



Daily Verse and Comment

1 Corinthians 12:7-11

(7) Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. (8) To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, (9) to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, (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. (11) All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

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Reading through this list, we may think, “I don't have any of these!” Quite frankly, we may have seen few of these actually exercised over our years attending the church. We may have never even seen a miracle or a healing with our own eyes or heard anyone get prophecy right, at least not yet. How about the word of [wisdom](#) or the word of knowledge? We may have witnessed a little more of those than we realize, not being “tuned in” enough to recognize it!

What about the gift of discernment, or as it reads in the passage, “discerning of spirits”? *The New Testament in Modern English* by J.B. Phillips paraphrases Paul's expression as “the ability to discriminate in spiritual matters.” This latter phrasing seems to be a more precise expression of what Paul means—not just the ability to detect evil spirits but to distinguish between the spiritually positive and negative.

Dictionaries like Wikipedia define *discernment* as

the ability to obtain sharp perceptions or to judge well. In the case of judgment, discernment can be psychological, moral, or aesthetic

in nature. . . . Christian spiritual discernment can be separated from other types of discernment because every decision is to be made in accordance with God's will. The fundamental definition for Christian discernment is a decision making process in which an individual makes a discovery that can lead to future action.

This description of discernment emphasizes making correct decisions that proceed to wise actions.

Of the verb form (*diakrino*, *Strong's* #1252) of the word Paul uses in [1 Corinthians 12:10](#), *Strong's Concordance* comments, “to separate thoroughly, i.e. (literally and reflexively) to withdraw from, or (by implication) oppose; figuratively, to discriminate (by implication, decide), . . . contend, . . . , discern, doubt, judge, be partial, stagger, waver.” Discerning is a matter of separating, discriminating, evaluating, and judging, and once done, a person either approves or opposes the subject of his discernment.

In our society, words like “discriminate” and “judge” are considered almost taboo, but the truth is that we must make judgments all the time. What would be the point of discernment if it does not lead to a judgment? In Solomon's prayer before [God](#) in [1 Kings 3:9](#), he asks for discernment between good and evil so he could judge God's people. God, pleased with both the humility and good sense of his prayer, rewarded Solomon immensely.

— Ronny H. Graham

To learn more, see:

[**The Gift of Discernment and Godly Love**](#)

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