



# Prophetic Group

UNIT 8: DISCERNMENT

# Activation

- ▶ Ask God, “what percentage of peace you are currently feeling?” (0% to 100%)
- ▶ Ask God, “was my peace stolen or did I give it away?”
- ▶ Ask God, “can I have that peace back?”
  - ▶ Do you need to let go of any disappointment
  - ▶ Release to God any situation or barrier
- ▶ Now what is your peace percentage?



# Core Topics

- ▶ Love God: Abiding, listening, connecting
- ▶ Love Others: Compassion for Others
- ▶ Raised Expectations: Biblical Basis for Prophecy
- ▶ Prophetic protocol and testing
- ▶ Dreaming Biblically
- ▶ Biblical symbolism and imagery
- ▶ Words of Knowledge
- ▶ **Discernment**
- ▶ Corporate prophecy and intercession

# The Gift of Discernment

- ▶ “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to **distinguish between spirits**, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.” 1 Cor 12:7-11
- ▶ Discernment is a spiritual gift distinct from prophecy, words of knowledge, and wisdom
- ▶ spirits: the Spirit of God, the spirit of a person, spirits of evil (demons), angels



# Jesus and Peter

▶ Spirit of God

“Simon Peter replied, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ And Jesus answered him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not **revealed** this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.’” Matt 16:16-17

▶ Satan and things of man

“From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things... and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, ‘Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.’ But he turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the **things of man.**’” Matt 16:21-23

# Test spirits

- ▶ “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but **test** the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that **Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God**, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God.” | John 4:1-3
- ▶ We are to test all human teachers
- ▶ We are to test all spirits: angels and demons
- ▶ We are to test all prophecies and words given



# Spiritual Maturity

- ▶ “for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of **discernment** trained by **constant practice to distinguish good from evil.**” Heb 5:13-14
- ▶ All mature believers have some level of discernment
- ▶ The gift of discernment may be given to a new believer and they may be able to distinguish spirits in a greater measure than the mature believer

# Discernment

- ▶ Most of the Bible clearly states whether it is an angel, demon, or person for the reader. The discernment was already done by the writer.
  - ▶ Balaam and his donkey see an angel
  - ▶ An angel speaks to Ezekiel
  - ▶ Job's afflictions are due to Satan and demons
  - ▶ Jesus casts out demons into pigs
  - ▶ Two angels are at the tomb
  - ▶ At the transfiguration Moses and Elijah appear (human spirits)





# John the Baptist

- ▶ “In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth...For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.” Luke 1:39-44
- ▶ John the Baptist leapt with joy when Jesus came near, even though they could not physically see each other.

# No Discernment

- ▶ “Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him,... And the chains fell off his hands.... And he went out and followed him.... [Peter] went to the house of Mary, where many were gathered together and were praying. And when he knocked ...a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. Recognizing Peter's voice, in her joy she did not open the gate but ran in and reported that Peter was standing at the gate. They said to her, “**You are out of your mind**” ... “**It is his angel!**” But Peter continued knocking, and when they opened, they saw him and were amazed.” – Acts 12:6-16
- ▶ Discern between man's spirit and an angel

# Jesus

- ▶ Bible example:

And immediately Jesus, **perceiving in his spirit** that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, “Why do you question these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk’? Mark 2:8

- ▶ Jesus perceived what they questioned in their hearts

# Testing the message

- ▶ “...the angel Gabriel was sent from God... [to] the virgin's name was Mary. ... And the angel said to her, “...you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus... And Mary said to the angel, “**How will this be, since I am a virgin?**” And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you... And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.” Luke 1:26-37
- ▶ “And Zechariah said to the angel, “**How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.**” And the angel answered him, ‘I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God,... you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words...’” Luke 18-20

