THE DAILY BREAD

The Magnificat of the Beloved



Discerning the Spirit's Promptings

A FORMATION BOOK BY

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The Everyday Apostle

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Discerning

the Spirit's Promptings

Telling His Voice From the Others

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INTRODUCTION

Whose Voice Is That

Many women have a real sensitivity to interior movements, a sense that something is being asked of them, a prompting toward one path or another, a feeling that God is drawing them a certain way. This attunement to the inner life, to the promptings of conscience and the stirrings of the heart, is often stronger in women, and it is a genuine gift. But it is also a danger, for without a way to tell which inner movements are from the Holy Spirit and which are merely emotion, desire, fear, or preference, a woman may mistake her own feelings for the voice of God, or miss His true promptings amid the noise of her own heart. The gift of attunement needs a framework, a way of discernment, or it becomes indistinguishable from sentiment.

This book is about that discernment, about telling the Spirit's promptings from the other voices within. It will show that a woman's attunement to interior movements is a gift that needs a framework; that the Spirit is not the only voice speaking within her; the marks by which the Spirit's promptings can be recognized; how to test a prompting against the truth of Scripture and the Church; the difference between true spiritual consolation and its counterfeits; the danger of self-deception and the safeguards against it; and how to respond once a prompting is discerned. The aim is not to make a woman doubt every inner movement but to give her a way to discern, so that she can follow the Holy Spirit with confidence and not be misled by the other voices that speak within her.

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God. — 1 John 4:1

The Scripture does not tell a woman to believe every inner movement but to test the spirits, to discern whether they are from God, for not every voice within is His. This book will teach her how: recognizing the gift and its need for a framework; knowing the several voices within; learning the marks of the Spirit's promptings; testing them against the truth; distinguishing true consolation from its counterfeits; guarding against self-deception; and responding rightly. A woman's sensitivity to the inner life is a gift, but it needs discernment. This book will give her the framework, so that she can tell the Spirit's voice from the others and follow Him with confidence.

CHAPTER ONE

A Gift That Needs Training

Attunement Is Not Enough by Itself

A woman's sensitivity to interior movements is a real gift, but by itself it is not enough, for the gift of attunement needs to be trained in discernment, or it cannot tell the Spirit's promptings from the many other stirrings of the heart. Understanding that attunement to the inner life is a gift that requires training in discernment prepares a woman to develop the skill that makes her sensitivity reliable rather than misleading.

Solid food is for the mature, who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. — Hebrews 5:14

A Real and Valuable Gift

The sensitivity many women have to interior movements, to the promptings of conscience and the stirrings of the heart, is a real and valuable gift, a natural attunement to the inner life that can serve a woman's relationship with God. Women are often especially attuned to the inner life, sensitive to interior movements, to the promptings of conscience, to the subtle sense that something is being asked, and this attunement is a genuine gift, a God-given sensitivity that can make a woman responsive to the Holy Spirit and alert to the movements of grace within her. This means a woman's sensitivity to the inner life is not a weakness or an overactive imagination but a real gift, a valuable capacity for attending to the interior movements through which God often works, so that she should value her attunement rather than dismiss it. The woman who recognizes her attunement as a real and valuable gift values her sensitivity to the inner life as a capacity God can use. A real and valuable gift is a woman's sensitivity to interior movements, a natural attunement to the inner life and the promptings of conscience that can serve her relationship with God.

The Gift Without Discernment

Yet attunement without discernment is unreliable, for a woman who feels interior movements but cannot tell their source may mistake her own emotions, desires, or fears for the voice of God. The gift of attunement, valuable as it is, becomes a danger without discernment, for a woman highly sensitive to interior movements but unable to distinguish their sources is apt to confuse them, taking her own strong feelings, her desires, her anxieties, or her preferences for the promptings of the Holy Spirit, so that her very sensitivity can mislead her if it is not trained to discern. This means attunement by itself is not enough and can even be dangerous, for without discernment a woman cannot tell the Spirit's voice from her own heart's, so that her sensitivity, untrained, may lead her astray as easily as toward God. The woman who sees the gift without discernment recognizes that her attunement needs training to be reliable, lest it mislead her. The gift

without discernment is unreliable, for a woman who feels interior movements but cannot tell their source may mistake her own emotions, desires, or fears for the voice of God.

