

God, Is That You?

By Denise Bostic

Try the Spirits

Anyone that genuinely loves the Lord and desires to follow Him will want to obey Him. In their zeal to obey God, many are quick to receive teachings or commands simply because someone is claiming that they are speaking in the name of the Lord or what they are speaking is a word from the Lord. Our zealousness to obey the Lord should always be tempered with the knowledge of God. (Romans 10:1-3) It has become quite popular now in certain Christian circles for some to say that God gave them a word for you to do this particular act or to give x amount of dollars in order that God might do something for you in return. Is this God? Does the Almighty operate this way? Whatever we say or do, we need to make sure that it is in sync with God's nature, character and word.

How can we be sure whether or not someone is speaking by the Spirit of God? The Bible commands believers to try the spirits to find out whether they are of God or not. The Apostle John wrote, "**Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.**" (1 John 4:1 KJV) According to the *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, try means *to test; to approve; allow, discern, examine, prove, try*. Also according to the *Joseph Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* the word try means *to test, examine, prove, scrutinize (to see whether a thing be genuine or not)*. John is teaching **believers** to test the spirits that are speaking to them and that they are not just to receive everything that they hear without first proving that it is coming from God. There is a spirit behind every preacher, teacher or prophet.

In order to obey what God is telling us, there are some things that we need to know before we can do this properly. The word says to try the spirits (plural). There are three sources from which all spirits come from – the divine, human or demonic. The divine consists of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and His holy angels in the kingdom of light. The human consists of the spirit of man on earth. The demonic consists of satan, demons and evil spirits in the kingdom of darkness.

God has provided believers with the ability by His Holy Spirit for us to be able to discern the difference between these spirits. "**There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by the means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits...**(1 Corinthians 12:4-10) It is by the Holy Spirit that we are to try the spirits to see whether they are of God or not. (1 John 4:1-6)

There have been many times when I would get a telephone call from a brother or sister in Christ and they would be troubled or distressed by a teaching they had heard, read about, or a personal prophecy that was given to them because they did not know if this was God speaking or not. We all need to know that the scriptures teach us how we can know whether something is of God or not. The first thing that I would ask them is, did you pray about it? Then, does this agree with the Word of God? Do you have peace about it? Is this true to the nature and character of God? Our reliance must be upon God if we are to test the spirits.

First, we must seek God through prayer. We are told in **Proverbs 3: 5-6**, “**Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not unto your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths.**” (KJV) If we need answers, God has them. It is His will for us to try the spirits and He wants us to be able to recognize whether something is from Him or not. Next, did what the speaker say go contrary to the word of God? If you are not sure about it, you do not have to accept it readily into your spirit. It is wisdom to wait until we find out all the facts. To do this you may need to spend extra time studying to find out what the Bible says on the subject. You may also ask someone who is more mature in the things of God and ask them to show you where it is in the word, then study and prove that word which was given unto you. (Acts 17:11, I Thessalonians 5:21, II Timothy 2:15) If what was said goes contrary to the word of God or cannot be substantiated in scripture then most likely it is not of God.

We also may share our personal prophecies with others that are more mature (such as those in the ministry), so that we may have confirmation as to whether something is of God. **A special note should be made here.** With a teaching, we can always turn to the scriptures in order to prove whether the authority of God’s word backs it up. This may not always be possible with personal prophecy, but there is Someone (yes, I said Someone, not something) that will help us out in this area. That Someone is the Holy Spirit, who is our Helper.

Personal prophecies many times are speaking of things that may be directional, such as something that God may want to do regarding our personal lives, such as callings, ministry, marriage, jobs, geographical moves, etc. These are things that we cannot find the answers to in the Bible necessarily. It is then that we must rely on our personal relationship with God through the witness, peace and confirmation that comes by the Holy Spirit. We do not have to feel pressured to receive something without first taking the time to seek God through prayer, study and sometimes fasting as the Lord leads.

