1 Corinthians.

In chapter 6, having dealt with the importance of solving the church's problems among themselves, and not going before the public law courts, he then speaks of the matters which he says they had written to him about. These matters were:

(a) the unmarried among them (7.1)

(b) material sacrificed to idols (8.1), which leads into a discussion of the Christian person (9.1-23), and an exhortation to flee idolatry

(i) they are to be clear that they cannot go back to the demon's tables from which they come and also come to the Lord's supper (10.14-23)

(ii) they are to remember the place of men and women in respect of each other, as to the spiritual order of the universe, for they must live as supernaturalists and remember the angels (11.10) - this has the practical implication of the headship of the man over the woman in respect of the spiritual realities in the church. (11.1-16)

(iii) they must order themselves better in love as to their eating of the Lord's supper. (11.17-34)

(c) spirituals - where what is meant is the use of powers which come from supernatural sources. (12,13,14)

(i) an excursion on the resurrection (15)

(d) the collection for the saints (16)

What must be very clear from the topics listed above is that the Corinthian church had come out of demonic powers which had manifested themselves in demonic feasts and sacrificial meals [chapter 8 and 10], and also they had come from a demonic base where they had seen supernatural "gifts" operating before and they had now come into the Christian base of "supernaturals" and needed some guidance about discernment, as to which was which, and also about how to use the ones which they exercised, in respect of their gathering together [chapter 12,13,14].

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It is really important for us, in the twentieth century, post-Christian West, who have become “naturalists” in our thinking, to see that the Corinthian problem was not our one.

They had come from a demonic base which had had plenty of manifestations in “spiritual matters” - they were no strangers to such things [in much the same way as the modern animist, in some countries today, is not a stranger to these matters either]. The Corinthian need, as Paul sees it, is that they need to distinguish the source of the one from the other. It is this which he addresses in 1 Cor. 12.1-3. It is expressly a test of the source of the “spirituals” by the attitude which is expressed to the person of Jesus. This will help them distinguish demonic from godly.

But they had another problem. They also were, no doubt, familiar with evil spirits. And they knew that each evil spirit manifested in a particular way. So Paul, to avoid the worry and the confusion for them, wants to tell them that they must be aware that the Holy Spirit is One Spirit but He has a variety of manifestations. They are not to think of a multiplicity of spirits in operation in respect of the charismata [gifts of grace], they are to think of the unity and the diversity as being from the same Source. In this way, they must not take their knowledge of the way the demonic spirits work into their understanding of the Holy Spirit. They would then tie Him down to one manifestation, and they would also then, of course, miss the many other manifestations of His work among them.

To us who come from the “naturalist” base of the philosophy which we have accepted, we need to become thorough-going supernaturalists before we can appreciate the problem at all. For us then, it is important to take into account, what is said below. We shall have to begin with the early statements of 1 Corinthians, for it is there that the differences between the naturalists and the supernaturalists are discussed.

In the early statements about spiritual gifts in the discussion recorded in 1 Corinthians 12 Paul uses a variety of terms for what he means. Each of these terms, although clearly about the same thing, convey information for us about the matter.

1. “Spirituals” (pneumatika), - things of the spirit. (12.1)

The Bible does distinguish between “natural” things and “spiritual” things. At base root it has to do with the source of something. In 1 Cor. 1-2 Paul has made it clear that when he came to the Corinthians he expressly did not come to preach for them to grasp it by a natural cleverness (1. 18-25). Rather, it was to them, naturally speaking, foolishness. They could not receive it (2.14). But when, among Christians, there is teaching, then there is a combining of “spiritual” (thoughts) with spiritual (words) 1 Cor. 2.13. In this way, they come to understand what it is that they have already received from God (2.12b)

So here, although these gifts operate through our natural bodies, the source of them is divine, not human.

2. “Gifts” (charismata) (12.4,9) This conveys the idea that these are things of grace. They come to us freely and without merit. They are the functions which God provides for His people to minister to one another and in the world.

