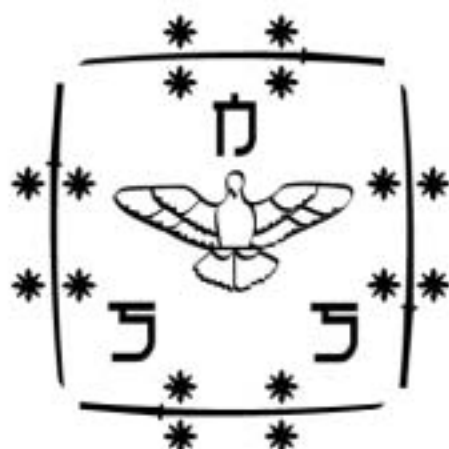


THE ARTS AND DISCIPLINES OF A

HOLY GHOST

NINJA



16 Ninja Arts

- * Virtue
- * Contemplative Prayer
- * Scriptural Meditation
- * Service
- * Knowledge
- * Wisdom
- * Evangelization
- * Intercession
- * Tongues
- * Prophecy
- * Word gifts
- * Interpretations
- * Discernment of Spirits
- * Faith
- * Signs and wonders
- * Healing and Deliverance

* VIRTUE

- * Ryu is learning that ninjitsu is more than just hiding and killing people. He is learning it is a way of life focused on enduring come what may. Ryu sits down for his first lesson to grand-master Sensei Chie who tells him: "Ryu, you must learn that the war within is the most important war you will fight. If you do not

4 Ninja Disciplines

Personal Prayer and Spiritual Study (daily)



Communal Prayer and Spiritual Study
(weekly)



Service to others (biweekly)



Accountability to mentor and/or same gender
small group (monthly)



learn to conquer, balance and channel the passions within you towards the good you will surely endanger every mission you take. If you fail to see balance and harmony in your own life how do you expect to bring it to the world? Learn this: You must be just in your actions, giving what is due to each according to the nature of your relationships with them. Gain fortitude to courageously face all situations and endure them patiently. Be self-controlled, you must be able to moderate all your passions and appetites. Above those three you must be prudent learn to see reality for what it is and gain wisdom in how to best act. More importantly he must believe he can succeed, believe that the daimyo knows what he is commanding, expect the mission to succeed and most importantly be motivated to order all his actions to the good of the clan and his master. Above even prudence you must expect that the missions and purpose of our clan will succeed, trust yourself and your daimyo (commander). Set above all else you must set your will towards achieving the good of all.”

Christian examination:

The ninja training mirrors Christian tradition where there is the notion of Virtue. Virtue is the perfection of an ability. In the moral and spiritual life there have been identified certain virtues in which all other moral and spiritual virtues rely. There are four moral virtues or cardinal from Latin meaning hinge because all other moral virtues hinge on these. They are:

1. Prudence: Practical Wisdom allowing you to see reality as it is and know how to act the best way accordingly.
2. Justice: Acting rightly in relationships of all kinds. Giving to each according to what is due.
3. Fortitude: Courage to do the right thing and the strength to do it and endure it.
4. Temperance: This is being able to control and moderate your desires and passions.

There are 3 theological virtues which deal strictly with our relationship with God. They are not a balance between two extreme like the cardinal virtues because they deal with God who is infinite. They are:

+ Faith: trusting and believing in God and his word. (Romans 8:24-25, John 3:2-3)

+ Hope: Expecting and trusting that God will fulfill his promises. (Hebrews 11:1-3)

+ Love: Total Self-sacrificing acting and feelings directed towards the glory of God. Our love of God should flow towards others in service. All virtues are united in this most important one (1 Corinthians 13).

All the virtues, moral and theological, affect one another, they do not occur by themselves. Strengthening one will inevitably strengthen another. All virtues are infused by God in baptism his grace makes them grow. They are all present in the soul we need to respond to his grace by practicing them and praying for them. The opposite of a virtue is a vice. Take some time in silence to pray and ask yourself: Which moral virtue am I weakest in? What practical things can I do to strengthen them? Is there a root to it? Ask God to guide you in becoming more like Jesus, the ultimate ninja.