Prophecy usually takes time to come to pass, so sometimes we may just have to hold that word in our hearts and give it time to come into manifestation. There are times when we may know for certain that it is of God because the Holy Spirit bears witness to that which is true and we have peace and joy in our spirits. If we are not for sure however, it is wisdom to wait until you know for certain that something is genuinely of God. We may also wait for additional confirmation by God in other ways and through other people. Some ways that we can know is by being attentive to the Holy Spirit, who knows the things of God. (I Corinthians 2:9-16) Do you have the peace of God about it? A good sign that something may not be from God is that you are disturbed in your spirit. The meaning of disturb is: **to destroy the tranquility or settled state of.** [*The American Heritage Dictionary.*] In other words, something has disturbed the peace of God in you and has unsettled your spirit. This may be a warning or discernment from the Holy Spirit that something is wrong.

As believers, the Holy Spirit dwells in us and we need to pay attention to what He is trying to show us. You may be having an unction from the Holy One. (I John 2: 20, 27) What is an unction? According to the Greek meaning **it is used of the gift of the Holy Spirit, as the efficient aid in getting knowledge of the truth.** [*5545 Joseph Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*] One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is **discernment of spirits.** (I Corinthians 12:10) The Holy Spirit can help us discern what type of spirit is operating. He can warn us if there is an ungodly spirit at work. As believers who have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we should not ignore that disturbance in our spirits for it may mean that God is trying to show us that something is amiss. Even though we may not understand why we feel this way, we should always pray and rely on God to reveal what we need to know about the situation. It may be that a teaching or prophecy is from God and we are simply lack understanding, knowledge or our flesh is resisting truth from God. Either way, God has our answers and will give them in His timing. Personally I have learned over the years that whenever I am troubled in my spirit, I take this as a signal from the Holy Spirit to seek God and I will pray about it until the understanding comes and my peace returns. Is what I am saying scriptural? Yes, God has given believers the gift of the Holy Spirit to help us in such matters. (John 14:16-18, 16:7-15, Romans 8:26-28, I Corinthians 12:4-10 and I John 2:26-27, 4:1-6)

A good example of this is in the book of Acts chapter 16. Here we read about a story of a woman who was possessed with a spirit of divination. She was following the Apostle Paul and his companions around for days shouting that they were “servants of the Most High God”. It says in verse 18, “**She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, “In the**

name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” At that moment the spirit left her.” (NIV)

What this woman was declaring was true, but there was a wrong spirit behind the voice. Paul knew this spirit was not of God because it troubled *his* spirit. This spirit was not there to help Paul and his companions, but there to harass them. Later, we will go more in-depth about the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. For now we will turn to God's word to gain understanding and insight about true and false teaching and prophecy.

By the Word

There are safeguards that God gives us in His Word that we can learn and use to help protect us from deception and false teaching. The Apostle Peter warned the Church that there were then (and would be in the future) false prophets and false teachers among those in the Church. **“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.” (II Peter 2:1 KJV)** Here, Peter is speaking of some who were blood bought by the Lord and had denied Him as their Lord and Savior. The Apostle Paul also prophesied by the Holy Spirit of an end time apostasy and how some believers come to be in this unthinkable condition. **“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.” (I Timothy 4:1 KJV)** Because this prophetic word is speaking about believers in a latter day setting, we should understand that this warning of apostasy is especially meant for those of us who are alive today. We in the Church should take heed to these warnings and rely on God more than ever to help us distinguish truth from error.

Satan's goal is to lead believers away from Christ through false teaching and false prophecy. Not only are we warned of teaching that comes from demons, but also the teaching of man that goes contrary to God's Word. (I Timothy 4:1-3) Dear brothers and sisters in Christ because this came from the Holy Spirit, we should consider ourselves warned and be on guard concerning false prophecies and false teaching. These things do exist and we need to understand what the word of God has to say about it. We must stay close to the Lord by abiding in Him through prayer and digging into His Word to find out what He has to say about these things.