3. “Services, ministries” (diakonai) (12.5) The reason why they are given by God, is for the service of others. It is true, that because of another biblical principle, that it is more “blessed to give than to receive”, there are often lovely side effects for the operator.

4. “Powers, effects” (energemata) (12.6) Here the emphasis is on the fact that they are momentary endowments of power rather than permanent things which we hold on to. These special burst of divine energy are for a particular purpose. They operate for that purpose immediately.

5. “Manifestations” (phanerosis) (12.7) These gifts are able to make the Holy Spirit visible, not as to His Person, but as to His work. We see the effects of His presence through the manifestation of His power. People actually “see and hear” (Acts 2.33) something.

We can sum up this teaching in a tight definition or description. I borrow it from Michael Harper (Renewal Study Section No. 3 of Vision Magazine),

“Spiritual gifts are certain powers (energemata) given to men by the Holy Spirit (pneumatika) and freely bestowed (charismata) and manifested (phanerosis) through our natural faculties (mind, mouth, hands etc) in the service of others (diakonai) for their blessing and God’s glory.”

6 - The Variety of the Gifts in The New Testament

When we see what the gifts are intended to do, and the environment in which they are to work, we will not be surprised that there is a great variety of them. Gifts and graces abound in all areas of our Christian witness and life within the fellowship of believers.

(a) 1 Corinthians 12.8-10

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Here, nine gifts are listed. They come under three easily recognisable headings:

- (i) Gifts to say. Tongues, interpretation of tongues and prophecy.
- (ii) gifts to do. Healings, miracles and faith
- (iii) Gifts to know. Discerning of spirits, wisdom and knowledge.

(b) 1 Corinthians 7.7

Paul speaks of his ability to sustain the celibate life as a charismata. He implies that the man who cannot sustain the celibate life has another gift, which in this context is marriage.

(c) Romans 12.7-8

Service, teaching, exhortation, contributing, aiding, acts of mercy, leadership.

(d) Ephesians 4.11

Here are a list of offices or functions which are at work in the church. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. These will have gifts individually, what is described here are people rather than the charismata they each possess.

7 - Tongues

1. The description

From what we see of the description which is contained in 1 Corinthians we can say the following things: It is the ability to speak in a language which the speaker has not learnt. It seems clear from the description that it is also true that the speaker does not understand; and further, it is generally incomprehensible to the hearers. This much information can be drawn from the three analogies which Paul uses in 1 Cor. 14.7-11

(a) that of inanimate musical instruments. His point here is that the sound which comes forth has no meaningful variation in note. His point is that, tongues, if they are not interpreted are not understood, are unclear, and as a result no-one does any action as a result.

(b) the analogy of the human tongue which is not enunciating clearly. (Verse 9) Similarly, nothing is achieved.

(c) The analogy of the foreign tongue. With it, no-one understands and as a consequence, no-one responds.

Now, common to all these three analogies is the points of the language is not understood it is not clear and that there is no response possible. (Which, in the assembled body, is desirable for all ministry is for the edification of all).

The "different kinds of tongues" (12.10) may be a language unknown to the speaker, but intelligible to someone else. Or it may refer to angelic languages as distinct from those which are human (13.1).

2. As to the purpose.

(a) the direction of the speech is to God and not to men. In this way we are directed to something used in a man's prayer-life. It brings a genuine liberty in prayer.

(b) It enables a man to praise God at a depth unknown previously (Acts 10.46).

(c) It edifies (builds up) the individual who practices it. (14.4) Paul, consequently desired that all the Corinthians would speak in tongues (for their own edification) However, in the context of 1 Cor. 14.4-5 he prefers that there is prophecy, for that builds up the whole body, which, in the situation of disorder, is what he wants them to learn about and correct.