Contemplative Prayer

Ryu is learning how it is most important to learn to use his body as a weapon. Before he can master any of the other arts he must learn to master this. After many weeks of practicing he discovers a few things. He finds memorized movements to be most useful when they are well directed. Although mindlessly performing has some benefit not near the benefit as when they are well directed and intentional. He enjoys falling back on them when his creativity is lacking to come up with spontaneous moves in a sparring session. He finds that he does best when he practices for at least a half an hour everyday. In addition to that he finds that by reflecting on the moves mentally and imagining a sparring session he does even better. He finds that in training he needs to exercise in some way every dimension of striking, kicking, throwing and blocking mixing spontaneous and memorized movements. At first in sparring sessions he finds himself overwhelmed by distractions. He learns to focus simply on his opponent or sparring partner. Eventually he finds himself able to react and fight perfectly without even having to think. At this point it requires much less energy and relies on the energy of the other person he is sparing. It is refreshing and it aids and strengthens all of his other arts.

Christian examination:

There has been a long line of discipline and teaching along the lines of prayer especially contemplative prayer. The goal of contemplative prayer is union with God. This prayer should strengthen and provide the energy for all other dimensions of the Christian life. In Christian tradition prayer has been categorized in the following way.

Vocal Prayer: Just like the memorized movements in ninja training Christians have written formulaic prayers that have been used for centuries, such as the “Our Father” or the Jesus Prayer.

Mental Prayer: Any act of prayer whether conversational, spontaneous or vocal directed towards God that involves your mind’s full intent.

Meditation: There are two kinds of meditation: Discursive and imaginative. Discursive means to break down. This is where someone thinks about the truths of God and applies them to their life. Imaginative is where someone imagines themselves in a scene of scripture or before the throne of God.

Recollection: Focusing all of one’s energies and attention on the presence of God in your soul, in nature or in the scriptures. There are various levels deep recollection leads to contemplation. Just as the ninja best fights when he is focused.

Contemplation: In short it is union with God. There are levels to it. At its highest it is known as pure contemplation. This is when all of the faculties of the soul and even body are united to God. At the lower levels only certain faculties are united, such as the will.

Contemplation is a total gift from God and only he can initiate it, however we can choose to respond to his grace to best dispose ourselves for it. Contemplation is like when the ninja can act and move smoothly without having to think and with no effort. The three signs of contemplation are: 1) Consistent dryness in all meditation. 2) Desire to be in silence and solitude with God. 3) A subtle mysterious experience of the presence of God without any form or image.

Just like in Ninja training it is good to have all the elements of prayer present. There are a few general categories: petition/intercession, praise/thanksgiving, meditation with or without reading, silent listening and repentance.

Keep in mind that it is a good idea to have some sort of flexible structure to your prayer time. This way when you go to pray you will have something to do if it is a particularly "dry" time. For instance starting with repentance moving on to reading something followed by meditation, petition, praise and ending with thanksgiving. It is also good to have a set prayer time during the day that best suits you. Some people find morning is best, some people find night, some people find some combination of the two. A general rule is to have at least a 1/2 hour a day, which is fairly intimidating so starting with 15 or even just 5 is good.

A note on distractions. They are not that big of a deal. First, every time you turn back to God is an act of love and more importantly what really matters is what God is doing in you not what you are doing for God. Only he can cause growth.

Scriptural Meditation

Ryu is beginning to learn to use the katana (Japanese sword), the most effective and deadly weapon in the ninja arsenal. He learns that like regular martial arts he must practice with the katana daily. The katana must be regularly sharpened. It must be made with the premium steel. Ryu finds that there are certain strokes that are best memorized and repeating them trains his muscles to not only remember them but it strengthens their ability to execute the stroke. There are different styles of fighting that he finds best fit him. Some are more smooth and require fluid spontaneous movements and some are more regimented. All of them feed of the various unarmed combat styles. Eventually he begins to develop his own style by combing elements from them all. Some of his friends are adept fighters and only use one method and he learns how to maneuver with them in battle feeding off their strengths and protecting them from weaknesses and vice versa.