Believers are admonished in the word of God to prove the validity of the teaching we receive personally and from others. The bible gives us guidelines for how we are to do this. **“Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good.” (I Thessalonians 5:21 KJV)** **“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (II Timothy 2: 15 KJV)** Concerning the Apostle Paul's ministry to the Bereans, they were recorded in the word of God as an example and attitude that we should emulate. **“These (Bereans) were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” (Acts 17:11 KJV)** We are to receive good, sound doctrine so that we would not be led astray from the Lord. (I Timothy 4:6, Titus 1:9, 2:1)

Paul taught Timothy that a time would come that people would not receive sound doctrine and would have a spiritual deafness that would cause them to turn away from the Lord. (II Timothy 4:3-4) This is why we should teach and receive sound doctrine because this draws us closer to the Lord, that we may know Him and His ways. False teaching obscures His ways to us and leads us away from the Lord. Again, satan seeks to deceive people with his ultimate goal being to lead people away from Jesus. If accepted and followed, this will eventually lead to a spiritual deterioration and according to God's Word, for some a condition of apostasy, which means literally a departure from the truth or faith in Christ.

Just because deception is out there though, does not mean that we are to live in fear of being deceived. We must trust and abide in Christ, not in man and not even in our own selves. We should trust in the Lord and His love for us and this will cast out all fear because He is greater than anything that seeks to draw us away from Him. (I John 4-read the whole chapter) Jesus said, **“My sheep hear my voice and a stranger they will not follow”.** (John 10:27) It is imperative that we know the Lord personally and recognize His voice distinctly through others that speak to us. The Lord is able to keep us from falling when we put all of our trust and dependence in Him. (Jude 24)

By the Spirit

In our technologically advanced world today, we have more voices speaking to us than ever before. These voices can come in many forms. As believers we must discern the spirit behind the many voices that speak to us at churches, conferences, on the television, radio, the Internet, in books, magazines and personally. In addition to the many voices of men, we have most important, the voice of God and the voices that we would prefer never to hear but intrude upon us anyway- the devil and his demons. How then, are we to discern what spirit is behind each voice? God has not left us defenseless but has provided a Divine Helper for us who searches all things and knows the things of God- the Holy Spirit. (I Corinthians 2:10)

Before Jesus departed from this world, He said in **John 14: 18**, **“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come unto you.”** How would He come to us? **“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” (John 16:7)** Jesus did depart and went to heaven to sit at our Father’s right hand, and kept His word by sending us His Holy Spirit to dwell in us and help us by empowering us to live a life in Christ. We must rely on our Helper to help us distinguish truth from error, to help us know when a spirit is of God or not and to teach us what truth is according to God’s Word. (John 16:13-14, I Corinthians 2:9-14, I John 2:27, 4:1-6)

There are many ways in which the Holy Spirit helps us in our lives. The Holy Spirit has a ministry. (II Corinthians 3:8) He is a minister of life and so much more. We need to understand the ministry and work of the Holy Spirit in our lives so that we may receive the things that the Lord wants to give us. (John 16:12-15, II Corinthians 3:6-8) We learn in the New Testament scriptures the ways that the Holy Spirit is our Helper, Guide and Comforter. To understand some of these ways, we can learn much from His moving powerfully through the Church from it’s inception as recorded in the book of Acts. The cooperation of the Church with the Holy Spirit was so close and powerful that He was mentioned in this one book about 60 times! The Church knew who their Helper was then and we need to know Him just as well today.

God wants to move in greater power than ever before. The prophet Haggai prophesied, **“the glory of the latter house shall be greater than the former.” (Haggai 2:9)** This is speaking of the glory of the New Testament (Christ’s house) being greater than the glory of the Old Testament (Moses’ house). (Hebrews 3:1-6, II Corinthians 3: 7-11) Jesus taught His disciples the ways in which the Holy Spirit would help us. When we understand the ministry and character of the Holy Spirit, this helps us to discern when God is at work.