(d) When a person speaks in tongues, he speaks mysteries, and he speaks them with (his) spirit. (14.2) In this way it is a communication to God directly from the spirit of the man to God. Its message is hidden (but real); for this is what a "mystery" is in Scriptural usage. Paul makes a distinction between his mind and his spirit in regard to tongues. He says that when he prays in a tongue his spirit is doing the praying (14.14), however, his mind has no result (unfruitful) as a consequence. He can distinguish prayer with his spirit (when tongues are used) from prayer with his mind (where they are not) 14.14-15. I do not say that his spirit could not pray if he did not pray in tongues, but from the material here, we can assert that if in tongues then it is so. Concerning if not, the NT is silent.

3. As to usage of the gift.

Paul has some cautions for us. For, since the context of 1 Cor. 14 is that of correcting the Corinthian church over the excessive way they use tongues in public, Paul has some things to say about what tongues does not do:

(a) It does not profit the assembled brethren when it is used without interpretation - simply because it is not understood and hence is not edifying (1 Cor. 14.6-19)

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(b) It is absolutely counter-productive in evangelism.(14.20-26). In a reference to Isaiah 28.11-12 Paul recalls the time when Israel spurned the message of the prophets which had been delivered in clear unambiguous speech. God, by way of punishment, had to speak to them through the unwelcome tongue of the Assyrians. These strange tongues came to them at that time, because they were unbelieving. Hence, to the Assyrians (those who did not believe), they were a sign of God's judgement upon Israel. In this way, the strange tongues spoke of the separation of God from his people, not His presence. However, if the Corinthians would indulge in prophecy, then an unbeliever would be convicted and repent.

a(iv) the context of the material is to the use of the gifts in the gathered body - this is important to remember. For, when Paul says "do all speak in tongues, do all..." we must ask, does he mean this as to the availability of the gifts to all, or to the practice of the gifts when the assembled brethren gather? The context suggests the second to me.

8 - Interpretation of tongues

This is the ability to give the sense of what has been said in an unknown tongue, when it has been exercised in the gathered congregation. It is not a translation, but rather an interpretation. Here the accent is upon the meaning being discerned, not the process.

These points should be noted:

(1) Those who have the gift of tongues should pray for the gift of interpretation (1 Cor.14.13)

(2) Tongues + interpretation = (in effect) prophecy as far as the gathered body is concerned. (14.5) This is an important issue when it is seen what is being said. It will help us think about what we expect when tongues are interpreted, and it will help us think about the "singing in the spirit" which often accompanies worship.

[a] In the first place, when we see what the opening section of the 1 Corinthians 14 states, it makes clear that the 'direction' of tongues when spoken privately is man-to-God. For, in that place [1 Corinthians 14.2-3] Paul is making much of the 'direction' to indicate the difference. However, prophecy, as the 3rd verse makes clear is from God-to-man. So, if we thought that the interpretation of the tongues should come forth as a prayer which is 'as to direction', is spoken to God, then the equation which we have here as "tongues + interpretation = prophecy" would seem to imply otherwise. In this way, the tongue is directed to God and the intelligible result which comes to the gathered congregation is in the form of the statement which comes from God-to-man. In this way, interpreted tongues comes to mean - and comes out in the sense of what you hear - a prophetic message. The gift of interpretation reverses the flow of the direction of the message. Which is why it is not necessarily a translation.

[b] In the section 1 Corinthians 12-14, the whole context is the use of spiritual gifts for the building up of the people of God. In which case, the direction of the ministry is from one to the other. The concern is that the people themselves, as gathered, should receive from one another through the operation of the Spirit. It is for this reason that Paul has noted in 14.2 the direction of the tongues when used for private communication to God. It is simply not fitting in this context of mutual ministry.

However, when the whole gathered body is meeting together to minister to the Lord the direction of the movement is that each person, although gathered together, sings to the Lord. In the same way as singing/praying when we all gather to worship. In this case the direction of the ministry is not manward, [as was the case in the 1 Corinthians 12-14 context], but is Godward. For this reason, "singing in the spirit", as a ministry to the Lord is quite a different ministry than that which is described in 1 Corinthians 12-14. It is really a beautiful phenomenon when the whole body is able to sing in the spirit/sing in tongues together without understanding what they are saying. For it is the direction of the ministry which is the decisive difference.