Christian Examination:

In Christianity the sword of the spirit is the word of God (Ephesians 6:17 and Hebrews 4:12). Throughout Christian tradition there are various methods of studying and memorizing the scriptures, just as there are various fighting styles within ninjitsu. The most important thing above all is to keep in mind that, like prayer, meditating on and studying the word of God is essential to the Christian walk and is to be practiced daily. Just as the katana must be sharpened so must our knowledge of God's word be continually sharpened. There are a few practices of meditation on scripture that, like the different fighting styles, have been enormously helpful to the spiritual lives of countless Christians.

First is simple discursive meditation. Discursive means to break down. It can be abstract but the goal is to read a passage or passages and ask questions before the Lord about them. Think deeply about the truths contained and how they can applied to daily living.

Second is imaginative meditation. This is best for the narrative books of the Bible, especially the gospels. Imagine yourself in the scene either observing like a movie camera or as stander by or as one of or in place of one of the characters. Such as if you were one of the lepers being cured by Christ or at the foot of the cross during his passion.

Finally is what is called Lectio Devina or in English Divine Reading. It is a simple four step process:

- 1) Read until something catches your attention either a phrase or even just a single word.
- 2) Repeat it
- 3) Pray to the Holy Spirit to open you to the riches of it
- 4) Receive from God

Service

After learning how to effectively use the katana, Ryu was introduced to the spear and the naginata. (A naginata is like a spear but has a curved a long curved blade on the end instead of a point) The spear is more effective for enemies at a distance because of how easy it is to throw. The naginata is mostly confined to a closer range of effectiveness. Ryu learns that for some a regular spear is much more preferable and others a naginata. Like the other fighting techniques practice is necessary.

Christian Examination:

There is a tradition in Christianity to break up service into two broad categories, material and spiritual. Often times they will be referred to as corporal (coming from the Latin word for body) works of mercy and spiritual works of mercy. Traditionally corporal works of mercy were further categorized into seven groups: Feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit those in prison and bury the dead. Likewise for the spiritual: Admonish the sinner, instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, comfort the sorrowful, bear wrongs patiently, forgive injuries and pray for others. The material service is like the naginata in that it is most effective in close range, you need to be physically close. Spiritual service is often something that can be done long distance, especially with new communication technologies. Kind of like throwing the spear. Like everything in Christianity it is best to practice these on some level but some are called to focus more deeply on certain dimensions.

Evangelization

While there are many parallels that can be drawn between learning to effectively assassinate someone and evangelize them, it also is somewhat counterproductive. It is best to just go ahead and provide some basic advice on how to effectively evangelize. Think of evangelization as an extension of spiritual service.

First. We do not convert anyone, God does.

Second. That does not mean what we do does not matter.

Third. Because it is God converting him we need to lay aside our expectations and get in line with his.

Often times it is easy to think we need to get person from sinner to saint. When in reality God simply wants us to reveal one aspect of his truth and more often than not that is his love. Listening to the person is more often than not enough to reveal where God is leading them (even if they are totally unaware of it) and then pray about where you belong in that. Avoid a black and white paradigm of “saved” and “unsaved” we all can further deepen our conversion it is a daily process. We should continually evangelize each other. Saying the sinners prayer is not the goal, going to heaven and knowing the riches of Christ on earth is (even if saying the sinners prayer is the beginning to that).

Avoid arguments, yes some people need to work through the truth intellectually, more often than not they simply need to work through something emotionally.

Humility is crucial to evangelization. Recognizing and admitting ones faults can help reduce anxiety. Christianity is a hospital for sinners not just a club for saints. Use the extra pressure to spur you on to virtue, but if it robs you of peace pray against it. It is more important to believe what you preach than to practice it.

There is no sure fire method evangelism. The most effective way Christ is often revealed is through his body. This is often known as “body evangelization” which is simply getting people in touch with real Christian community. If you set out to evangelize often times it helps to try and do the following:

- 1) Be a friend, that means love others regardless of where they are at with no hidden agenda and a willingness to listen to them.
- 2) Share your story. Witness to the power of Christ in your life.

Witness to the power of community. Abstract arguments can be argued about forever but personal experience is much more difficult to refute.

- 3) Invite them to experience God by inviting them to community.
- 4) Offer to pray for and with them often. You will be surprised how often people will accept it.

