JANE HAMON

FOREWORD BY CHUCK D. PIERCE

DISCERNMENT

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO HEARING THE VOICE OF GOD
For Tom

You are such a gift to me! Thank you for all the support, strength and wisdom you have given me as we have served the Lord together. I am so blessed to be married to a man who loves me unconditionally, loves God passionately and encourages me to be strong and courageous in all I do. I love doing life, family and ministry with you!

Serving Each Other,
Together Serving the Lord!
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Once you are a child of God, you can be anointed by God. The enemy, however, longs to keep your spirit encased. In Hebrews 4:12 we find that “the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” By living in communion with God and knowing His Word, we can actually increase in discernment. Discernment is a function in the intuition of our spirit. This is a time when we must discern that we are going to be victorious in the earth. *Discernment: The Essential Guide to Hearing the Voice of God* by Jane Hamon is a critical tool for the days ahead to help us maneuver strategically through the times that are on the horizon. Jane is like a sister to me, and I have been privileged to minister with her and her husband, Tom, throughout the last few decades. She is an incredible speaker, leader and author, and her newest book could not be more timely.

**Training Our Senses**

Every time I have received a vision of the future, the Lord has also spoken words that have given me courage.
“But, Lord, I do not have the ability to discern at this level,” I have often said.

And each time, it was as if the Lord replied that I did not have a choice.

*Discipline yourself in the Word and exercise My Spirit within your spirit*, He would say, *for it will take both Word and Spirit to cause the reality of Me to be seen in the days ahead.*

If we quench the Holy Spirit in our lives, or if we do not wash ourselves with the written Word, we will fall out of spiritual balance and open ourselves to delusion. Under those conditions we will never reach the level of discernment we will need for the critical times ahead.

A dichotomy between good and evil is forming in almost every arena of life; there will be a fine line of division regarding how we discern. We must train our senses to discern good and evil. Hebrews 5:14 says, “Solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

We discern by the Word and the Spirit. That means for many of us that the Word of God must come alive again! This is my greatest concern for the generations that are arising. I do not see that the foundation of the Word has been built within them. The enemy will attempt, therefore, to counterfeit spiritual dynamics. We must know both Word and Spirit. I also see that those who have been involved in the cessationist philosophy (which says that God quit demonstrating His power centuries back) will have a difficult time in days ahead. There will be certain circumstances that we will be able to know, see and discern only by the Spirit.

**The Discernment War!**

Allow me to share a dream that one of my mentors, Lacelia Henderson, had many years ago. The dream has stuck with
me through the years, probably because it seems more relevant now than ever!

In the dream I had gone with friends (Charles and Charlene) to a cabin they had in the woods. We were dressed for bed when someone knocked at the door. Charlene started to answer the door, and I waited in the bedroom. I said I would hide back there while she answered the door. If it was a friend I would come out, and if it was not I would jump out the window and run for help.

When she opened the door, men came in who were dressed in Army fatigues. They came in like the Gestapo and took the place by storm (captured it). In the meantime I had jumped out of the window in my nightgown. When they saw the open window they knew that I had escaped. Some of them ran outside and got in a vehicle (like a jeep) to look for me. It was very, very dark. I was alone and vulnerable (in my nightgown). Their eyes were piercing as they scanned to and fro, trying to spot me. When they were not looking my way I would run from tree to tree. It was all very intense, and I had little time to get behind the next tree before they looked back my way each time.

Finally, I came to a clearing and saw some houses. But I knew that I had to choose carefully which house to run to. It had to be someone who knew me and trusted me. I knew that once I stepped out into the clearing I would be spotted. I also knew that when I ran to a house to use the telephone to call for help, I would not have time to explain the situation in order to get permission to use the telephone. If I took time to explain, I would be caught and stopped by the enemy. Once I got to the house I had to be able to run straight to the phone to make the call for help.

This dream reveals to us the war ahead over discernment. We will have to know when to hide ourselves, when to come forth boldly with a word, when to run, when to fall, when to stand, when to make our way through a crowd, when to embrace...
Foreword

revelation (and when not to!), when to be quiet and when to release the sound of the Lord loudly.

Discernment means that we will rightly divide the complexity of the events around us and choose the best way to advance. Discernment and faith work hand in hand. Continuous exercising of faith causes you to come to full age or maturity. You learn to divide between sound and unsound stimuli. This allows you to act with proper conduct and avoid misconduct on your path of life. You will hear a word from behind or recognize His voice inside of you. You must heed that call and obey.

Jane’s book could not be a better resource to help you hear the voice of God. Discernment will help you develop a thought process and spiritual awareness that will cause you to walk in triumph in the days ahead.

Dr. Chuck D. Pierce, president, Global Spheres, Inc.; president, Glory of Zion International Ministries
INTRODUCTION

Have you ever been in a situation where everything looked right but felt wrong? Or have you ever met someone others admire and promote, yet about whom you have a deep sense of unease? Have you ever had a foreboding nightmare that you blamed on last night’s pizza, but you cannot shake the feeling that God was trying to show you something important? Have you sensed the presence of angels or demons? Or have you ever been overwhelmed by the presence of the Lord and heard His voice at an unusual time or in an unusual setting?

