

Discerning God's Voice

You just received discernment and believe it is from the Lord. Your concern is: "What do I do next?" My concern is what you didn't do next.

The next step is not taking action on the discernment you received, but testing it. Ask yourself questions such as: "Will this bear fruit and glorify the name of Jesus Christ, or will it distract and detour me from my godly assignment?"

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When receiving discernment that you believe is from the Lord, you should stop and verify it is from the Lord, and not your flesh or the enemy trying to distract you. It is wisdom to verify the word (not analyze it) before you take action. Taking the word at face value without seeking confirmation and direction can detour you from the will of God.

We can prematurely act on a word because we feel it makes sense and we have comfort proceeding. We think, "*I can do this.*" We are comfortable because it makes sense to us in the natural, but the question is: Do we have peace proceeding forth in the spiritual?

We are not natural people; we are spiritual beings. Moving forward with an idea because of our natural comfort is one of the main ways the enemy and our flesh can cause us to proceed in a wrong direction.

When you receive revelation, a prophetic word or an answer to prayer, take the next step. Discern it. Dissect it. Don't overthink and don't analyze. Test it. Bring it back to the

Holy Spirit through prayer and test it against the Word of God.

We hear from three sources. We can hear from the Spirit of God, our own thoughts and the enemy. We hear God more clearly than we think. The challenge is sometimes we hear Him so clearly that we doubt what we heard and then we ask a person their opinion—leading to confusion. The enemy can send thoughts, which are lies, into our minds to confuse and distract, and our flesh can get involved by being analytical and letting our imagination take over.

God's Thought Downloads

God speaks to us through thoughts dropped in our spirit. When God speaks to us, we need not try to figure out the revelation, but rather receive the revelation He is giving.

You may have heard God's voice before saying, "Don't do that," "Take this road instead today" or "Give this much as an offering." You have heard God as you have prayed and felt you received your answer. However, don't just feel you have received the answer. Rather, know you have received the answer.

When you receive discernment, ask yourself, "Is this the way God usually speaks to me?" Verify it. He may speak to you in different ways, but He usually speaks to you the same way for a season. Ask God, "Why do you want me to head in this direction?"

Test the Scriptures to confirm if the revelation aligns with or contradicts God's Word. God will not tell you to do something that is against His Word. I once knew a woman God had been convicting regarding giving. She felt led to write an offering check for \$5,000. She wrote the check in advance of a business transaction that was being completed. The deal fell through and she ended up in debt! That contradicts God's Word. If she would have tested the discernment, she would have

stayed out of debt.

The Flesh Blocks Revelation

Our flesh gets involved in receiving revelation because we think about it instead of pray about it. When thinking about whether a thought is from God, we tend to overanalyze it and get impatient waiting on God for an answer.

Analytical people can plan out the answer instead of praying and receiving the answer. During prayer time, analytical people have difficulty shutting down their minds to receive from God. When analytical thoughts come into your mind, transfer those thoughts to your heart, to the place of love, where the Father is.

When you receive discernment and you are unsure about it, or even when you think you are sure of its source, ask yourself, "Is this the way I would think?" You may think you heard from God when really what you heard were your own thoughts.

Deceptions and Distractions

The enemy speaks to us with thoughts such as: "They don't like you; they are over there talking about you," or "You'll never lose weight; you can't do it." We have all heard the lies of the enemy. If you pay attention, you will be able to discern when and how the enemy speaks to you. When he speaks to me, I will hear, "Listen to me," in the sentence. God knows I hear His voice and doesn't have to say, "Listen to me."

If confusion is present in times of discernment, it is from the enemy. "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace" (1 Cor. 14:33).

The enemy will attempt to distract. When we don't pray about things in advance, it leaves the enemy an open door to sidetrack us.

Testing the Spirits

When testing the spirits, ask yourself if you are feeling convicted or condemned. Conviction from the Holy Spirit is quick and calls you to action. He presses you until you confess or act. Condemnation is from the enemy and makes you feel numb. Feeling heavy and bad about yourself produces complacency.

When you are confused, under pressure, scattered, stressed, oppressed and going through heavy trials and tests, your soul is highly activated and you could be experiencing demonic opposition.

As spiritual warfare occurs, you cannot automatically assume that you can hear God with the same clarity as in other times. All of us have heard wrongly at one time or another, and have regretted the decisions we made in the flesh.

In 1 John 4:1, the Word of God instructs us to test the spirits. If we are instructed to test the prophetic words given by prophets, then shouldn't we also test our own words and discernment?

There are times our flesh gets involved in the outcome. Increase discernment and cast down your flesh by being in the Word, praying and being around prophetic people who know how to test the spirits—people whose discernment produces results that are evident through the fruit of their ministry.

When you receive revelation from God, keep it in front of you and consistently pray it through.

Ask for His will to be further revealed and for Him to give you the spirit of revelation, knowledge, wisdom and understanding (Is. 11:2).

Be in tune and sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading.

You can and do hear from God. You just don't know how simple and clear it really is.

Kathy DeGraw is passionate about releasing and empowering people to share the love and power of God. She is the founder of DeGraw Ministries, a prophetic healing and deliverance ministry. DeGraw has written several books, including *Flesh, Satan or God?: Who Are You Hearing From?* Follow her on Facebook or online at .