Finally remember that if you do everything perfectly ultimately it is God's grace and their choice. Look at Christ no one was more perfect or effective in his ministry and he was crucified by those he was trying to save. Be willing to suffer for them and still love them even if they reject you completely.

Knowledge

Ryu discovers that a few members of his ninja are very well versed in geography. When they go on missions this enables them to easily find their way without getting lost. Ryu questions his ninja master about this one day. "All ninjas must have some knowledge of geography," his master begins to explain "but some must know more than others, these serve as very valuable in the troop, sometimes they are leaders, sometimes merely helpers. What you must learn Ryu is to find to what degree geography is best suited for your training. If you find geography is more compelling then most of the arts it is possible you are called to channel your energy strongly into that area of expertise, but be careful if not for life and death hangs on the word of a geographer and a mistaken arrogant one has been the death of many."

Christian Examination:

The Charism of knowledge is the root of teaching. All are called to know about Christ (Eph. 3:19) yet some are called more deeply to study the faith. These people find studying and reading invigorating and seek every opportunity to do it. They are often very helpful to the Christian community as they help navigate difficult questions just like the geography masters. Yet as the scripture warns not everyone is called to become teachers (Jas. 3:1) and there is a real danger in pursuing a Charism that God does not wish to grant, especially this one (1 Cor. 8:1). Humility and love must be sought above this Charism even for those who have it.

Wisdom

After almost a year of training in geography Ryu is given his first mission to lead. Before the mission is embarked Ryu sits down with an experienced ninja leader. This leader has studied and more importantly learned from experience military strategy. Ryu finds that the ninja master strategist can perceive clearly any given situation . He also is able to come up with an effective strategy, using the available recourses, quickly and easily. Ryu follows the advice given by the ninja master. His mission is a success and on all subsequent missions he has returned to this ninja master. After months of leading missions some young trainees begin to approach him with questions on military strategy. In spite of this Ryu continues to return to those who are more adept than him.

Christian Examination:

Wisdom is a Charism that is often given in tandem with knowledge and like knowledge all are called to it to some degree (Jas. 1:5) and some more than others. It is a Charism that enables one to provide effective and creative solutions to problems that arise in the Christian walk. People who possess this Charism will find people continually coming to them and finding their advice effective. Like the military strategist the most effective way to grow in wisdom is from personal experience. The scriptures constantly speak of the benefit of possessing wisdom and seeking to learn from those who have it.

Intercession

Ryu is learning the importance of how to disguise and impersonate people. To effectively impersonate he is learning that he must almost become the person. He must think about find out about their desires and hopes. An effective disguise requires being aware of mannerisms and habits that even the person they are impersonating may not be aware of. Ryu must be able to come across as if he is the person he is trying to impersonate.

Christian Examination:

To intercede is to literally go in the place of someone else. When Christ came to bear our sin he came to be completely and fully in our place. He became man to fully identify with us. When we pray for and with others we should try to identify with the people we are praying with/for just like a ninja who is trying to impersonate someone. When we go before God as intercessors he not only sees us as prayers but in many instances of the Bible counts the prayer of prophets as the prayer of the person or people who they were praying for. To be aware of others needs we need to be diligent in being attentive to them, just as a ninja would be towards someone he was planning on disguising himself as. If there is anything that is essential to evangelization and community it is this.

Tongues

Ryu in his training has begun to learn how to effectively battle the enemy with the use of staffs. Staffs can either be nicely and ornately carved or simply large sticks that were found lying around. Staff fighting skills provide an extra edge in combat because it provides extra force from the staff and is almost always available. When Ryu first began training a lot of his movements were simply made up on the spot. Eventually after much training his movements came in line with organized and effective staff fighting techniques. Staff fighting in the end became a fluid and powerful tool in ninja missions for Ryu.

Christian Examination:

The gift of tongues, like staff fighting is readily available and provides an extra edge in prayer. Tongues is the Charism of the spirit that enables the prayer to speak in another language. Often times it is simply prayer however sometimes it is prophecy in which case it needs to be interpreted. There have been other times it is actual conversation with someone who knows and who doesn't. Paul speaks of it in 1 Corinthians 12-14. It first shows up in Acts 2 with Pentecost. To receive the gift simply ask for it and perhaps ask someone to pray with you to receive it. Like all the charisms it is not necessary for salvation. It is unlike the other charisms in that it is often meant for the individual exercising it. Initially tongues is mostly us but over time it becomes more spirit lead. Like a child learning to speak the heavenly father takes delight in our attempts at praying in the spirit. The over all goal is to glorify the Lord.