The Holy Spirit:

1. Reproves or convicts people of sin, righteousness and judgment. (John 16:8)
2. Shows us what is to come in the future. (John 16:13) This can include warnings. (Acts 20:22-23, Acts 21:10-12)
3. Glorifies Jesus. (John 16:14)
4. Equips the saints with spiritual power to be witnesses of Jesus. (Acts 1:8)
5. Equips the saints with spiritual gifts to do the work of the ministry. (I Corinthians 12:1-11, Ephesians 4:11-12)
6. Dwells in believers in Christ. (John 14:17)
7. Teaches believers all things of Christ and bring them remembrance of the things that Jesus said. (John 14:25)
8. Is our Counselor. (John 16:7)
9. Guides us into all truth.
10. Does not speak of Himself, but only what He hears. (John 16:13)

As believers, we cannot only learn about our Helper in the pages of the bible, we can also learn from Him personally and He can teach us everyday because He dwells in us continually. (John 14: 16,17, 26, I John 2:20,27) We can learn to be sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit and His leading as we abide in Jesus through personal, intimate prayer, studying the Word of God and in times of fasting.

As believers, we need to abide in Christ. (John 15) To **abide** in the Greek means **not to depart, not to leave, and to continue to be present: to maintain unbroken fellowship with one.** [*Joseph Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*] This is what the Lord wants us to do. We need to keep a total reliance and dependence on Him in order to follow Him. In turn, He has promised that not only that He would abide in us, but the Father and Holy Spirit would as well. The Greek is much more expressive and powerful as to how God would abide in us:

The Holy Spirit is constantly present to help one. (John 14:16-17)

The Holy Spirit puts forth constant influence upon one. (John 1:32, John 14:16-17)

Christ would dwell in us and be continually operative in us by His divine influence and energy. (John 15:1-7)

Christians are rooted in him, knit to Him by the Spirit that they have received of Him. (I John 2:6, 24, 27)

That the joy of the Lord might remain in us and fill us. (John 15:11)

God's love would abide or dwell in us if we abide in Him and keep His commandments. (John 15:9-10)

To be held or kept continually (by God) (I John 2:10, Jude 24)

Clearly, the Lord is able to keep us as we abide in Him and He in us! Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the Lord is able to be there for us twenty-four/seven, in all things and at all times. He is constantly present within us and when we turn to Him, He is faithful to help us in time of need. (Hebrews 4:14-16) He has made us a promise that He will never leave us or forsake us. (Hebrews 13:5-6) God will keep His word to us for He is faithful to keep all of His promises (II Corinthians 1:20). We need to do our part and keep that same commitment to Him.

The Sharp Two-Edged Sword

The reason that God wants us to try the spirits is that we might know what is of Him and what is not of Him. He does not want us to be deceived by others. How does a person become deceived? A person becomes deceived when they believe a lie. It is important for us to learn and know the truth of God's Word. Because of Peter and Paul's prophecies that were quoted earlier, we must take heed to warnings that are directed at those of us living in the "latter times." Sadly, it is evident that some have (in times past) and some will (in the future) turn away from and forsake the Lord because they had been or will be deceived. How does this happen? May I submit to you that those that have forsaken the Lord did not do so overnight? Slowly and gradually, they turned from Him as they received some form of false teaching. (Galatians 3:1, 5:7-9, I Timothy 1:19-20, 4:1-3, II Timothy 4:1-4, Hebrews 3:12, II Peter 2:1-3, 3:17) If someone continues to receive lies over truth, they can become deceived and become ensnared by the devil. (I Timothy 3:7, 6:3-9, II Timothy 2:24-26)

God's word is like a sharp two-edged sword. (Hebrews 4:12-13) I have been teaching about how to reject that which is false from others. The other edge of the sword is not rejecting that which is truth from others. In trying the spirits, we should be careful that we do not reject when God is trying to speak truth that we need to hear, receive and apply to our lives. As believers in the Lord, it is as equally important to receive God's truth, as it is to reject that which is false. (II Timothy 1:13-14) The only thing that will set us free from deception is truth from Christ. We are all responsible to apply the truth of God's Word personally to our own lives.