As a prophetic person, I have learned that God loves to speak to us to help us navigate life with victory as we discern both His plans and the plans of darkness. His voice directs, comforts and empowers us and provides every necessary insight for us to accomplish our divine assignments, to confront dark powers and to live lives that are pleasing to Him.

For more than 35 years I have operated in discerning of spirits, which is one of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit given to believers. As a young prophet, I received several prophetic words that indicated God had given me this gift as part of my prophetic gift mix; however, I never heard any specific teaching
on the subject. I did not know anyone who operated fluently in this gift, or who could explain its dynamics or function, or who could teach me to activate it in such a way as to be a blessing to others. I lacked any kind of paradigm for what discernment actually is.

Sure, I would have a gut reaction to certain people and want to avoid them and know not to trust them. Or I would be in beautiful places that should evoke feelings of peace and security but, rather, caused me to experience internal distress due to a sense of darkness and danger. But I never thought of this as discerning the voice of God. On some occasions I saw demons manifest in my room but did not know this was discerning of spirits. In my earliest walk with God, I recognized the Spirit of God and His presence as I sensed, felt, heard and experienced His reality, but never did I realize that this was another aspect of discernment. On more than one occasion I knew angels were present to protect me, even seeing them intervene in dangerous situations, but I had no paradigm about the reality of the surrounding spirit realm.

There were no books on this specific subject to help me identify the things I was seeing and sensing. I found a few that discussed the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit, yet to me it seemed the sections about discernment were generalized or mystical.

My Journey Begins

In the late 1980s, our ministry, Christian International, was pioneering the prophetic movement and activating believers to hear the voice of the Lord. My husband, Tom, and I had started a church at our home base in Florida under the covering and direction of his father and mother, Bishop Bill and Evelyn “Mom” Hamon, along with other family members and friends. It was an exciting time as God began to emphasize the ministry office gift of the prophet. Believers were discovering that God
did not speak solely to prophets and pastors, but that everyone could hear His voice. Our ministry led the way in what became a worldwide prophetic movement. Our church began to grow, as did our ministry staff.

During this time I met a person, whom I will call Jamie, who seemed to be gifted in many areas and attended prayer meetings and church services regularly. But there was something about Jamie that concerned me, that gave me an uncomfortable feeling. If asked, I could not have told you what it was that bothered me. Jamie had a warm smile and many friends, and seemed to love the Lord.

Then I learned that Jamie had announced plans to start a ministry and had convinced several others to join the endeavor. I saw an obvious ability to connect well with other people, but unfortunately, Jamie stole their hearts away by poisoning them with lies and suspicions about church leadership. I was right not to be trusting, and all my feelings were confirmed by Jamie’s bad behavior.

In a confidential setting with Bishop Hamon and other team members, hoping to learn from the experience, I explained about the feelings I had whenever I encountered Jamie. I had no language for what I was sensing so I just blurted, “I never really liked or trusted Jamie! I felt this was a person who would do harm.” (I have since learned that prophecy is not about what I am “feeling” on a soul level, but about the way God uses our souls to alert us to issues needing to be discerned.)

As Bishop Hamon asked me further about the experience, and why I had not expressed my concerns, I explained that I was raised with the saying “If you can’t say something nice, don’t say anything at all.” I did not want to be guilty of being critical, judgmental or gossipy about someone else. So I said nothing. But God had given me discernment about what was happening so I could pray and perhaps help other people not be hurt or led away by Jamie’s seduction.
Activation

That day, Bishop reminded me that I had received prophecies about having the gift of discernment. One of the prophetic words declared that God had anointed me as a watchman, saying that I would “see the snake and see the wolf.” He suggested that the ministry leaders “lay hands” on me, a biblical practice described in 1 Timothy 4:14, and activate this gift fully so I could have eyes to see and ears to hear what I needed to discern for the Body of Christ—as well as for our ministry. So Bishop Hamon, my spiritual father and father-in-law, laid hands on me and activated that gift to another level of function. Within days I began to see, hear and sense more clearly demonic spirits that were present and operating around us. I heard conversations in the spirit realm. I saw impure motives and activities in people’s lives that showed no visible signs in the natural realm.

To be honest, it was completely overwhelming and a bit unnerving. I love people! Generally I trust people. But sometimes I would hug someone at church and see or sense all kinds of dark or impure things. I did not like what I was experiencing—so I went back to Bishop Hamon and asked him to lay his hands on me again and take the gift back!

But rather than do that, he explained that gifts are given by the Holy Spirit to edify the Body of Christ. He challenged me to receive this gift of discernment as an aspect of the voice of God—a gift meant to be used as a blessing and a building tool for the Church. I would need to learn how to manage this gift with grace. He also encouraged me to remember that he and Tom would always help me walk in wisdom with what I heard and saw. I love leaders who are committed to bringing out the best in people!