Discernment Is Trained

The ability to discern the sources of interior movements is not automatic but trained, developed through practice, instruction, and experience, so that a woman grows in discernment over time rather than possessing it all at once. The Scripture speaks of those whose powers of discernment have been trained by practice to distinguish good from evil, revealing that discernment is a learned skill, developed through experience, instruction, and the practice of attending to and testing interior movements, so that a woman grows in the ability to discern over time, training her gift of attunement into a reliable discernment. This means a woman should not expect perfect discernment at once but should give herself to learning it, training her sensitivity through practice and guidance, so that her gift of attunement matures into a trained discernment able to tell the Spirit's promptings from the rest. The woman who understands that discernment is trained gives herself to developing it, maturing her attunement into a reliable skill. Discernment is trained, developed through practice, instruction, and experience, so that a woman grows in the ability to discern the sources of interior movements over time rather than possessing it all at once.

CHAPTER TWO

Not the Only Voice

The Sources of Interior Movements

A crucial truth for discernment is that the Holy Spirit is not the only voice that speaks within a woman, for interior movements can arise from several sources, from the Spirit, from her own nature, and from the enemy, so that not every prompting is from God. Understanding that interior movements come from several sources, not only the Holy Spirit, is the foundation of discernment, for a woman cannot tell the Spirit's voice until she knows it is not the only one.

Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. — 2 Corinthians 11:14

Movements From the Spirit

Some interior movements genuinely come from the Holy Spirit, who prompts a woman toward God, toward virtue, and toward the good, so that the Spirit is one real source of

the stirrings she feels. The Holy Spirit does truly speak within a woman, prompting her toward God, drawing her to prayer, nudging her toward virtue and good works, giving her a sense of what He is asking, so that some of the interior movements she feels are genuinely from the Spirit, real promptings of grace within her. This means a woman should not doubt that the Spirit speaks within her, for He is a real source of interior movements, genuinely prompting and guiding her, so that discernment is not about denying the Spirit's voice but about distinguishing it from the others. The woman who recognizes movements from the Spirit knows that He genuinely speaks within her, one real source of the stirrings she feels. Movements from the Spirit are real, for the Holy Spirit genuinely prompts a woman toward God, virtue, and the good, so that some of the interior movements she feels are true promptings of grace.

Movements From Yourself

Many interior movements arise simply from a woman's own nature, her emotions, desires, moods, fears, and preferences, which can feel like spiritual promptings but come from herself rather than from God. A great many of the stirrings a woman feels come not from the Spirit or the enemy but simply from herself, from her own emotions and moods, her desires and attractions, her fears and anxieties, her temperament and preferences, so that much of her inner life is the movement of her own nature, which can masquerade as spiritual prompting but is in fact her own feeling. This means a woman must reckon with the large role her own nature plays in her interior movements, for many stirrings that feel like God's voice are simply her own desires, fears, or moods, so that discernment requires distinguishing the Spirit's promptings from the movements of her own heart. The woman who recognizes movements from herself can distinguish her own emotions and desires from the Spirit's promptings, not mistaking her feelings for God's voice. Movements from yourself, the emotions, desires, moods, and fears of a woman's own nature, can feel like spiritual promptings but come from herself, so that much of her inner life is her own feeling rather than God's voice.

Movements From the Enemy

Some interior movements come from the enemy, who can disguise himself as an angel of light, prompting toward evil or discouragement in ways that may seem good, so that a woman must reckon with this deceptive source as well. The spiritual enemy also works within a woman's interior life, suggesting thoughts, stirring temptations, sowing discouragement or false attractions, and because he can disguise himself as an angel of light, his promptings may seem good or spiritual, so that some interior movements come from the enemy, whose deceptions can be subtle and appear holy. This means a woman must reckon with the enemy as a source of interior movements, not assuming that a

prompting is from God merely because it feels spiritual or good, for the enemy can counterfeit light, so that discernment must account for his deceptions. The woman who recognizes movements from the enemy is alert to his deceptions, not assuming every spiritual-seeming prompting is from God. Movements from the enemy come from a deceiver who disguises himself as an angel of light, so that some interior movements, prompting toward evil or discouragement, may seem good, and a woman must reckon with this deceptive source.