(3) Paul is careful to regulate it in Corinth. He is concerned over the disorder in their worship. If there is speaking in tongues then, he says, there may be 2 or 3, they should do it in turn (ie not interrupt each other), and someone should interpret.(14.26)

(4) If there is no-one who can interpret present, then there should be no tongues spoken in the congregation.

I saw something in Pretoria which caused me to think great deal in this matter of practice. The Pastor of the gathered 2000 people was leading the praying for a person in hospital at the time, and he directed the whole congregation to pray in tongues (which I think was, in their understanding, the equivalent of praying in their spirit, individually) for the person.

At this point they all lifted up their voices and did so. It lasted for about one or two minutes. I thought this was immediately a place of disorder - although my spirit did not jarr with it: then, on reflection, I saw that it was under the direction of the leadership, it was "orderly". My only remaining question had to do with the use of it for intercession] I suspect the Corinthian problem had to do with a competitive style of interrupted speaking. A matter which I still have not come to a mind about.

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9 - Prophecy

Prophecy is the direct word of God, spoken into the appropriate situation, in such a way as it brings a word for the people gathered. It has a wide usage.

- (a) it can be predictive eg. Agabus in the Acts
- (b) it can be a mysterious visionary material Rev. 1.3
- (c) it can name a Christian for office (1 Tim. 4.14)
- (d) it can give testimony to Jesus Rev. 19.10
- (e) it can be used in evangelism, for edification, and consolation and in teaching 1 Cor. 14.3ff, 24f, 29f)

From 1 Cor. 12-14 we can say the following things:

- 1. It was the direct word of God through the mouth of one of His people.
- 2. It was delivered in clear speech. It did not require any interpretation.
- 3. It used the mind of the speaker (c/f tongues 14.14)
- 4. It struck at the heart of the believers, it was direct and relevant, it had a cutting edge.
- 5. It showed that God was present.
- 6. Not all Christians have it (12.29); yet all are encouraged by the Apostle to pray for it, because it is useful for all.

Such encouragement to pray for the gift implies that these may be asked for and specifically requested from God.

7. Prophets could be instructed to keep quiet (14.29-33) so as to keep order. They were able to control their prophecy - for their spirits were subject to themselves.

- 8. Prophecy is distinguished from teaching Acts 13.1, 1 Cor. 12.29

10 - Knowledge

Paul's prayer for the Colossian church, was that they should be filled with a deep knowledge of God's will and spiritual understanding (Col. 1.9-11)

As it is used in 1 Cor. 13.2, 14.6 it means some word of revelation from God for the benefit of others. It is a precious gift for the Christian counsellor who wishes to know the heart of the person who consults him. (e.g. of the gift/function are Jesus' understanding of the Samaritan woman's true marital status. And Peter, calling Ananias and Sapphira to account.

11 - Wisdom

This is a word which has rich connotation within the Bible. Certainly in 1 Corinthians we see that Paul is at great pains to make them clear that there is no sense in which the Christian faith is a new form of wisdom like some other of the mystery cults around them in their day. He makes clear that:

(a) Christianity is not grasped by human wisdom. It is based upon the cross and is foolishness to the world - which did not, by its own wisdom, know God.

(b) The Christian teachers and apostles were not pedlars of wisdom either, for they are not able to be independent of God Himself, (3.7-17) nor are they to be judged by the Corinthians (4.1-13).

James (1.5, 3.17-18) teaches us that the wisdom which comes from God:

(a) can be asked for - but one needs to not be double minded about that.

(b) It is pure. It has an untrammelled motive.

(c) It is peaceable. In this way we can test if we are hearing wisdom or not.

(d) It is gentle. This tests the means by which it is delivered. In this way we learn that wisdom is not simply the "content" of what is said - it is also the manner of the delivery.