Discerning Demonic Assignments

Not long after this, our ministry faced a number of difficult challenges. Finances began drying up; many people in our
church suddenly faced bouts of discouragement; accidents were occurring; various sicknesses were spreading. In the midst of this, our team of intercessors began having dreams of spiritual warfare. It became apparent that we were undergoing a spiritual attack.

Finally, one morning, prayer partners from around the nation began calling to tell me that God was showing them the battle we were fighting. By noon I had received six phone calls from intercessors who all used similar words to describe the demonic assignment we were dealing with: oppression, deception, defrauding and division.

I took this information to Bishop Hamon. He challenged me to “go behind the veil in the spirit” and press in to see if the Lord would give me the specific name of this demonic assignment.

I looked at him in disbelief. “I don’t know how to do that!” I said.

He told me basically that “going behind the veil” meant praying in tongues, stirring up the gift, activating the gift and listening. He said that when I followed these suggestions God would speak.

This sounded to me like an oversimplified statement of a complicated process. Besides, seeking the name of a demonic assignment seemed a little bit weird to me; I have never wanted to be weird or spooky spiritually. Nevertheless, I did as he asked—and God spoke very clearly to me.

Now, in case you have a picture in your mind of what “going behind the veil” might look like, I want to share the environment in which the Lord spoke. When I tell people about this, they usually ask: “Did you fast and pray for days? Did you shut yourself into your prayer closet with God for hours? Did you have an ‘out of body’ experience?” The short answer is no. Though those are all valid ways to press into the presence of the Lord to hear His voice, that is not what happened.
Introduction

Instead, I was driving my three children and my neighbor’s three children into town, a 45-minute ride, to do some shopping. I had six children under the age of six in my van, it was pouring down rain, and my windshield kept fogging up. While they listened to children’s music, I began praying and asking God how this was going to work. How would I get the name of a demonic spirit?

Honestly, what I was saying was, “Lord, I am not sure I even believe in doing this. It seems kind of strange. But if You want to speak the name of this demonic spirit to me, I will listen.” It was not a great prayer of faith and power!

Suddenly, I heard a name. I did not hear it audibly, but I heard it very clearly with my spiritual ears. It seemed strange. I had recently read a Christian novel, This Present Darkness by Frank Peretti, that had a plot regarding the activity of dark spiritual forces affecting a small town. What I was hearing seemed like a page out of one of his chapters. In my uncertainty I leaned forward and wrote the name I heard in the fog on my windshield and stared at it as I drove.

This is just strange, I thought. How do I even know this is right?

I decided to pull into a Christian bookstore and see if I could find any reference to this unusual name. With the six young children under tow, I walked into the store, pulled a Strong’s concordance from the shelf and began to look up the word phonetically.

The name I heard was Tokamene. Strange, right? But when I looked it up I found a combination of two Hebrew words: tok, which means “injury, to oppress, to deceive, to divide and to defraud,” and mene, which means “numbered” and comes from a root meaning “being assigned or appointed.” God was telling me the name of the demon assigned to injure us, oppress us, deceive us, divide us and defraud us!

Quickly I loaded the kids back into the car, finished my errands and went home to discuss a strategy for prayer with Tom,
Bishop and other leaders. We took time that week to fast, pray and do spiritual warfare against this demonic assignment. We saw tangible results of breakthrough immediately.

One other note about this experience. Did we have to have the exact name of the spirit in order to break this assignment against us? I think not. But I can tell you that our faith was engaged knowing we were receiving from heaven the battle strategies and insight we needed.

**Learning to Discern**

In the beginning I made a lot of mistakes, not necessarily in what I was seeing or hearing but in keeping my heart right. It was easy to become judgmental and critical from what I was hearing God say. I had to learn to discern what came from my soul and what came from the Holy Spirit. I had to learn that sometimes my own opinions got involved and blocked me from seeing what was occurring in the spiritual realm or in the natural realm. Ephesians 1:17 speaks of having a spirit of revelation but also a spirit of wisdom. I had a lot to learn and great leaders around me to help me grow in grace and wisdom.

At times, I felt overwhelmed by what I was seeing or overburdened by the responsibility of the revelations. What was I supposed to do with everything God was showing me? Many times I became frustrated and said or did the wrong thing. There were times when I simply wanted to ignore the gift or close my spiritual ears to the voice of God because I dreaded making a mistake on such important matters.

Others with the gift of discerning of spirits express similar challenges. Some shut down the operation of this gift in their lives because they grow frustrated with seeing things in the Spirit when they have no idea of what to do with that information. The internal pressure of receiving a flood of revelation without any strategy for its use is overwhelming. Others shut it
down because they made mistakes with some of the information they received. Those bad experiences hurt people or led to misunderstandings with leaders in their churches.

