

5. 🌿 Spiritual Discernment in Real Life:

🌿 How to Use This Guide

Spiritual discernment isn't always clear-cut — but it's a skill we can grow.

This handout offers two ways to help:

- **The “5 Lenses”** offer a quick way to assess choices from a faith-filled perspective.
 - **The “Compass”** helps when the path is murky, messy, or when peace is hard to find. Use whichever section meets you where you are.
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1. Wise Counsel

Talk to people who are grounded, prayerful, and honest — not just agreeable.

- Does this person challenge me or just affirm me?
 - Are they rooted in prayer and spiritual maturity?
 - Would they speak truth to me in love, even if it's hard to hear?
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2. Scriptural Alignment

Does this decision reflect the heart of Jesus? What Beatitude or Gospel value does it connect with?

- Am I choosing mercy, justice, humility, and love?
 - Does this choice build the Kingdom — or just preserve my comfort?
 - Can I connect this to a passage of Scripture that resonates?
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3. Fruits of the Spirit

Does this lead toward peace, joy, patience... or something else?

Fruits of the Spirit Opposites

Peace	Anxiety, turmoil
Joy	Bitterness, apathy
Patience	Frustration, anger
Kindness	Harshness, coldness
Self-control	Impulsiveness, compulsion
Gentleness	Aggression, rigidity
Faithfulness	Flakiness, self-preservation

- What inner fruit is this bearing in me?
 - Am I moving toward God — or away from Him?
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4. Freedom vs. Compulsion

Am I acting from love and clarity, or from fear, guilt, or ego?

- Do I feel pushed or trapped?
 - Am I people-pleasing or people-serving?
 - Am I trying to prove something — or am I responding to God's invitation?
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5. Long-Term Fruit

Will this stretch my heart, deepen my trust, and help me grow?

- Will this make me more compassionate?
- Am I becoming more Christlike — or more self-protective?
- Will this bear fruit beyond today?

How Do I Know If I'm Following God's Will?

We often want black-and-white answers:

"If it brings peace, it's from God. If there's conflict, it isn't."

But real discernment is more complex — and more relational.

A Discernment Compass: Questions to Ask

1. What is my *intention*?

Am I seeking truth, justice, healing — or self-protection, image, revenge?

- God honors honest striving. “Blessed are the pure of heart” doesn’t mean perfect — it means sincere.
- Right intention does *not* guarantee a smooth path.

2. What does the situation call for?

- Am I being asked to speak truth? To wait? To confront? To support?
- What would love *look like* here — not just feel like?

3. What fruit do I hope for — and what fruit might grow *later*?

- Some good fruit comes after pruning (John 15:2).
- Is the initial messiness leading to greater freedom or restoration in the long term?

4. How do I feel in my spirit before, during, and after?

- Even if others are upset, do I feel a quiet inner integrity?
- Do I feel regret or relief?
- Was I reactive or grounded?

5. How am I being stretched by this?

- Is this calling me to deeper compassion, stronger boundaries, more courageous truth-telling?
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When Conflict Follows a Peaceful Intention

Sometimes the most Spirit-led actions bring resistance.

Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey — in peace — but it still led to the Cross.

- **Conflict does not mean you failed.**
 - **Discomfort is not always a red flag.**
 - **Opposition is not always persecution, but it isn't always your fault either.**
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What Really Matters?

- ✓ Sincere effort to listen for God
- ✓ Willingness to bring the decision to prayer
- ✓ Desire to grow in love, truth, and freedom
- ✓ Openness to learn — even if you misjudge