

Use Heavenly Discernment With These 4 Types of People in Your Life

It's important to look carefully at the kinds of people you connect with and the types of connections with them that you nurture. Human connections are absolutely vital to your well-being as a whole and to your victory in Christ in particular, but it's not connecting with just anyone. Jesus was intentional about the kinds of people He invested Himself with, and you should be too.

Other people in your life will generally fall into one of three categories.

First, some people are clearly on your side. As a believer that should be synonymous with being on God's side. Sometimes this is clear—your walk with God is strengthened when you are with them, your heart is encouraged and filled, and you leave encounters stronger in spiritual battles than you were before. When you find people like this, be willing to invest a lot of yourself in order to nurture these connections. You are blessed indeed if you have a few such fellow warriors in your inner circle to journey with.

Second, there are people whose heart may be on God's side but their effect on you is less clear. They may seem abrasive or make you feel uncomfortable. Some may make your life difficult or wear you out. You may not understand each other. Jesus's disciples were often in this category, and yet He invested a great deal in them. The point is not how comfortable you are together; the point is their heart as best as you can know it. You may not open your heart to these people as much as to your inner circle, but you need them in your life.

The third category of people in your life are those who are

neither clearly on your side nor clearly evil. They may or may not have an effect on your daily life. Your attitude toward these people should be twofold.

First, don't spend too much energy worrying about them. A lot of energy is wasted in worrying about what "they" will think or do. And second, whatever mission God has given you to do will involve them in some way. Your purpose is always bigger than yourself. At some point God will send you to a certain group of them. Learn to see them as Jesus sees them. Be someone whose character becomes attractive to them, and become alert to the appointments God makes for you to draw them into His kingdom.

And then there are those who are clearly not on God's side. Some people are truly used for evil in your life. When faced with these people, remember, we are not fighting against flesh and blood (Eph. 6:12). The kingdom of darkness may use people to oppose God's work, but our spiritual warfare is not against human beings.

Be excessively cautious before moving against other human beings. We can judge behavior, but only God truly knows the heart. Jesus rebuked and cast out demons who were harassing people, but He didn't confront human beings in the same way. He spoke truth and engaged with people, but He also never allowed them to deter Him from His own position or mission. For you, when you encounter evil people, protect yourself—both physically and spiritually if necessary. Then stay focused on what God has given you to do.

Establishing healthy connections with fellow believers happens best in a small group of some kind, where you can get close enough to begin to do life together. Then when any of you face spiritual battles, you can offer each other support, encouragement and, most of all, spiritual warfare prayer that can powerfully push back the enemy.

Pray this prayer as you seek to implement this strategy:

Dear Lord, please forgive me for trying to fight my battles alone and for isolating myself from those You have sent to help. I ask for Your wisdom and guidance as I seek out healthy connections with others who are also following You. I ask You to send the people I need into my life and to help me be aware of who they are when You send them. I ask for Your courage to move past my fear and anxiety as I seek to connect my life with others in Your body. I also ask for Your protection against those people through whom the enemy would seek to do me harm physically or spiritually. I accept Your plan for me to connect with other believers. Thank You for guiding me as I do so. Amen. {eo}

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