

How to Be Spiritually Discerning

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1. What is spiritual discernment?

1 John 4:1

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.(NIV)

Ability to determine

Spiritual discernment is the ability to determine what is of God and in accordance with His righteousness.

Spiritual discernment enables the believer to determine if a doctrine is of God, the world or the devil

Not Critical
or
Judgemental

“Christian discernment is not critical and judgemental. True Christian discernment is an **expression of love**: True discernment will have all the marks of the **fruits of the Spirit**, but especially that of love.”

(Sinclair Ferguson)

Philippians 1:9-10

And this is my prayer: that **your love** may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you **may be able to discern** what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,

2. Why is spiritual discernment important for the Christian?

1 Timothy 4:3

For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. (NIV)

1 Timothy 4:4

They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. (NIV)

Determining
the spirit
behind the
words/actions

Every good and well meaning Christian can accept and share doctrine or insights that may not be from God and aligned with His righteousness.

Luke 9:55

But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. (NKJ)

3. How do we grow in
spiritual discernment?

Growing in Spiritual Discernment

- 1.** Ensure that the teaching/activity is aligned with the gospel

1 John 4:2

This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,

1 John 4:3

but every spirit that **does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God**. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. (NIV)

1 John 4:10

This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son **as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.**

Growing in Spiritual Discernment

1. Ensure that the teaching/activity is aligned with the gospel
2. Search and know the Scriptures

2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is **God-breathed** and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

1 John 4:6

We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

Discernment
is informed
by the Bible

When discernment is informed
by the word of God it is not
clouded by my preferences, my
opinions, or my arbitrary
standard of what is right or
wrong."

(Kyle Borg)



Content is King

Context is Queen

Job 42:7

After the Lord had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken the truth about Me, as My servant Job has."

Growing in Spiritual Discernment

1. Ensure that the teaching/activity is aligned with the gospel
2. Search and know the Scriptures
3. Pursue intimacy with God

Acts 16:16

Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling.

Acts 16:17

She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved."

Acts 16:18

She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her.

James 1:5

If any of you **lacks wisdom**, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

James 4:8

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.