



[1 Corinthians 12:10](#)

(10) to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.

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To discern spirits is a supernatural ability enabled by God's [Holy Spirit](#) that allows a person to determine the source of a spiritual manifestation, whether it emanates from [God](#), the Devil, [the world](#), or man. If we have this gift, God will reveal information about the presence or absence of spiritual entities. Usually, people regard this gift as useful to detect evil spiritual forces or influences. It can also detect the presence or absence of angelic intervention or the prompts of God's Holy Spirit working within us.

The apostle John writes in [1 John 4:1](#), "Beloved do not believe every spirit, but test [try] the spirits, whether they are of God; because many [false prophets](#) have gone out into the world." We are commanded to examine thoroughly any spiritual teaching with our critical faculties to see whether the presenter is handling the Word of God accurately. Because evil spirits have the capacity to produce paranormal phenomena, the Scriptures exhort us to prove or test the spirits, proving all things, holding fast only to what is good ([1 Thessalonians 5:21](#)).

It is highly imperative that we use our God-given reasoning and understanding in doing this, but we should not rely exclusively on our intellect. Likewise, it is unwise to allow our inward feelings to sway us, but we should seek the guidance of God's Holy Spirit. Undoubtedly, the most reliable guide concerning the testing of Spirits would be the Scriptures. We know that God's Word—the Bible—is [truth](#) ([John 17:17](#)).

We must remember that just reading or mumbling God's Word without understanding is next to useless. We have leaders who eloquently read teleprompters but have not the foggiest notion of what they are saying. Likewise, reading the Word of God without understanding makes us a spiritual "empty suit." Reading God's Word with

The Berean: Daily Verse and Commentary for 1 Corinthians 12:10 (<http://www.theberean.org>) understanding via the Holy Spirit enables us to tap into the spiritual realm, know "the things of God," and make right judgments ([1 Corinthians 2:10-16](#)).

— David F. Maas

To learn more, see:

[The Gift of Discerning Spirits](#)

Related Topics:

[Discerning Good and Evil](#)

[Discerning the Spirits](#)

[God's Commandments Provide Understanding](#)

[Proving All Things](#)

[Testing the Spirits](#)

[Understanding](#)

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