Prophecy

After years of training Ryu was given a very important mission to spy on a major leader. This leader was very sinister and elusive. In order to do this Ryu had to secretly enter the enemy camp and spend many days there. Ryu successfully penetrated their defenses and spied upon said evil leader. For many days he learned his schedule and habits. Upon his return to inform the masters of his info they appointed him to assassinate this leader. It was clear from the situation that the only way he could do it was with one effective shot with a shuriken (throwing star). Normally these are used exclusively for distraction, but over the years Ryu learned to be extremely accurate and powerful in throwing them. Ryu set off to his mission and after days of following the leader around his chance arose. Ryu in one shot killed off the leader. One of his body guards he was not so successful with and had to kill with his bare hands. He escaped just barely, his actions were a major turning point in the war.

Christian Examination:

Prophetic knowledge is like spying. It is a supernatural view into unseen realities transcending time and space. This takes many forms such as words and senses and comes through many ways such as dreams, visions and even tongues. There is one common thread, it is supernatural illumination. Prophetic words is not just mere psychology, even though psychology is a great help in ministry, it is a supernatural grace meant to alert people to a specific grace. Prophecy proper is when someone speaks in the voice of God. True prophecy carries power and is deadly accurate. If it is not it is just distracting. Kind of like a shuriken. Prophecy, if it is of God must necessarily bring about change. In more technical terms Prophecy is a divinely given message imparted by supernatural grace to the spirit of the prophet prompting the prophet to speak in the voice of God revealing the unseen thereby calling an explicit person or people at a certain time to respond to specific graces, bringing action, transformation and/or healing.

As previously stated, prophetic gifting manifest themselves in many ways, however not all of them are prophecy in the strict sense. A prophet is someone who has this very specific charism. Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:1 admonishes to seek this gift above all other charisms, but not more than to live in love. Prophecy and the prophetic is almost always intended for the body and like the other charisms is by nature other directed.

A powerful prophetic gift is not an indication of a virtuous person who prays frequently. Neither is a virtuous person necessarily adept at prophecy. The combination however is the most effective. Think what would have happened if Ryu had only been adept at throwing stars. The reason he succeeded was because his arts and commitment to the ninja disciplines enabled him to effectively defend himself and accomplish his mission.

Word Gifts

After his last major mission Ryu began to receive extensive training in stealth and entering methods. Stealth provide him with the skill to identify shadows and areas where he could blend and hide. It also equipped him with creativity to move without being seen by training his ears and eyes. He also learned how to pick locks and slip in through windows as well as other various entering methods. After months of training he was capable of doing even more advanced espionage (spying).

Christian Examination:

Word gifts are a form of the prophetic. So it is best to view them in the light of prophetic gifting as a whole. There are essentially two word gifts: word of knowledge and word of wisdom. Word of wisdom is like stealth, it is supernatural grace that gains access to creative unseen solutions. It allows the person to give profound advice without seeing how. It relies on trained supernatural perception. Word of knowledge is similar to entering methods because it is like gaining access to something that otherwise would be inaccessible. Word of knowledge is a supernatural grace that imparts knowledge that would be otherwise impossible for the person giving the word to know. Such as the state of some ones soul. It is beyond mere psychology or being allowed into a house. Like all other charisms this one must tempered with prayer and virtue, especially humility.

Interpretations

Ryu after learning his new stealth and entering methods volunteered to another mission hoping to test out his new schools. A friend, more advanced than he came along. In the process his friend was captured. Ryu barely escaped. His friend who was captured was waiting for him. Ryu stunned asked to find out how this was possible. His friend then sought the master ninja and Ryu learned from the two of them the art of escaping. Weeks later after mastering many of the techniques he was captured, not while on a mission but while practicing in the woods. He employed his new skills and got to safety effectively. The head master ninja, while happy for Ryus successful escape was upset about the aggressiveness of the enemy, things were starting to change.