In trying the spirits, we want to make sure that we do not reject truth just because our flesh does not like the message. When we submit and humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, he can work effectively in our lives. We must be careful of receiving only teaching that appeases our flesh and rejecting that which will purify us. (James 4:8, I Peter 1:22, I John 3:3) In II Timothy, Paul charges Timothy to preach the word of

God in all situations but warns of those who only want to hear that which appeals to their own flesh. **“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables”.** (II Timothy 4:3-4)

A good example of how we are to apply God's truth to our lives is found in the book of James chapter one. We are to apply God's word to our lives by faith and works (action). We are not to be like the man that looks at himself in the mirror and light of God's Word, and then does not apply it to himself. We must allow God's word to shine like a light in the inner recesses of our souls to reveal the true nature of our sinfulness. We should all be teachable and receive truth about God and ourselves. We grow in grace and knowledge as Christians when we submit to God's correction, repent of sin and put into practice the truth of God's Word in our daily lives. If we live in sin, self-deception and indifference, we will only suffer for it in the long run and if not repented of, the words of the Lord will eventually pass judgment on us. (John 12:48) The sword of the Lord will either expose or cut away what does not belong in us or will bring judgment on those who do not obey it. (Hebrews 4:12-13, Revelation 19:11-16, esp. verse 15, I Peter 4:17)

God's Word is truth, so it is very important to study to prove and validate not only someone else's teaching, but also so that we may personally learn to live in the light of God's truth. **The lesson to be learned here is that when we are trying the spirits to see whether they are of God, it is not only in situations when we are hearing words from others, but also when we are hearing words personally ourselves.** In other words, we need to make sure that we are hearing from God and not our own flesh or from powers of darkness. So we understand that trying the spirits is to be applied to our own lives personally first and foremost.

Godly Discernment or Evil Suspicions?

For every counterfeit there is a genuine. There is a counterfeit to true discernment and that is something called evil surmisings or suspicions. When Paul was giving advice to his spiritual son Timothy, he warned of those who walked in the works of the flesh instead of in the Spirit. (I Timothy 6:3-5) **“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings...”** In other words, we can either receive from the Spirit of God or resist and fight against Him. In this scripture Paul speaks about those who resist and reject the things of the Lord. It is important for all believers to understand the difference between godly discernment and what Paul called evil surmisings or suspicion. To learn about both, we must go to the scriptures for understanding.

First, the Holy Spirit gives true, godly discernment. Not only do we need help by the Holy Spirit to understand the word of God, we also need to rely on Him to help us discern the difference between the spirits. We need to know what to receive and not receive. In I Corinthians 12, the apostle Paul is teaching about the gifts of the Holy Spirit that God has given to believers to empower them not only in their personal lives but also to help others. The gifts of the Spirit mentioned here do not operate according to fleshly ability (although God cooperates and works through human instruments), but by divine ability given by the Holy Spirit. Mentioned in this list is a gift called discerning of spirits (plural). (I Corinthians 12:10) We learn from this passage of scripture that the Holy Spirit gives true, effective discernment. This is a supernatural gifting that God gives the believer to discern or judge whether a spirit is of God or not and specific information can be given as to what type spirit it is. As believers, we are not to judge by the flesh, but by the Spirit. (John 7:24, Galatians 5:16-17)

It is important to note here that even unbelievers may know when a spirit is present because they may manifest some way or the flesh may react to a spirit, but this is not the same as having supernatural knowledge by God about a spirit and having authority to cast it out. Mediums and psychics can discern spirits of darkness as well because they are instruments of Satan and receive their information from his evil spirits, but their information will not be given in truth, but lies and deception. Those that are God's receive their information by the Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of truth. Vessels of Satan will not cast out Satan because they would be coming against the same kingdom that they are working for and his kingdom would be divided. (Matthew 12:25-26)

God exposes satanic spirits to believers in order to destroy their works of darkness by casting them out. (Luke 10:19, I John 3:8) In the name of Jesus Christ, we cast out demonic or evil spirits by the power and authority He has given us. Jesus gave believers power in order to preach redemption through Christ and demonstrate His Kingdom in the world. Unbelievers have no power over Satan and his demons because they are not in Christ and have not been given the authority to do so. (Acts 19:11-17)