It is imperative for people with discernment revelation to pursue the balancing anointing of wisdom that Paul spoke about when he prayed for the church at Ephesus. This was written to a first-century church planted right in the heart of a city that was the center of the known world for goddess worship, magic and occult training. If anyone needed discernment it was these believers. He wrote:

[I pray] that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; ... according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

Ephesians 1:17–21

The truth is, we are living in such critical times today that it is imperative for believers to learn to know the voice of God and be able to function in every tool given to us by the Holy Spirit. We are called to be Kingdom influencers—not only to discern angels and demons but also to discern the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to discern the times in which we live and to prophesy His words as He directs us.

Spiritual discernment gives us a strategic advantage to win every battle. It releases divine intelligence from God’s heavenly command center in order for us to identify our foe and overcome in this world. Our mission is to push back the gates of hell and advance the Kingdom of God. To accomplish this assignment, God has given every believer the supernatural ability to
operate with “Holy Spirit radar” to see and sense things in the unseen realm. John 7:24 tells us to “look beneath the surface so you can judge correctly” (NLT). Hidden things are revealed so the Church can come to a greater place of authority, health and liberty; it is possible even for regions in the earth to be set free.

God is challenging His prophetic people—for, as we will see, we are all called to be prophetic—to be equipped with this exciting, multidimensional anointing for breakthrough. Spiritual discernment is not just about discerning demons and demonic strongholds, although it does offer a clear perspective on activity in the spirit realm. But it will also reveal strategies by which those strongholds are dismantled and destroyed. It will give insight for discerning angelic interactions with man and show how to respond to the movement of angel armies between heaven and earth. It will highlight hidden motives of the human soul that can deceive the unsuspecting and disrupt God’s plan. Discernment, when coupled with wisdom, enables us to perceive the move of the Holy Spirit and align ourselves with His Kingdom purpose. This enables us to recognize and resist evil and be empowered to triumph in every spiritual battle.

Discernment is not a sideline issue with God but is the very manifestation of the counsel of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

My prayer is that this book will shine the light of God’s Word on the function and operation of this important gift of discernment in your life and bring you to a new dimension of discerning the voice of God. My heart is that God will allow my personal growth experiences to be of benefit to you in the sphere of our culture where God is equipping you to advance His Kingdom. The voice of the Lord brings life, freedom, hope and deliverance every time. May God’s Spirit of wisdom and revelation empower you to have eyes to see and ears to hear what He is saying to His Church today.
The voice of the Lord is powerful.
Psalm 29:4

My husband, Tom, and I were attending a local Christian business leaders’ meeting when I looked across the room and saw friends, a couple, who were successful real estate brokers. They were amazing! During the economic recession they managed to position themselves to prosper by listening to the voice of the Lord. While others had to close their businesses, they managed to grow and increase during one of the most difficult financial downturns of modern day.

I waved at them and suddenly heard the Lord say, Go over there and break the spirit of robbery off their lives and business.

To be honest, I actually argued with God!
Lord, really? A spirit of robbery? They seem so blessed and prosperous. They are an amazing example of how You bless even during hard times.

I heard God respond to my argument: Shhhh! Just go do it!

I understood immediately that I did not have all the facts about what was going on in their lives—and He did.

So with a quick word to Tom, I walked over to them. After hugging and greeting them I explained what God had spoken to me. I was to break off a spirit of robbery.

They looked at one another and then responded to me. “Is that what is happening? Wow! We have been doing business for 35 years and God has always led us to prosper. But over the last five weeks everything has gone wrong. We have had issues with our staff, and with our family—and every time we have prepared to come to the closing table something has gone wrong, and we have lost the deal. As a matter of fact, we have lost almost five and a half million dollars of sales in the last five weeks.”

I explained that God was revealing the source of their troubles. It was not because they were doing something wrong; it was because a spirit of robbery was resisting them. I said that we had the authority through the name of Jesus and the power of His Word to break off the demonic assignment. We prayed together, and I spoke aloud Exodus 22:7 (NIV) as a decree, which says, “The thief, if caught, must pay back double.”

Six weeks after this conversation, the couple called to say that since our prayer they had finalized more than eleven million dollars’ worth of sales, a double portion of what was stolen from them! God was faithful to His Word to restore double. Isaiah 61:7 (MESSAGE) says, “Because you got a double dose of trouble and more than your share of contempt, your inheritance in the land will be doubled and your joy go on forever.” God gave them double for their trouble.

How did this breakthrough come? It came by hearing the voice of God as He provided insight and discernment in a situation I
knew nothing about. His voice gives us answers from the supernatural realm that bring a tangible release of breakthrough in the natural realm.

My initial response of questioning what I heard from God is, sadly, the case of how we often limit ourselves by looking to the natural realm for what we see, hear and know. Discerning God’s voice and the strategies of the enemy unlocks unlimited potential for believers to experience victory and freedom—and, like that couple, we can even expect a double-portion restoration of all that has been stolen by the “thief.”

