

THE SPIRITUAL GIFT OF **DISCERNMENT**

Discernment is simply the wisdom to judge well. While we often dislike the word “judgment”, the ability to identify what is right and true is a deeply important part of the spiritual life. It is what allows us to determine whether a person, a plan, or a situation is leading us to godly outcomes or not. Solomon is an example of a biblical character gifted with discernment.

In particular, the Bible values discernment as a quality which helps warn others of spiritual dangers they may not be aware of. Damaging ideologies or manipulative leaders have often led people astray from the path God has laid out for them. Friends who are discerning can help us from falling victim to these things. They can also help us discover which paths or choices are best out of a variety of possibilities.

People with this gift...

- Are passionate about truth and unwilling to accept lies
- Listen carefully and notice details that escape others
- Value clarity about pros / cons of any course of action
- Are often described as “wise”, “perceptive”, or “astute” by others who know them
- Ask important questions about plans and aspirations which help clarify their purpose
- Pray regularly for wisdom around personal decisions
- Are often consulted by others for their input on important matters
- Can get to the root of an issue and discern what motivation or cause lies behind it
- Are aware when personal unease arises around a situation and think carefully about the cause
- Often feel a sense of God’s presence in a place or situation

Putting your gift into action

If you are gifted with discernment, it is probably something you have already been using in your personal life. This is an important part of being gifted, but it is only a part. God also gives us gifts for the sake of others, and particularly for His church. Here are some ways to use this gift at home, at church, and in the community.

- Foster a regular practice of spending time in Scripture and prayer
- Make listening to others a priority, and pray for the issues that are challenging them in their daily lives
- Be unafraid to act on promptings that God may be giving you
- Cultivate an attitude of patience with those who may not see things as clearly as you do
- Pray for your children and grandchildren, and consider how to help them grow into the people God made them to be
- Participate in church meetings like vestry, and provide feedback on what direction to take on important issues
- Volunteer for a leadership position in the church or in a non-profit organization in the community
- Make a point of encouraging others when you see God at work in them
- Pay attention to how you naturally communicate – do you enjoy writing, or conversing 1:1 with people? Think about how you can combine your gift of “seeing” the world through the eyes of discernment with your natural communication style so you can share your gift with others and encourage them.

“And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.” ~ Philippians 1:9-11