Christian Examination:

Interpretation of tongues is similar to the ninja skill of escaping. There are many situations in which tongues is used and in which there is need for interpretation. It doesn't matter if it is being a missionary in a foreign country or someone giving a word through tongues you never know when this charism will be necessary. Interpretations by its nature starts somewhere unfamiliar and foreign and moves towards familiarity by supernatural grace. Interpretations is the supernatural gift to be able to properly translate a language unknown to the person exercising the gifts. It is in the prophetic domain in that it is beyond mere human ability. Like escaping it is sometimes a one time thing and very valuable.

Discernment of Spirits

Ryus grandmaster looked into the horizon from where Ryu escaped. He was strongly gripping his cane. "Storms coming" he spoke softly to Ryu who was standing next to him. Sure enough in a few minutes brooding storm clouds came forth over the horizon. Ryu amazed asked how his master was able to predict the weather. The grandmaster explained "There are instruments that can do similarly, but it is my bones that tell me." The grandmaster then guided Ryu into his house and into a secret chamber where many instruments and scrolls were sitting around. For the next several days, as it poured down rain the master trained Ryu in the art of meteorology. He showed him how to detect weather conditions, what to do to protect himself from all sorts of bad weather and how to use it to his advantage.

Christian Examination:

There are two forms of discernment of spirits. One is a supernatural charism, the other is a practice anyone can do. Just like the difference between the methods the ninja master taught Ryu and his innate ability to predict the weather.

The charism is similar to many of the prophetic gifts in that it is a supernatural grace to detect something unseen. It is a supernatural gift that enables a person to immediately and intuitively identify spirits and their nature in a given place, person or circumstance as well as the true source of a supernatural force, gift or event. However, just because someone can detect the source of something, that does not mean they know what to do about it. Just as the grandmaster could predict the weather, he didn't necessarily know how to survive in the various elements, that took training and experience.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:21 Paul admonishes us to test every spirit. This is an admonishment everyone is to follow, not just those who have the charism. There are constantly forces working to bring us towards or against God. The flesh, the world and the devil are in opposition to God whereas the Holy Spirit, angels and good Christians are working to bring us to God. It is primarily on the internal dimension that needs the most clarification. Discernment is fundamentally divided into three steps:

- 1) Become aware
- 2) Identify/Understand

3) Take action

Pay attention to the movements in your soul and mind. Ask probing questions to understand its source, is it in line with scripture? Does it lead to virtue? If it is of God embrace it, if it isn't reject it. Immediately. Just as Ryu and the grandmaster went immediately to shelter, it is far safer than staying out and being exposed to progressively greater and greater danger. Temptation is best and most easily resisted immediately. Temptation likewise should not just be fought but totally overthrown. It is better to have too much clothing than too little in a snow storm.

Some additional and crucial advice is to never make a change in desolation (experience of dryness, emptiness, unknown fear etc...) or extreme consolation. Often times Satan will make us feel as if something is going to last forever, especially desolation. This is in order to stop us from continuing on the good works we have committed to, such as praying. It is best to talk to whoever you are accountable to in order verify any judgments about the source of any particular movement in the soul. If you are in a time of desolation focus on that God has and does give you the strength and this time cannot last forever. If it is a time of consolation focus on how gracious God is and merciful despite how little we deserve it. Focus on how everything good is his gift.

One of the biggest difficulties is discerning if something is a prompting of the Holy Spirit. The key verse to remember is "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom" (1 Cor. 3:17). If any prompting is accompanied by compulsion or a sense of dread, anxiety or great fear, it is not of God. It is best to let reason guide in these circumstances and to submit your prompting to someone who can help discern with you.

Faith

Early one morning a few days after the storm the grandmaster gathered everyone together from the ninja Klan and informed them of what was happening in the north. "It is time we go there to assist our fellow ninjas. It appears our enemies have gathered to eradicate our ancient practices. It is many miles away it is time you learn one of the most crucial arts, horsemanship. Not only will it speed our progress to help them, but will give us an advantage in battle. We have horses from the villages of the valley being delivered later this day. We must master this art quickly or it is death for our friends." Later that day Ryu learned to ride, it took only a few days before he could adequately maneuver on and with a horse. Horsemanship proved to be extremely helpful in enhancing most of the other arts.