Jesus says, “The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life and have it in abundance (to the full, until it overflows)” (John 10:10 AMP). The Greek word for _abundant life_ means “superabundant in quantity, superior in quality, exceedingly abundant above, beyond measure, more, more eminent, more remarkable, more excellent, more than necessary, super-added.” Wow! This promise from God’s Word encourages us with what we can expect when we hear the voice of God and discern the work of the thief, the source of our troubles.

. . . And They Shall Prophesy

Before I was in a position to receive clear discernment to help this couple, it was first necessary to lay a foundation in my life regarding hearing the voice of the Lord. I had spent most of my walk with God learning to tune my ear to His voice and to prophesy what I heard Him say. Prophecy sounds like a deep and complicated spiritual concept, but it merely means hearing what God says and speaking it out loud. When we prophesy and release the words of God, we are not speaking words of information for people to hear and process with their natural minds. Rather, we are declaring powerful, creative “God-words” of impartation that have the ability to shift
spiritual atmospheres, release light and life and drive out darkness.

In Jesus’ last words to His disciples before He ascended into heaven, He told them to go back to Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father, for “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you” (Acts 1:8 NLT). The word power is the Greek word dunamis, which means “a force, miraculous power, a miracle itself, strength, worker of miracles.” When we receive the power or force from the Holy Spirit within us, it gives us the ability not just to work miracles but also to live supernatural lifestyles, filled with His explosive might and strength.

Acts 2 then tells the story of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon those waiting in the Upper Room. Peter declared what was happening by quoting Joel 2:28–29:

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy.”

Acts 2:17–18

As we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we can all prophesy! Prophecy, dreams and visions are part of the promise of the Father that Jesus gave His Church to fulfill our commission in the earth. We are told to desire to prophesy (see 1 Corinthians 14:39); that we can prophesy one by one (see 1 Corinthians 14:31); and that we are to desire spiritual gifts but especially that we may prophesy (see 1 Corinthians 14:1).

We are also taught that we can prophesy according to the proportion of our faith (see Romans 12:6), even though we know only in part and prophesy in part (see 1 Corinthians 13:9). First Corinthians 14:3–4 says that prophecy is for edification, exhorta-
Hearing the Voice of God

tion and comfort, and it builds up the Church. Revelation 19:10 teaches us that “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” What a powerful gift God has given to us by the Holy Spirit to enable us to fulfill His Kingdom purposes in the earth!

The Voice of the Lord Is Powerful

God’s voice is a force. His Word has the power to move immovable circumstances and to transform situations. When we discern prophetically and then speak what God is revealing, that word has the power to heal, deliver and set free.

Scripture declares that “the voice of the Lord is powerful” (Psalm 29:4). The Hebrew word for powerful is koakh, which means “force, might, strength and wealth.” When God speaks, things happen. Blockages are removed, hindrances are destroyed and blessings are released. Scripture also tells us that “the voice of the Lord will shatter Assyria [the enemy]” (Isaiah 30:31 NIV). Declaring what God says causes the powers of darkness to be crushed, and people and lands to be delivered. Jesus said, “The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live” (John 5:25). The voice of the Lord brings life.

So you see, hearing the voice of God is not a sideline issue in our Christian walk. Jesus said, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me” (John 10:27). It should be a regular part of the life of the believer to spend time not just praying to God but listening to Him as well, and cultivating a prophetic lifestyle. Relationship with God means that we connect heart to heart with Him; we speak with Him and He speaks with us. God loves to speak and communicate with His people, revealing His will for our lives. He also wants to help us overcome the obstacles that block our destinies so we can establish His Kingdom in the earth. Every believer can and should learn to discern God’s voice.
In his book *The Discerner* (Whitaker, 2017), James Goll explains it this way:

Each of us needs to become a *discerner*—no matter what our personal background or specific gift function in the body of Christ. Although some believers are especially gifted as prophets, *every* follower of Jesus receives the gifts of revelation and discernment. And every believer needs to use them! . . .

Developing discernment is not so much about knowing the future as it is about bringing the kingdom of God to bear on the time and place in which you live. . . . In a very real way, you and I bring God’s Word to dwell in the midst of the world as we remain sensitive to the flow of His Spirit. Through our relationship with God, we receive revelation. And as we bring that revelation to the world around us, we actually incarnate His Word in our very ordinary lives.

### Hearing and Obeying God’s Voice

When God speaks, He wants us to be not only hearers but also doers of His word (see James 1:22). In *Spiritual Authority* (Christian Fellowship, 1972), Watchman Nee makes the point that “rather than being called believers it would be better if we were called obeyers.” When God speaks He is looking for a response from His people. It could be a call to prayer, spiritual warfare, heart change or action. Hearing God’s voice is one part; responding in obedience is another.

Deuteronomy 28 delineates the blessings that come from obeying the voice of the Lord. In this Old Covenant passage, we hear the heart of the Lord speaking to His people so that we can align ourselves and enjoy His blessings:

> “Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings

30
shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God.”