# Discernment

- ▶ “But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their **senses** trained to discern good and evil.” Heb 5:14 NASB
  - ▶ Eyes (physically or minds eye), ears, taste, touch, smell, emotions
  - ▶ May feel great peace in an atmosphere of worship
  - ▶ May physically see angels or demons and what they are doing
  - ▶ May physically feel a spirit of infirmity on someone sitting next to you
  - ▶ May hear in your mind what a demon is saying over someone
  - ▶ May feel bad electricity in your body
  - ▶ May feel agitated in your emotions when walking into a store with certain items
  - ▶ May smell good wine and flowers or rot and death when no one else does
  - ▶ You may see items that are spiritual in nature highlighted

# Discernment

- ▶ Discernment is information that comes from the Holy Spirit
- ▶ It is not about how someone dresses or carries themselves or how an object looks (sometimes it is just a benign really ugly doll)
- ▶ Never use discernment to be suspicious of people (always love)
  - ▶ Demons sometimes follow people to harass them and that person is successfully resisting that sin
  - ▶ Do pay attention to real warnings that God gives

# Discernment

- ▶ “And it is my prayer that your **love may abound** more and more, with knowledge and all **discernment**, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ” Phil 1:9-10
  - ▶ How we show love is determined by discernment
- ▶ Jesus only healed and delivered those that came to Him
- ▶ Jesus interacted very differently with the Pharisees than with the people He ministered to
- ▶ We are not responsible for dealing with every spirit we encounter





# Discern God

- ▶ “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may **discern** what is the will of God, **what is good and acceptable and perfect.**” Romans 12:2
- ▶ We are to discern what is of God that comes through our mind

# Test Yourself

- ▶ “Let a person **examine himself**, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.” – I Cor 11:28
- ▶ “Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. **Test yourselves**. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!” II Cor 13:5
- ▶ “I say this not as a command, but to **prove** by the earnestness of others that your **love** also is genuine.” – II Cor 8:8

# Test Works

- ▶ “But let each one **test** his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor.” Gal 6:4
- ▶ “Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to **discern** what is **pleasing to the Lord**. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.” Eph 5:9-11
- ▶ “each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will **test** what sort of **work** each one has done.” – 1 Cor 3:13

# Test Ministers and Times

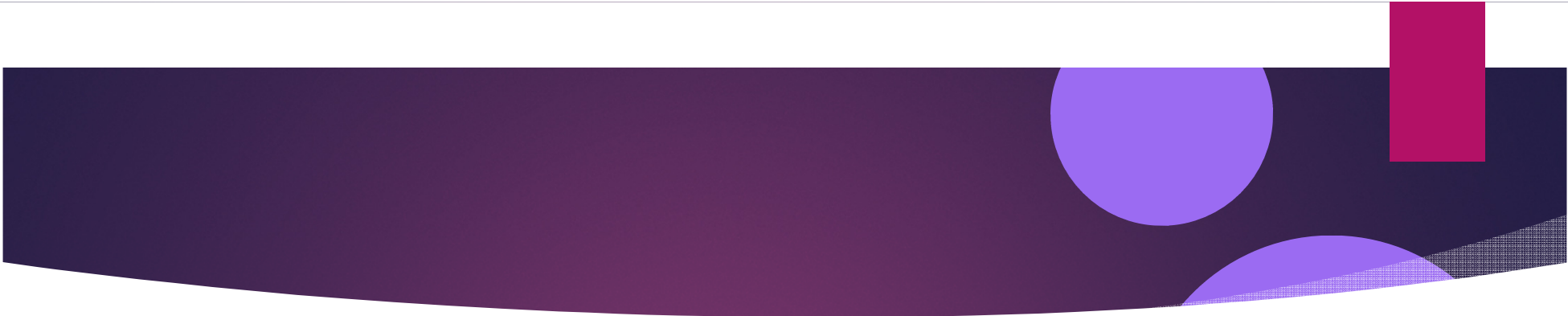
- ▶ Times: “You hypocrites! You know how to interpret (discern) the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to **interpret** (discern) the present **time**?” Luke 12:56
- ▶ “And let them also be **tested** first; then let them serve as **deacons** if they prove themselves blameless.” – I Tim 3:10
- ▶ “And when I arrive, I will send those whom you **accredit** by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem.” – I Cor 16:3
- ▶ “And with them we are sending our **brother** whom we have often **tested** and found earnest in many matters, but who is now more earnest than ever because of his great confidence in you.” II Cor 8:22

# Test Prophecy

- ▶ “Do not despise prophecies, but **test** everything; hold fast what is good.” I Thes 5:20-21
- ▶ “Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others **weigh** what is said.” I Cor 14:29
- ▶ Is it from God, an evil spirit, or the human spirit?
- ▶ Those with the gift of discernment may have an easier time testing prophecy. But we all should have some measure of discernment.

