



Holy Spirit - The Gift Giver pt.3

Pastor Ron Carpenter, Jr.

Sermon Recap

In this message, we're taught that the Holy Spirit empowers us, as believers not only to experience God, but to see *as God sees*. The gift of discerning (or distinguishing) of spirits allows us to recognize what is truly happening beneath the surface—whether something is from God, from the enemy, or from our own human heart. Discernment is not about suspicion or judgment, but about wisdom, protection, and alignment with God's purposes. When we walk in discernment, we're able to rule well in both the natural and spiritual realms, avoiding deception and embracing God's plan—even when it comes through difficult seasons.

Group Discussion Questions

The Purpose Of Discernment Is To See As God Sees

Discerning spirits enables believers to look beyond outward appearances and recognize the condition of the heart. God does not evaluate situations the way people do. The Holy Spirit gives us insight, so we don't make decisions based on what looks right.

1. Why is it dangerous to make decisions based on outward appearances? - 1 Samuel 16:6–7
2. How does the Holy Spirit help us recognize what cannot be seen naturally? - 1 Corinthians 2:9–10
3. Can you recall a time when discernment would have saved you from pain or regret? What did you learn from it? - Proverbs 14:12

Discernment Protects Us from Deception

Deception is not simply hearing a lie—it is believing something false to be true. Satan does not always appear obvious; he often masquerades as something good. Discernment helps believers recognize when truth is being twisted or when a spiritual influence is not from God.

1. What is the difference between deception and being lied to? - 2 Corinthians 11:3–4
2. Why is it important to recognize that accurate information can still come from an unholy source? - Acts 16:16–18
3. How can believers guard their hearts and minds against subtle spiritual deception? - Ephesians 6:11–12



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Discernment Helps Us Understand People, Seasons, and Purpose

Not every person who appears helpful is meant to walk with us, and not every painful experience is meant to harm us. Discernment helps us recognize human motives, identify divine purpose in adversity, and understand when God is using difficulty to transition us into a new season.

1. Why is discerning the human spirit just as important as discerning spiritual forces? - 1 Corinthians 2:11
2. How can discernment prevent the wrong people from frustrating God's purpose in our lives? - Ezra 4:1-4
3. Why did Jesus call Judas "friend" but rebuke Peter as Satan—and what does that teach us about discernment? - Matthew 16:22-23; Matthew 26:48-50

Conclusion

Discernment is a gift meant to protect, guide, and prepare believers for greater purpose. Through the Holy Spirit, God reveals what is unseen so we can walk wisely, avoid deception, and embrace His plan—even when it comes through unexpected or painful circumstances. Discernment does not make us suspicious; it makes us spiritually mature, loving, and effective.

Group Challenge

As a group, reflect on decisions, relationships, or seasons where discernment played a role—or was missing. Pray together and ask the Holy Spirit to sharpen your collective spiritual awareness so that your group walks in unity, wisdom, and truth.

Personal Challenge

This week, intentionally slow down before making decisions or responding emotionally. Ask the Holy Spirit daily: "*Show me what You see.*" Commit to trusting His guidance, even when it contradicts appearances or personal comfort.