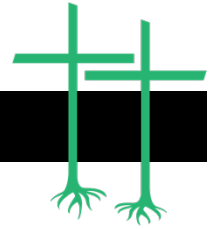


# MINISTRY TOOL #1 – FOR DIAGNOSTICS

## Awareness & Discernment

*With practice, this tool is useful for recognizing what spirits are at work in a person's life.*



**Hebrews 5:14** – But 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. (NKJV)

### EXPLANATION:

As we talked about in Session 2, your body is physiologically designed by God to respond to the spiritual realm. As a result, it's not uncommon to feel things in the spiritual realm, including God's Spirit, evil spirits, and even the human spirits of those around us.

Spiritual sensitivity is not the same as discernment. Everyone is perceptive to varying degrees, but that doesn't mean they understand what's happening. In fact, most people just assume that everything they feel is happening within them.

For example, a person might be having a great morning, but then they walk into work and suddenly feel depressed. Such a person might think, *I guess it's going to be one of those days.* Instead, the person might be better off thinking, *Who here is struggling with depression and needs prayer?*

As we grow in holiness, we grow in discernment because we can quickly identify which feelings are normal for us and which are not. Our discernment can grow over time, but also the Holy Spirit can grant us a gift of discerning spirits long before our experience is developed. All this is the work of the same Holy Spirit, and He is the one we need to consult when something feels different. Ask God for this spiritual gift and trust the Holy Spirit to help you discern.

During a ministry session, it is not uncommon to sense abnormal feelings, thoughts, or temptations. These things may be indicators of spiritual activity in the other person (or one of your fellow prayer ministers) that needs to be addressed.

### GOSPEL SUMMARY:

Sensing the spiritual realm doesn't make us more spiritual than others; it makes us human. What we do with that information is what sets us apart from the world. Bring every feeling and every perception to the Lord. Don't assume that any feeling associated with darkness automatically belongs to you. If it does, simply put it on the cross and repent. But if it doesn't, ask the Lord if it's something He wants to address during this ministry session.

Galatians 6:1–2 says, “Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” As we feel what another person is feeling, we spiritually lighten the load for them—bearing some of their burdens. But this Scripture also reminds us not to internalize the other person’s issues and fall into temptation ourselves. Remain humble, and trust the Lord for power to remain free.

## HOW TO:

- ❑ Before a person arrives for a Gospel Encounter, take a moment to rest in your heart and turn your attention to the Lord.
- ❑ Take note of your own physical and emotional state.
- ❑ As you meet with the other person and work through the ministry session, take note of what feels different.
  - If you suddenly feel afraid, the person may be dealing with fear.
  - If you suddenly feel like you’re incapable of helping the person and need someone else to take over, the person may be dealing with a spirit of inferiority or inadequacy that you’re picking up on.
  - If you suddenly feel sick or get a headache, the person may have a demon that is fighting to maintain control (note that some people feel this way because of perfumes, fluorescent lights, or other environmental factors, so discernment from the Lord is important).
  - If you suddenly experience anxiety, the person may be dealing with anxiety.
  - If you find yourself suddenly lusting after the person, this may be a spirit of lust in the person (or possibly a wound in you, responding to the other person’s human spirit with countertransference).
  - If you’re suddenly confused and uncertain about how to proceed, there may be a spirit of confusion that needs to be told to be quiet so the person can understand the gospel.
- ❑ Be humble with what you think you’re discerning. Ask questions at appropriate times, and let the Holy Spirit lead the session. We minister by faith, not by what we can perceive in our flesh (2 Corinthians 5:7), but our perceptions can often alert us to things we might otherwise overlook or even internalize.
  - Not every feeling you feel is you.
  - Not every thought you think is you.
  - Be aware of changes you feel during the meeting, and ask the Lord if there is a need to address each change.