

Daily Devotional, November 12, 2021 Using the Gift of Discernment

Dear friends, 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. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. 1 John 4:1-2 (NIV)

One of the many spiritual gifts God gives to God's people is spiritual discernment. God's Spirit is at work in us to help us know what truth is and what is error, what is from God and what opposes God. In the time of Christ there were many false prophets and false messiahs speaking lies and claiming to be what they were not. "Do not let them lead you astray," Jesus cautioned.

The message in these verses is about an important and timeless task for God's people: the ability to discern right from wrong, good from bad, truth from falsehood. Being able to discern lies from truth and those who lie from those who tell the truth continues to be a high calling for God's people today. Seeking truth is vital to our faith and our witness to others.

Many years ago, when I was a young teen, I recall asking my parents if I could go parachuting with some friends. It was one of those teenage ventures that was beyond my years and experience, and in truth, I was a little afraid of going. Still, I asked for permission to go. "We'll talk about it" my parents told me. Sometime later my mother said "Your father and I talked about it and we decided that we don't think it's a good idea for you to do this. But we are not going to stop you from going. We'll let you make your own decision. And we know you'll make a good decision." End of story. I didn't go.

So much of life is about in whom or what we believe and why. So much that matters comes down to the decisions we make and the paths we choose or the ones that we avoid. In a word, life is defined by one of our most important callings: discernment. I believe that faithful discernment requires reliable sources of information, seeking wise council from faithful mentors, praying for God's direction, and keeping an open mind and open heart to discern God's will.

Prayer: God of grace and truth, you call me to love you with all my mind and all my heart and to follow in the way of Jesus Christ. Give me a deep desire to seek your will and the courage to do it. Amen.