Christian Examination:

Beyond the theological virtue of faith there is the charism of faith that is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13. This is beyond the acceptance of the truth of God. It is a special supernatural grace enabling one to access the miraculous. It is like horsemanship in that can quickly and powerfully get one where one needs to go. It also all of the charisms and most Christian disciplines. Faith, the charism, is also like a horse in that it is not us doing the work. Like contemplation there are things that we can do to dispose ourselves to access the power of this charism.

Signs and Wonders

Three days before the ninja Klan was to ride to assist their friends the ninja master called together the proficient ninjas and the ninjas who were being trained to be leaders. Ryu was among them. The ninja master brought them into his house into a secret chamber. In their was an overwhelming smell of burnt things. Black powder was lying on round pieces of leather. Ryu knew immediately what the next training was all about. "Pyrotechnics is among the most treasures and unique arts to the ninja. It is most effective in killing and escaping. It is very dangerous however, which is why only a few of you were chosen to be allowed to learn this art." The day before they were to ride Ryu knew how to make and use bombs, gun powder and all sorts of elements to create fire and smoke to his advantage.

Christian Examination:

The gift of signs and wonders is a lot like Pyrotechnics. It is very flashy and noticeable. At the same time it is fairly mysterious in that the scriptures are not clear on exactly what it means. No doubt God is careful not to produce all sorts of flashy miracles if it is not to be used properly. This charism can only be gained by praying and acting on faith. Those who have it must exercise extreme caution against the explosive nature of pride. It is however extremely effective when used well.

Healing and Deliverance

The day arrived for the Ryus Klan to ride. After days of travel, while they were resting the grandmaster ninja pulled aside his proficient students including Ryu and brought them to a large still lake. "This is the last art you must learn" the grandmaster began to explain. "I know you can all swim and have basic water training however there is still more to learn. Where we are going there is much water so we must learn to use it to our advantage." From that point forward the grandmaster showed them how to purify water, extract poisons from water, draw water snakes from lakes and hide effectively. At the end of the day they continued on their journey.

Christian Examination:

Healing often requires being immersed in the presence of God just like a ninja needs to be immersed to fully disguise himself in water. Aside from this the analogy does not extend much further. The gift of healing occurs on a physical and more importantly spiritual plain. It is accessed by faith and manifest through the supernatural charism of healing. Sometimes healing occurs in groups. It seems to me Satan will assign a certain number of demons to attack us consistently and keep us in bondage, preventing us from experience God's love. When we pray for deliverance there are several other things that need to happen to keep Satan from getting in.

We need to strip him of his armor (Luke 11:21-22). Often there are: 1)Lies believed 2)Wounds of the heart from unhealed memories 3) Forgiveness 4)Unrepentant sin.

When we pray for others in the name of Jesus Christ we need to 1) Reveal lies and speak the truth of God's word which sets us free (John 8:32) and renounce them. 2)Ask for healing, 3)forgive others (regardless of how one feels) 4) repent and 5)Rebuke/renounce any evil spirits.

The occult and drugs are gateways into the demonic any association with these need to be completely removed before attempting deliverance prayers.

Epilogue and conclusion:

They arrived at the ninja village the next morning. They regained their strength that day and night and attacked the samurai the following night. Ryu had all of his arts put to the test over the next week as they sought to crush the opposing forces. When it was all said and done many lie dead but alas the ninjas had freedom, at least for a while. When Ryu returned to his home village he continued to practice the ninja disciplines daily. When the next war arose he was seen by all as a grandmaster ninja.

You too can be a grandmaster ninja by practicing the four ninja disciplines and enriching your knowledge and experience of the arts.

Sample 30 minute prayer time:

- + Enter God's presence (5 min)
- + Bring to mind and repent for sin(1 min)
- + Spiritual reading (5 min)
- + Meditate and converse with God (10 min)
- + Sit in silence interior and exterior to receive (2 min)
- + Intercede and bring forth petitions (2 min)
- + Praise and adore him (3 min)
- + Thank him (2 min)

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