# Activation

- ▶ Have you ever discerned an angel? How did you sense it? See it, feel it, know it was there, hear it, interact in a dream?
- ▶ Have you ever thrown away an object that did not feel right?
- ▶ Do you ever feel emotions (anger, angst, joy) as you walk past someone or a place?
- ▶ Have you ever felt what a group of people was feeling or thinking and been able to address them?
- ▶ What is a way you desire to encounter God? Smell Him, see Him, feel His presence





# Distinguishing spirits

- ▶ How detailed do you sense it?
  - ▶ Angels: messengers, worshippers, warriors, carrying assignments or items, colors or lights
  - ▶ Demons: type, depression/anger/infirmity, may also have items
  - ▶ Human: light or dark spirit, their giftings or mix of gifts, see spiritual clothing, spiritual items (like a sword), spiritual colors
  - ▶ God: His Spirit, what He is doing, what His heart is



# Spirit Symbolism (Dreams)

- ▶ Jesus – lion, faceless person, Prince, man in white
- ▶ Father – narrator voice, audible voice, a father
- ▶ Spirit – dove, oil, glory, gold or yellow hue, rainbow, a woman
- ▶ Angels – people, lights, angel, warriors, message deliverers / mailmen, wisdom givers, narrators
- ▶ Demons- people, clothed in light, dark shadows, monsters, animals, dead relatives
  
- ▶ Dead people (or ghosts) – almost always demons



## Dream example

In a dream, a person encountered a group of spiritual beings. They were dressed in colorful clothes and were portraying themselves as helper spirits. The person in the dream thought something was not quite right and administered a test. “Sit, in the authority of Jesus Name.” Every spiritual being sits. “Do you believe Jesus came in the flesh?” A few said “yes” and a few said “no.” The ones that said no, were sent out in the authority of Jesus Name. A second question was asked, “was Jesus raised from the dead?” There were pauses and silence, a “I don’t know” and a few “no” answers. The person discerns they are all demons and sends them all away in the authority of Jesus.

In other dreams, the “risen Jesus” provokes demons



## Example- highlighted objects

A person had a dream where they entered a home and there were many idols and new age items on a set of shelves.

The next day the person went to a new friend's house. As they entered, the same type of objects were highlighted and seemed to be so visually overwhelming, as though they were in their face.

A week later they went back to this friend's house and with their natural eyes could barely pick out the 2-3 items in the friends house in amongst the books and other benign items.

- ▶ In the Bible, the people are consistently told to destroy the idols in the land and in Acts they burn all their books containing witchcraft

## Example

- ▶ A church set up stations around the building for an indoor prayer walk for different missionaries and countries. Items were set up and maps of the areas to pray for at each station. A person entered the church building that night and was immediately aware of several demons that seemed to be visiting. This person did not know about the prayer stations. Later they encountered some items that were idols and ritual objects from other religions.



# Impartation

There was a young man in a home group. They were all desiring more spiritual gifts and he wanted more discernment. He had gone through a troubled time and nearly committed suicide a few years earlier but was now changed by Christ. He asked someone with the gift of discernment for the laying on of hands and impartation.

Later that night he drove home to a part of town that was known for witchcraft and a lot of darkness. As he drove into that neighborhood he sensed very tangibly a spirit of death for the first time in his life. It really scared him. He went back and relayed all of this to the person that had prayed for him. He was told, that spirit has been there in that magnitude a long time but that night was the first time he noticed or felt it. And that he had already overcome it some years ago in Christ with evidence that he was no longer suicidal.