CHAPTER THREE

Marks of His Voice

How the Spirit Tends to Prompt

Though discernment is never mechanical, the Holy Spirit's promptings tend to bear certain marks, drawing a woman toward God, toward virtue and peace, in a manner consistent with His character, so that these marks help her recognize His voice. Understanding the marks by which the Spirit's promptings tend to be recognized gives a woman signs to look for in distinguishing His voice from the others, even though discernment always requires more than a checklist.

The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits. — James 3:17

Toward God and Virtue

The Holy Spirit's promptings characteristically draw a woman toward God and toward virtue, toward prayer, love, humility, and the good, so that a prompting leading away from God or toward sin is not from Him. A reliable mark of the Spirit's voice is its direction, for the Holy Spirit always prompts toward God and the good, drawing a woman to prayer, to love, to humility, to patience, to the virtues and the will of God, never toward sin, pride, or away from God, so that the direction of a prompting is a key mark of its source. This means a woman can test a prompting by where it leads, for if it draws her toward God and virtue it bears the mark of the Spirit, while if it leads toward sin or away from God it is not from Him, so that the Spirit's promptings are known in part by their godly direction. The woman who looks for the mark of toward God and virtue tests a prompting by where it leads, recognizing the Spirit in what draws her to God and the good. Toward God and virtue is a mark of the Spirit's voice, for His promptings draw a woman to prayer, love, humility, and the good, so that a prompting leading away from God or toward sin is not from Him.

A Deep and Lasting Peace

The Spirit's promptings tend to bring a deep and lasting peace, a settled calm that endures, rather than the agitation, compulsion, or anxious urgency that often marks movements from fear or the enemy. The Holy Spirit characteristically brings peace, a deep and settled calm that accompanies His promptings and endures, so that a genuine movement of the Spirit tends to leave a woman peaceful, even amid difficulty, while movements marked by agitation, anxious urgency, compulsion, or turmoil are suspect, often signs of fear or the enemy rather than the Spirit who brings peace. This means a woman can look to the quality of peace as a mark of discernment, for the Spirit's promptings bring a deep and lasting peace, while anxious pressure or agitation suggests another source, so that the peace or unrest accompanying a prompting helps reveal its origin. The woman who looks for a deep and lasting peace tests a prompting by the peace or agitation it brings, recognizing the Spirit in a settled and enduring calm. A deep and lasting peace is a mark of the Spirit's promptings, a settled calm that endures rather than the agitation or anxious urgency that often marks movements from fear or the enemy.

The Quality of the Fruit

The Spirit's promptings bear good fruit, the wisdom from above being pure, peaceable, gentle, and full of mercy, so that a woman can discern a prompting's source in part by the fruit it bears in her and her actions. The Scripture describes the wisdom from above as pure, peaceable, gentle, reasonable, and full of mercy and good fruits, giving a picture of what the Spirit's promptings produce, so that a woman can discern a movement's source by its fruit, for the Spirit leads to what is pure, peaceable, and good, while promptings that produce bitterness, division, pride, or harm are not from Him. This means a woman can test a prompting by the quality of the fruit it bears, both in her interior disposition and in its likely effects, for the Spirit's promptings are known by their good and peaceable fruit, so that the character of the fruit helps reveal the source. The woman who weighs the quality of the fruit discerns a prompting by what it produces, recognizing the Spirit in pure, peaceable, and merciful fruit. The quality of the fruit is a mark of the Spirit's voice, for the wisdom from above is pure, peaceable, gentle, and full of mercy, so that a woman discerns a prompting's source in part by the good fruit it bears.

