

James Goll: How to Test the Spirits When You Receive Supernatural Revelation

When you receive supernatural revelation, it is vital to discern—sometimes instantaneously—what to do with the revelation you receive. It is by practice that you learn to discern good and evil, and such discernment is of critical importance in the days in which we live.

Don't Be Naive

Not all revelation comes from God, and not even all of what appears to be spiritual comes from the Holy Spirit. 1 John 4:1 says, “Beloved, 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.”

As this scripture makes clear, it is imperative to learn how to “test the spirits” in order to determine if they are serving God or the enemy. Do not be naive! The unseen spiritual reality around us is populated with both angels and demons, and human beings are notoriously poor at telling the difference between good spirits and bad ones.

Only naive people will believe everything that comes across their screen. Satan is always lurking just out of sight, plotting wickedness against God's people, and we must not be ignorant of his schemes (see 1 Pet. 5:8; 2 Cor. 2:11). He especially loves to deceive the very people who are trying to learn how to receive revelation from God.

Realize that you can't elude the enemy just by pretending he is not there. He is. You will find him around every corner. During your lifetime, you will be exposed to plenty of evil, but you do not have to fall for it. To stay clear, you need to

discover how to discern the difference between the devil's doings, God's workings and everything in between.

I have run across some people who hold back from testing the spirits, saying, "Well, I don't want to offend the Holy Spirit." I guess they think it would bother God if they acted suspicious about something that may or may not originate from Him. That kind of reasoning does not hold water.

Just look at Scripture. False prophets are real, and God wants you to spurn them. He wants you to be alert and to test the spirits. He wants to help you do this, and your mistakes do not worry Him. He is pleased when you make the right distinctions and lean into Him for guidance and wisdom.

Other people may read the Scripture I quoted above about testing the spirits and get a little nervous about dealing with evil powers. "Test every spirit? No way do I want to risk my welfare by calling out Satan's demons. Please don't make me do that!"

To them I can only quote the words that Paul wrote to "Timid Timothy": "God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and love, and self-control" (2 Tim. 1:7). We have not received a spirit of intimidation or bondage, but a spirit of courage, effectiveness and love.

Trust the Holy Spirit to take care of you when you confront evil. Put your trust in the God who can protect you and who will deliver whoever calls on His name (Joel 2:32).

5 Discernment Basics

As you learn to discern good from evil, keep in mind these 5 basic principles:

1. Be a God-centered person.
2. Don't give others the power of making your decisions.
3. There is power in speaking God's Word.

4. There is power in forgiveness.
5. There is power in the cross, in the name and blood of Jesus.

Learning to discern good and evil does take time, and it is a process to learn to consistently recognize that which comes from God vs. the enemy. But as we present ourselves to God, He will bring us into progressively greater cleansing. We will have less and less in common with the god of this world, and our own inner filter will become more effective.

Always remember, each one of us is supposed to learn to test the spirits; it is part of the Christian life!

Blessings to exercise discernment and follow the Holy Spirit!