Deuteronomy 28:1–2

The chapter goes on to describe some of the blessings: being blessed in the city and the country; our children being blessed; the work of our hands and all our possessions being blessed. Our enemies will be defeated before our faces: “They shall come out against you one way and flee seven ways” (verse 7). Our bank accounts and workplaces will be blessed, as will our land. God will cause increase in all we do: “God will throw open the doors of his sky vaults and pour rain on your land on schedule and bless the work you take in hand” (verse 12 message). We will be the lenders and not the borrowers, the head and not the tail, above and never beneath. The people of the earth will know that we belong to God and will hold us in respect.

We also know, of course, that the very next passage is a list of all the curses that come upon us for not obeying the voice of the Lord. Though we are under a New Covenant and know that Jesus became the curse for us, we also understand that doing things God’s way will always bring a blessing, but doing things that are self-willed and disobedient will result in trouble. How much better is it for us to hear God’s voice, discern His ways and obey?

Developing Our Spiritual Senses

The Bible teaches us that “solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil” (Hebrews 5:14 NASB). This means that our senses—both physical and spiritual—are vital to receiving revelation from God. It also means that discernment comes as our senses are trained. The more our senses are trained, the more discernment we will have.
When God created mankind, He instilled five senses into our bodies through which we receive information. Seeing, hearing, tasting, touching and smelling are the means we use to observe the world around us, to perceive our surroundings. This is how we keep ourselves safe and healthy.

God sometimes uses these physical, natural means to communicate with us, such as speaking in an audible voice within our hearing. He also speaks through the voices of prophets and prophetic people who have discerned His word, and we hear them with our physical ears.

But mostly God speaks to us through our spiritual senses. Did you realize that you are a spiritual being, that you will live eternally? You are a spirit, you have a soul, and you live in a body (see 1 Thessalonians 5:23). And we read in Job that “it is the spirit in man, the breath of the Almighty, that makes him understand” (Job 32:8 esv). Our “spirit man” has its own set of senses.

When we come to Christ, God begins to develop these spiritual senses, enabling us to process spiritual information—and it begins with our natural senses. It is as we offer our natural senses to God and ask Him to utilize them to communicate with us that we begin to experience connection with heaven in a whole new way, and our spiritual senses are awakened. This is crucial to the discussion of discernment. Paul wrote this to the believers in Corinth: “The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the spirit” (1 Corinthians 2:14 niv).

If God desires to show you something to help you understand a situation from a spiritual perspective, you most often will not see a large hand writing on a wall like in the days of Daniel, but you might see pictures or a dream with your spiritual eyes. You are rarely afforded a booming voice to announce God’s directives, but you might hear with your spiritual ears.
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When God spoke and told me to go to the couple and break off a spirit of robbery, I did not hear an audible voice that others in the room could hear; rather, I heard clearly through my spiritual ears. I have seen angels and demons at times through an “open vision,” which involved my physical eyes, but most often I discern through the eyes of my spirit. I have smelled the beautiful fragrance of the Lord and at times the stench of a demonic presence, not only through my natural sense of smell but also through offering those senses to the Lord and being open for Him to communicate information to me through them. God will speak to us through our sense of taste as we are encouraged to taste and see that the Lord is good and believe that His word will be like honey on our lips (see Psalm 34:8; 119:103). There are times I feel a burning sensation in my hands, and I know God is present to heal. God loves to communicate with His people and delights in the creativity of activating all of our physical and spiritual senses for maximized connection.

My husband’s uncle, Darrell Buck, has an amazing word of knowledge and healing gift. He often feels pain in an area of his body that he recognizes is not his own pain but rather God speaking to him through his sense of touch. If, for example, he feels a pain in his knee while he is ministering, he will ask if anyone is present who needs healing in his knee. There is always someone who responds. As soon as he prays, the pain lifts. He has had to learn to discern that the pain is not his pain; he has had to train himself to understand how God is communicating with him to describe the specific need to pray for.

In the verse from Hebrews quoted above, we are told to exercise our senses to discern between good and evil. This means we must be willing to activate our expectation for God to communicate to us through any of these means, spiritually or physically. If you are praying about a situation, stop speaking for a moment. Listen with your physical ears and look with your physical eyes—or be aware of taste, touch and smell—to
see if God will use these physical means to download a spiritual answer to you. At the same time, realize that God might communicate a response to you through any of your spiritual senses as well.

In the natural, the more we exercise, the stronger and more proficient we become. It is the same in the Spirit. The more opportunity you take to focus on receiving from the Lord, the stronger and more proficient you will become. In this process you will learn to discern between your own voice and God’s voice, as well as between your own imagination and the pictures, smells, tastes and touches that God is giving you.

Listening Intentionally, Hearing Intelligently

Psalm 85:8 says, “I will hear what God the Lord will speak, for He will speak peace to His people.” The word *hear* is the Hebrew word *shama*, which means “to hear intelligently often with the implication of paying attention, to discern, to give ear, to listen, to obey, to make a proclamation.” It has this connotation: “to listen intentionally and hear intelligently.” In order to learn to discern God’s voice, we must take time to stop and listen in an intentional way. This will give us intelligent answers to the questions we have.