(e) It is reasonable. There is a commitment to a rational way of doing things. And the wisdom from God is able to be thought about and tested.

(f) It is full of mercy. Here is the example of God Himself as the mark of His dealings with us. Again, the test will be clear.

(g) It has good fruits. This is the test of the result. We ought to look and see what comes from the situation in which we would have claimed to have acted wisely.

(h) It is unwavering. There is nothing fickle about the person who is exercising the wisdom of God.

(i) It is without hypocrisy. This is a negative test for the wisdom of God. Other negative tests which abound are found in the contrastive passage which is prior to this one (James 3.14-16).

Wisdom can mean that we know things (in our experience) (Col. 3.16); it can also mean that we can practice well what we know. There is a practical wisdom which it is possible to have from God which can instruct us how to act at the

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appropriate time. This latter is what is referred to in Luke 21.15 where Jesus promises his disciples and “utterance and a wisdom” which their enemies will not be able to resist or refute.

[Wisdom is the word, action which can be done at the very time when it has to be done/said, and it is right for that time.

12 - Discernment

This is a gift of great importance. For it is vital for the Christian leader who would lead worship, or any of the activities of the local congregation.

In Acts 16.16-18, Paul exercises the discernment in the case of the slave girl who has been telling fortunes. Luke records that Paul called the spirit the spirit a “spirit of divination”. He calls it by what it is doing. This is similar to Jesus’ method of nomenclature (see below). Paul however, without specifically naming the spirit, discerns that there is one and he can address it to come out of her. A similar report by Mark(1.23ff,5.7ff) has Jesus commanding an unclean spirit. Mark knows which sort it is (and in the latter passage Jesus names it), yet it is dealt with.

Whether or not this gift enables us to “name” the spirit or not (although it seems that the NT evidence is very strong on naming and identification) that a discernment is possible is clear.

There are doctrinal tests which are a matter of recognition with the mind, which go with the discernment of spirits:

1. Is Jesus Lord of that person’s life? (1 Cor. 12.3)
2. Is Jesus acknowledged as perfect Man and perfect God? (John 4.2)
3. Is there a measure of true godliness and holiness about the person?(Matt.7.15-20)

That there is a mind factor (consistent with Romans 12.2) in the equation is seen in the testing which Paul is encouraging the Corinthians to apply to the prophets. For e.g.

(a) Are they going on too long? (1 Cor.14.29-30). This has the simple idea behind it that the longer he goes on the more likely that he is spouting his own ideas.

(b) Is there a willingness to submit it to the church leadership and to allow the Scriptures to be decisive. (1 Cor.14.37-40)

We need to see the distinction in the discernment question that we can mean the question in one of two ways:

(A) we can speak of a discernment that spirits are present. In this sense we are speaking of a gift which brings us an awareness that there are spirits present and they are to be dealt with.

(B) we can speak of a discernment between spirits. This is the distinction which divides one spirit from the other in our awareness. It may be that when we are aware and also discern that we are seeing the gift of discernment and knowledge being exercised together.

My own resolution of this matter (in my present stage of thinking about it) is that our spirit ought perceive that [A above], and that the difference between [B above], is what is meant by the gift of discernment, when applied to spirits.

13 - Healing

Salvation, as it is understood in its wider sense, contains in it the idea of healing. Consequently, many people whom Jesus dealt with were healed spiritually as well as physically.

The early Christians were sent out to “heal the sick and to raise the dead” (Matt.19) - the testimony of the Acts of the Apostles indicates that Peter and Paul had gifts of healing. I think however, we are wise to distinguish, in the NT, miracles of healing as pre-evangelistic miracles from the gift of healing which is used within the body of Christ. Mark 16.17 has signs accompanying those who believe. They are that they will...lay hands on the sick and they will recover.”

Healing is listed in 1 Cor.12.9,28,30 as a gift of the Holy Spirit for the body of Christ.

