

Checkpoints for Discerning the Spirit's Voice

[_] The leading of the Spirit can be witnessed in personal or common sense experience.

2 Timothy 1

5 I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. 6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

[_] The prompting of the Spirit can be observed in extraordinary means/circumstances.

Acts 10

1 At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. 2 He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. 3 One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!" 4 Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. 5 Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. 6 He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea." ... 9 About noon the following day ... Peter went up on the roof to pray. 10 He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. 11 He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. 12 It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. 13 Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter.

Kill and eat." 14 "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean." 15 The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." 16 This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven. 17 While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. 18 They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.

[_] The voice of the Holy Spirit can be heard in the Spirit-inspired scriptures.

2 Peter 1

20 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

2 Timothy 3

16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

[_] The guidance of the Spirit can be affirmed by the community of faith.

Acts 13

1 In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. 2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the

work to which I have called them." 3 So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

Ephesians 5

18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit19 Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 3

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

[_] The direction of the Spirit can be heard in wise and discerning counsel.

Proverbs 11

14 For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisers make victory sure.

Proverbs 15

22 Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.

[_] The evidence of the Spirit's prompting is found in life transformation.

Romans 8

5 Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. 6 The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; 7 the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. 8 Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

6 Practical Steps to Cultivate Spiritual Discernment

- 1. Trace the development of your spiritual journey and identify how God had guided or used you in those defining moments.***
- 2. Look for common thread(s) in the various high/low seasons.***
- 3. Be open and sensitive to extraordinary events/circumstances.***
- 4. Search through the scriptures for God's explicit instructions.***
- 5. Consult, share and pray with trusted brothers/sisters in the Lord and/or mature Christ-followers.***
- 6. Answer the Q: "How does this contribute to my love for God and advance kingdom mission?"***