As I was once praying about a miracle needed by one of my grandchildren, as well as for others in our church, I heard the Lord speak Psalm 85:8 as my answer. I was listening intentionally, and God spoke an intelligent strategy to me as to how to pray to see things shift. The verse says that God will speak peace to His people. This phrase *speak peace* in Hebrew is *dabar shalom*. *Dabar* means “to speak, to declare, to command with authority.” *Shalom* is the Hebrew word for “peace, prosperity, favor, wholeness, health, wealth and rest.” Someone said it carries the connotation of “nothing missing, nothing broken, nothing damaged.”
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So Tom and I began to decree the shalom power of God, *dabar shalom*, over our grandchild and other family and church members who needed miracles. One by one we saw God’s miraculous hand move to heal bloodstreams, backs, joints and brains and do miracles beyond our imagination. God gave a strategy for prayer and healing because I took time to listen intentionally and hear intelligently.

**Understanding Terms**

The New Testament speaks of discerning of spirits as one of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit. It addresses discerning the times, discerning good from evil and the need for believers to have spiritual discernment to process spiritual things. All these Greek words come from variations of the root Greek word *krino*, which means “to distinguish, to decide (mentally and judicially), to try, to judge.” *Diakrisis* and *diakrino*, which refer to the gift of discerning of spirits, mean “to separate thoroughly, to make a distinction or a clear discrimination, to judge, to have perception, to have a sense of decision or judgment, to make a judicial estimation.” When 1 Corinthians 2:13–16 speaks of things being spiritually discerned, the Greek word *anakrino* is used, which means “to separate or distinguish by looking throughout, to examine, scrutinize, question.”

This is why it is so important for us to have a proper understanding of this gift from the Holy Spirit and how it is to function in our lives. The very definition uses words such as *judge*, *scrutinize* and *question*. God is not releasing this gift of discernment so that we walk with a critical and judgmental spirit, condemning people, seeing demons and being negative about the world we live in. No, He is releasing this gift so we can see the full picture of what is happening in the spirit realm and implement proper strategies in response—and also have a proper perspective on the natural world in which we live.
We must learn to question without being rebellious. We must learn to judge without becoming judgmental. We must learn to scrutinize without becoming critical.

The Cambridge dictionary defines the word **discern** as “to see, recognize or understand something that is not clear, to be able to decide something.” The New Webster’s dictionary defines **discern** as “to see or make out through any of the senses, to discriminate, to have insight and perception.” Contained within this definition is the word **discriminate**, which means “to use good judgment in making a choice, to make distinctions.”

Throughout this book I will use two terms for **discernment** interchangeably. I will use the word **discernment**, which refers to hearing God’s voice, as well as the spiritual wisdom, understanding and perception that are received as we learn and grow through spiritual experiences and have our senses exercised to discern good and evil. I will also use **discerning of spirits**, which refers to supernatural spiritual insight of beings in the unseen realm, and which is received as a gift from the Holy Spirit.

I believe that everyone must operate in spiritual discernment, and that God has made the gift of discerning of spirits available to all. First Corinthians 12:31 tells us to covet the best gifts. Which is the best gift? It is the one needed to get the job done at the time. If someone needs healing, we access the gift of healing. If someone needs a word of prophecy, we hear the voice of God for prophecy. If we need discernment, we can access the gift of discerning of spirits to set captives free.

Using the gift of discernment involves operating in a prophetic dimension, and this is made available to every born-again believer. In the Old Testament only certain ones were appointed and gifted as prophets to hear God’s voice and speak His purposes. Now, Acts 2 tells us that God is pouring out His Spirit on all flesh and every believer can receive revelation through prophecy, dreams and visions. Revelation is not reserved for an elite group; God is releasing the ability to hear His voice to
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an entire prophetic generation. This fulfills the declaration of Moses: “Oh, that all the LORD’s people were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!” (Numbers 11:29).

We are now living in that day!

Natural Wisdom vs. Spiritual Discernment

First Corinthians 2:12–16 tells us this:

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For “who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

In these words Paul explains that we cannot live a life of clarity and purpose merely out of human wisdom or reasoning, having our thoughts and perceptions shaped by culture or an unbiblical worldview. We must not be guilty of the same sin that Adam and Eve committed when God decreed they could eat of all the trees in the Garden except the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. They were the first people to fail to obey the voice of God because they did not discern the voice of the tempter. As a result, they embraced the lies of not just the devil but also their own human reasoning and decided for themselves what was right and wrong, partaking of the forbidden fruit. Scripture tells us that Eve was deceived (see 2 Corinthians 11:3). This caused her to fail to perceive or discern what was actually occurring and kept her from recognizing her enemy.
Discernment

God has provided a gift of discernment to enable us to be sensitive to live Spirit-led lifestyles in which He speaks and reveals His thoughts, truths and directives. We align our lives accordingly, leaving the decision of what is right and wrong to Him. Spiritual things must be spiritually discerned. It is only by the Holy Spirit that we are able to judge between right and wrong, good and evil, His voice and any other voice. Hearing the voice of God is the basis for all discernment.