However, it is right to notice that in the apostolic experience, there was not always healing. Paul had to leave Trophimus sick at Miletus (2 Tim.4.20), and also couldn’t/didn’t do anything about Epaphroditus (Phil.2.25-27). He speaks to Timothy about taking a little wine for his gastric complaint (1 Tim.5.23), and in his own case, the Lord gave him, not healing, but the grace to bear the affliction which he calls his “thorn in the flesh”.

Healing is used in the body of Christ as a gift to bring the compassion of Jesus to the brethren.

It seems wise to distinguish between “suffering” and “sickness”. These are not always identical by any means.

What is recorded in James 5.13 is that the one who is suffering should pray. The man who is sick, however, should call for the elders of the church (James 5.14-16) and they should pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and if he has committed any sins they will be forgiven him. There is here the conjunction of forgiveness of sins and healing which we see in Jesus’ ministry.

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14 - Miracles

This gift covers a wide range of matters. In the OT, we have recorded the mighty works which Elijah and Elisha did for example. And in the life of Jesus we see so many nature miracles. In John 14.12 Jesus promises believers that they will do greater works than He did. And in Acts 4.29-30, the church, faced with persecution asked God to give them boldness, and to heal and do mighty signs and wonders. Paul can record that his preaching was a mighty demonstration of the spirit and of power (1 Cor.2.4) The early apostles raised the dead (Acts 9.36 -42,20.7-12), cast out evil spirits (Acts 16.18, 19.12) and performed nature miracles (Acts 16.26,28.3f). Indeed, Paul in writing to the Galatians can speak of the Christ as the one...."who supplies the spirit to you and works miracles among you." (Gal.3.5)

15 - Faith

By this, I think we are to understand a supernatural endowment of the spirit to believe for great things. It may be that all these gifts require this gift as a pre-requisite for their operations. It may be that it is represented among the body of Christ by the individual who has an amazing ability to hold out and believe for those absolutely amazing things which we see have happened throughout the history of God's people.

16 - The Fruit of the Holy Spirit

Whatever it is that God is doing in us, it is true that it is His work in us. If the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to us to do what Jesus did; then the fruit of the Holy Spirit in us will make us like Jesus was. One has to do with doing, the other has to do with being. One is concentrating upon the work which the life is doing, the other upon the life itself which is being expressed. It is very difficult to handle the gifts without the fruit. However, when you have grown the fruit you can handle yourself.

Here are some differences or contrasts between the gifts and the fruit.

Gifts	Fruit
1. outward, seen heard	inward, the nature of the person
2. appear suddenly,	appear gradually.
can be used immediately	
3. temporary, come and go	permanent, stay with you
4. appear early in the immature Christian	appear later, belongs to maturity
5. many gifts, spread	one fruit, in each person out among all

17 - God-related Fruit

1. LOVE (agape) this is the sort of commitment which we can see in the person of God Himself. It is the love of the worthy for those for whom He cares, not because He sees them performing well, but because He is committed to them in a deep way for loving care. To seek their good.

2. JOY This is really a deep happiness, which God works in us. No-one can take it from us. It is the awareness that the centre of life is located in the right place.

3. PEACE this speaks of a quiet serenity. It is what we have when we are at peace with God, others and also with ourselves. It is an awareness that we are experiencing the provision of God, whatever the circumstances.

18 - Man-Related Fruit

4. PATIENCE this is a slow tempered style of God. God can get angry, but it takes Him time. This is the patience to deal with others the way God deals with us.

5. KINDNESS this is a practical, action centred style of care. It shows itself in real things.

6. GOODNESS this is an unstinted generosity. It is the word used of wine which has become mellow with age.

19 - Self-Related Fruit

7. RELIABILITY this is the person who may be, like God is, depended upon. They are rock like in their dependability for you.

8. GENTLE HUMILITY this is a meekness which has been tamed. Someone who has come to a place of preferring others.

9. FIRM SELF CONTROL this is the person who has come to the ability to say no to themselves. The person who has all these developed is coming to be like Jesus Himself.

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