Discernment Checklist

Discernment is faithful testing, not suspicion of everything or unquestioning acceptance of a spiritual claim. Pray for wisdom, read the passages in context, and weigh the claim with mature believers.

☐ **Begin with Scripture** — Does this agree with the whole counsel of Scripture, read in context? No impression, dream, or leader can authorize disobedience to God's Word. 2 Timothy 3:16–17; Acts 17:11

☐ **Keep Jesus Christ central** — Does the message honor the biblical Jesus and lead to allegiance to him, rather than fascination with a messenger, secret knowledge, or spiritual spectacle? 1 John 4:1–3; Colossians 1:15–20

☐ **Weigh; do not simply accept** — Write down what was actually said. Distinguish the biblical text from someone's interpretation or personal impression. Welcome testing without quenching the Spirit. 1 Thessalonians 5:19–22; 1 Corinthians 14:29

☐ **Examine character and fruit** — Look for truthfulness, love, patience, self-control, and integrity over time. Charisma, apparent success, and an emotional response do not prove a claim is from God. Matthew 7:15–20; Galatians 5:22–23

☐ **Seek accountable counsel** — Ask mature believers who know the situation and can disagree freely. For major decisions, seek more than one perspective; protect privacy without accepting imposed secrecy. Proverbs 11:14; 15:22

☐ **Reject coercion and exploitation** — Watch for threats, pressure to give money, flattery, isolation, or "God told me, so you cannot question me." Spiritual leadership serves; it does not dominate. 1 Peter 5:2–3; 2 Corinthians 1:24

☐ **Test your own motives** — Am I seeking obedience, or confirmation of ambition, fear, resentment, or convenience? Receive correction. An inner feeling of peace alone does not establish truth. Psalm 139:23–24; James 3:13–18

☐ **Choose a wise, proportionate response** — If uncertain, wait, gather facts, and take a small faithful step rather than an irreversible leap. Uncertainty is not permission to neglect a clear duty or someone's safety. James 1:5; Proverbs 14:15; Micah 6:8

Record your response

Claim or decision: _____ Biblical evidence: _____
Counsel sought: _____ Next step / review date: _____

Original synthesis, not a quotation or denominational endorsement. Scripture remains the authority; theological traditions differ. If a claim involves abuse or danger, seek appropriate help rather than waiting for an impression.