



Free Listening Hearts Program Materials

A Primer on Spiritual Discernment: Topic 8

Signs of the Spirit

In spiritual discernment, when a good way forward starts to dawn, there remains the question, “Is it God that is speaking or is it some other spirit, some other voice?” The way to evaluate this is to look for signs of the Spirit that manifested themselves as the discernment was unfolding.

- **Peace:** There is only one sign that must always be experienced in order to bring the discernment to a conclusion. That sign is a **deep peace**—not to be confused with a false peace that comes from glossing over differences and unresolved concerns, creating a superficial sense of harmony and well-being. With the peace of God, a profound calm settles in deep down after all of the turbulence and turmoil associated with the situation has been prayerfully confronted. If any feelings of agitation linger, that is a negative sign that indicates a need to continue focused discernment.

Some other signs to look for:

- **Convergence:** Various things that occurred independently and at different times, and heretofore had not seemed to be related to one another, all of a sudden converge and fit together, informing one another.
- **Persistence:** The same message keeps coming through unrelated channels and in different ways.
- **Tears that do not fatigue:** These are the cleansing tears of the Spirit, so even if you cry hard and long, you do not feel tired.
- **Disorientation, followed by a sense of clarity:** This occurs when a previous comprehension of truth gets shaken up and a higher truth falls into place.
- **Sudden sense of clarity:** Totally unanticipated, all of a sudden something significant becomes clear in a vivid way.
- **Joy:** Radiance swells up from within you and anyone else who is engaged.
- **Energy!:** If we are getting the message right, we are infused with the energy to act on it. If we think we are called to do something, but we have no energy to do it and would have to force ourselves to do anything, we may have the general idea right, but

something is askew. Some aspect of what we are hearing must be incomplete or slightly off course. That means we need to take additional time and continue with the discernment.

Signs of the Spirit point the direction. They do not provide a roadmap. To the extent that we continue to walk with God, we will keep moving in the right direction. As we cultivate a life of discernment, the divine light continues to illuminate the path ahead, casting light on any missteps and revealing the way forward.

We can never be certain that we are hearing God correctly. It is unlikely that all the signs will be present in any given circumstance. We interpret signals as ably as we can, and move forward to act on what we believe God is asking of us, always listening and asking God to continue to guide us

– Farnham, Hull, and McLean, *Grounded in God*, pp. 29 & 30