

When Believers Crucify Each Other in the Name of Discernment

Discernment is ever so vital in this hour, but discernment can turn into a critical spirit if it's not bound by love on both sides of the river banks. Indeed, whether you have a discerning heart or the gift of discerning of spirits, there's always the danger of tapping into a faultfinding flow when you should be making intercession.

At Awakening House of Prayer—or when I travel as a conference speaker—I discern many things out of order in people's lives. I recognize the spirit of rejection from a mile away and fear from even farther. I can see pride, poor attitudes and people imprisoned to any number of fleshly appetites or demon powers. I've discovered it's easier to grumble and complain about people who behave wrongly than it is to hit my knees with a prayer burden and cry out to God for their freedom. But it's not righteous, so I guard my heart from a critical spirit.

Listen to Jennifer's podcast on criticism versus a prophetic spirit.

My spiritual father, Ken Malone, once told me, "People who walk in a high level of discernment need to walk in a higher level of humility. We all have issues and we don't need people to point them out. Those who feel compelled to point out other peoples' flaws constantly are elevating themselves and walking in pride. We need to strengthen people, not criticize and rebuke them as they struggle to gain freedom. There is a fine line between discernment and fault-finding. With discernment, we must walk in a high level of integrity so we don't abuse the gift by always pointing out faults. We must temper our discernment with grace."

What Discernment Is

Discernment is “the quality of being able to grasp and comprehend what is obscure,” also “an act of perceiving or discerning something,” according to *Merriam-Webster*. Discerning means “able to see and understand people, things or situations clearly and intelligently.”

JOIN JENNIFER ON FACEBOOK FOR SPIRITUAL COMMENTARY AND ENCOURAGEMENT. [CLICK HERE](#).

The Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words reveals that the Greek words for “discern,” “discerner” and “discernment” come from several words. *Anakrino* means “to distinguish, or separate out so as to investigate by looking throughout objects or particulars,” hence it signifies “to examine, scrutinize, question, to hold a preliminary judicial examination preceding the trial proper.” *Diakrino* signifies “to separate, discriminate;” then, “to learn by discriminating, to determine, decide.” *Dokiamazo* signifies “to test, prove, scrutinize;” so as “to decide.”

Hebrews 4:12 tells us the Word of God is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. We need to let the Lord deal with the hearts of people. He will bring people into your life, at times, so you can discern the spirits and help them break free—not so you can judge their hearts and avoid them like the plague because you have convinced yourself they can't be helped. I've seen too many prophetic people with critical spirits who seek to crucify the very ones God has sent them to help deliver.

What Discernment Is Not

John tells us to test the spirits to see if they are from God (1 John 4:1). But some with discernment test hearts to see if they are from God, which is not godly. Nobody knows what's really in someone else's heart except God Himself. Judging

someone's heart is dangerous.

Presuming someone has a bad spirit based on a checklist and not direct revelation from God grieves the Lord. And even if they do have a bad spirit, we need to separate the principality from the personality, as it were. We need to love the people and hate the demons that hold them in bondage. We need to wage prophetic warfare against the devils!

CHECK OUT JENNIFER'S PROPHETIC TRAINING SCHOOL.

Remember what I said previously: Discernment is not a feeling. Discernment is a knowing. If you have a feeling, don't act until the feeling is a knowing. Your emotions will betray your discernment. Likewise, a haughty heart will betray your discernment. A bitter and critical spirit will betray your discernment. You need to see people by the spirit, not by your soul.

Beware the critical spirit that masks as discernment. There's a difference between a prophetic spirit and a critical spirit. A critical spirit is not looking for a solution. It just wants to criticize. This comes many times from spiritual pride. A critical spirit finds faults.

A prophetic spirit is filled with hope and redemption because this is the true heart of the Father. A critical spirit shows no hope, or little hope, of redemption. A critical spirit harps on people and creates a gang mentality, looking for agreement from others.

Determine in your heart today to ask God to give you more discernment—and to root any critical spirits out of your heart so He can use you to help set the captives free!