The reason why God reveals what kind of spirit is at work can be for different reasons, but are reasons that we as believers need to be aware of. It may be that someone needs a healing and an evil spirit is causing one to be sick or diseased. Someone may be possessed and tormented by demonic spirits. (Luke 13:10-13, Acts 8:5-7) God also gives discernment to believers to protect them from deception. (John 16:13, I John 4:1-6, I Corinthians 12:10) He can help us to identify when someone is walking in the flesh or in the Spirit. (Acts 5:1-11, Galatians 5: 19-23) It is important to understand that when we are discerning by the Spirit of God that someone is operating out of their own flesh, that we do not have authority over their flesh. God gave us authority to cast out devils or demons, not the flesh of man. We must pray for God to help that individual if we see that they are not walking in the Spirit. The same is true regarding our own lives. We cannot cast out our flesh but can die to self and submit ourselves to God so that He might empower us to follow after the Holy Spirit.

Godly discernment is always for a purpose and that purpose is for doing good. God wants to set people free from eternal death, sickness and those in bondage to the devil. Satan will always work for the purpose of evil. He wants to deceive people, keep them blinded to God and His glorious gospel. (II Corinthians 4:4). It is so important that the Church has godly discernment so that others might be saved and be set free to live in Christ. The demonstration of the Spirit's power must accompany the Gospel message in order for us to be truly effective for God and His Kingdom. We can only have these things revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. We cannot understand with our natural minds because these things are only *spiritually discerned*. (I Corinthians 2: 10-14)

Now that we know a little about true, godly discernment, we need to understand what it is not. Going back to I Timothy 6:3-5, Paul is warning Timothy about those who do not teach and practice the words of the Lord and also brings up their ungodly attributes. Listed among this passage is something Paul calls evil surmisings. When we look this up in the Greek, it literally means evil suspicions. What does this mean? Paul is speaking of those who practice a false discernment, in effect; they are not relying on God, but rather on their own fleshly, corruptible nature to judge a matter. Evil suspicions means *by a bad nature or literally an evil heart as revealed in distrusting*. [Joseph Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament] To understand what Paul is saying here we need to understand what surmisings and suspicions mean.

Surmising means to infer with little evidence; guess; an idea or opinion based on little evidence, conjecture. Suspicion means the act of suspecting something wrong on little evidence or proof. Suspicious means tending to suspect, distrustful, expressing suspicion. Conjecture means inference based on incomplete evidence; guess work, to guess. [The American Heritage Dictionary]

As we can tell by these definitions, this is not godly discernment. Those who practice evil suspicions make their decisions about whether they accept or reject something based upon their own conclusions rather than relying on God and His Word.

People who are suspicious by nature usually distrust others. It is not entirely wrong to have suspicion when one is in a situation where it may be warranted. At times, if this did not happen we would not know that there is anything wrong. What I am speaking of here is when someone is by nature a suspicious or distrustful person about almost everything. This is not of the new nature of Christ, which is not quick to think evil of others. (I Corinthians 13:5) When someone is distrustful by nature, it is hard to minister to that person and they usually tend to also reject ministry from others.

Evil suspicions are a device of the devil to prevent people from receiving what God has for them. Satan usually takes advantage of not only people's lack of knowledge, but also takes advantage of the personal negative situations that they have gone through to create an attitude of distrust and an unwarranted suspicion of others. If we find ourselves being suspicious of others in an unbalanced way, we can ask God

for forgiveness and help in this area so that we might learn to trust God and those that He speaks through so that we may receive those things that God wants us to have.

We all need to rely on God to show us what is of Him or not of Him. We should never put our confidence in the flesh-others or ours. We must examine what we receive personally and what is spoken through others in the light and authority of God's Word. When we put our trust and confidence in God and His word, He will bring divine illumination and direct our paths. (Proverbs 3:5-7 and Psalm 119:105)

God speaks and works in many different ways. We need to discern when God is speaking and working and when He is not. If we believe and accept what the Lord tells us in His word and by His Spirit, we know that we can count on Him to keep all the promises that He has made to us. We can always count on Him to be faithful to us in all things. Jesus said, **"Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! (Matthew 7:7-11 NIV)** Whenever we encounter situations where we ask, "God is that you?" we can rest assured that we can rely on God and trust in Him to be faithful to give us the answers to our prayers.