Eyes to See, Ears to Hear

We are the Body of Christ. Each one of us is a member or specific part of that Body and must learn to follow the directives that come from the head, which is Christ (see 1 Corinthians 12:7–12). My physical body responds to what my head says, and each one of my body parts has the responsibility to do its job for the function of the whole. Scripture paints the picture that each one of us has been created to function as a unique part of the Body of Christ and that we have gifts necessary to fulfill that specific membership ministry. To one is given the gift of prophecy, to another gifts of healing, to another the gift of discernment and so on.

In addition, whatever our particular giftings, when we are operating in the gift of discerning of spirits we become the eyes and the ears of the Body of Christ. We have the ability to see into the spirit realm and the natural realm in truth and reality. It gives us an element of operating with X-ray vision to be able to see things that the natural eye cannot see. Through the use of X-ray machines doctors can see hidden things, beyond what they see on the surface, and gain clarity regarding what is happening in a person’s body in order to construct a strategy to bring the person to health. Discernment reveals hidden things in the realm of the spirit so the Body of Christ can come to a greater place of health, power, authority and anointing.
Paul gives us insight on this: “As it is written, ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit” (1 Corinthians 2:9–10).

In his book *Sparkling Gems from the Greek, Volume 2* (Harrison House, 2017), Rick Renner discusses this powerful word translated as “revealed”:

The word “revealed” is a translation of the Greek word *apokalupsis*, which is a compound of the words *apo* and *kalupsis*. The word *apo* means away, and the word *kalupsis* is the Greek word for a veil, a curtain, or some type of covering. When compounded, they form the word *apokalupsis*, which is normally translated in Scripture as the word revelation. This new word literally means to remove the veil or to remove the curtain so you can see what is on the other side. This word *apokalupsis* plainly refers to something that has been veiled or hidden for a long time and has suddenly become clear and visible to the mind or eye. It is the image of pulling the curtains out of the way so you can see what has always been just outside your window. The scene was always there for you to enjoy, but the curtains have blocked your ability to see the real picture. As soon as the curtains are drawn apart, you can suddenly see what has been hidden from your view. . . . So Paul was proclaiming in this verse that when the Spirit of God came to dwell within us, one of His major missions was to remove the veil that once obstructed our view. The moment you see beyond the curtain for the first time and observe what has been there all along that wasn’t evident to you—that is what the Bible calls a “revelation.”

So Paul was proclaiming in this verse that when the Spirit of God comes to dwell within us, one of His major missions is to remove the veil that once obstructed our view.

God is removing the veil from our lives, by the power of the Holy Spirit, so we can more clearly discern the hidden things
and process them in the light of His love. God might bring an unveiling of revelation to us:

- Through the study of God’s Word
- Through times of intimate prayer and worship
- Through Holy Spirit encounters
- Through revelation received in dreams and visions
- Through angelic or demonic interaction
- Through exploring impressions from the still, small voice upon our spirits
- Through God speaking through our natural five senses
- Through spiritually discerning natural world events in a biblical light
- Through spiritually discerning fulfillment of prophecy in Scripture
- Through exploring symbols or analogies inspired by the Spirit
- Through studying prophetic words released by other prophetic voices

God through His Holy Spirit is releasing a powerful, fresh dimension of the ability to discern the strategies of the enemy, the purposes and plans of heaven and its angel armies, and God’s path forward to victory. Regardless of spiritual positioning or one’s individual assignment from God, every believer needs to grow in the grace of the Lord to operate in discernment.

Leaders need eyes to see and ears to hear what the Spirit of the Lord is saying to the Church. Intercessors need insight into the realm of the spirit so they can pray strategically and wage successful spiritual warfare. Businesspeople and those called to government positions need the ability to separate, scrutinize and judge what is going on in the kingdoms of this world so as not to be deceived by the god of this world system and to...
operate above reproach as a Daniel or a Joseph. Ministry team members, counselors, cell group leaders and youth leaders need a well-developed gift of discernment to accomplish their assignments effectively. Every person who has any impact on a child’s life needs discernment to navigate the complexities of helping that one grow in the faith. Students need discernment as they approach education in this modern age.

Every believer needs to hear God’s voice in order to live a life of wisdom, victory and breakthrough every single day. As you ask God for discernment, He will be faithful to give you eyes to see and ears to hear what the Spirit of God is saying.

**Activation**

Take a moment to *shama*—listen intentionally and hear intelligently. Ask God to speak to you and tune your ear to the sound of His voice. He may give you a picture, a verse, a physical touch or a word. You may sense His presence, feel His power or smell His fragrance. Write down in your journal what you received.