CHAPTER FOUR

Testing Against the Truth

The Spirit Never Contradicts Himself

The first and surest test of any prompting is whether it accords with the truth God has revealed, for the Holy Spirit never contradicts the Scripture, the teaching of the Church, or a woman's genuine duties, so that a prompting against these is certainly not from Him. Understanding how to test a prompting against the revealed truth gives a woman a firm and objective standard for discernment, a sure check on the movements of her heart.

Even if an angel from heaven should preach a gospel contrary to the one we preached, let him be accursed. — Galatians 1:8

The Spirit Never Contradicts Revelation

The Holy Spirit who inspired the Scripture and guides the Church will never prompt a woman to anything contrary to the truth He has revealed, so that a prompting against Scripture or Church teaching cannot be from Him. Because the Holy Spirit is the author of the Scripture and the guide of the Church, He is perfectly consistent and never contradicts Himself, so that He will never prompt a woman to believe or do anything contrary to the truth He has revealed in Scripture and through the Church, for the same Spirit cannot speak against Himself, so that any prompting opposed to revealed truth is certainly not from Him. This means a woman has in revealed truth a sure test of discernment, for whatever contradicts Scripture or the Church's teaching cannot be from the Spirit, however spiritual or compelling it feels, so that the consistency of the Spirit gives her a firm standard. The woman who knows the Spirit never contradicts revelation tests every prompting against revealed truth, rejecting whatever opposes it as not from God. The Spirit never contradicts revelation, for the same Spirit who inspired Scripture and guides the Church will never prompt a woman against the truth He has revealed, so that a prompting opposed to revealed truth cannot be from Him.

Testing Against Scripture and the Church

A woman tests a prompting by measuring it against Scripture and the teaching of the Church, rejecting whatever conflicts with them, so that the objective truth serves as a check on her subjective sense. The practical way to apply this test is to measure a prompting against the objective standards of Scripture and the Church's teaching, asking whether what she feels moved toward accords with the revealed truth, so that if a prompting conflicts with Scripture or Church teaching she rejects it as not from the Spirit, while if it accords with them it passes this first test. This means a woman checks her interior movements against the external and objective truth of Scripture and the Church, using them as a firm standard that corrects her subjective sense, so that she is not left to her feelings alone but has a reliable measure against which to test every prompting. The woman who tests against Scripture and the Church measures her

promptings by the objective truth, rejecting whatever conflicts with it. Testing against Scripture and the Church measures a prompting by the objective revealed truth, so that a woman rejects whatever conflicts with it and uses the Church's teaching as a firm check on her subjective sense.

Testing Against Your Duties

A woman also tests a prompting against her genuine duties and state in life, for the Spirit will not prompt her to abandon the real obligations God has given her, so that a prompting against her duties is suspect. Besides Scripture and Church teaching, a woman tests a prompting against her genuine duties and responsibilities, the obligations of her state in life, for the Holy Spirit will not ordinarily prompt her to neglect or abandon the real duties God has given her, to her family, her commitments, her vocation, so that a prompting that would lead her to shirk her genuine responsibilities is suspect and likely not from Him. This means a woman weighs a prompting against her actual duties, recognizing that the Spirit works within and not against the responsibilities of her state in life, so that a supposed prompting to neglect her real obligations is a sign of another source. The woman who tests against her duties weighs a prompting by whether it accords with the genuine responsibilities God has given her, suspicious of what would lead her to abandon them. Testing against your duties measures a prompting by a woman's genuine obligations and state in life, for the Spirit will not prompt her to abandon the real duties God has given her, so that a prompting against them is suspect.

CHAPTER FIVE

True Peace and False Peace

Consolation and Its Counterfeits

A key to discernment is learning to tell true spiritual peace, the consolation that comes from God, from its counterfeits, the false peace or the agitation that comes from other sources, for feelings of peace and unrest can both mislead if not rightly understood. Understanding the difference between true consolation and its counterfeits, between the peace that is from God and the feelings that are not, equips a woman to read the interior movements of peace and unrest rightly.

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. — Philippians 4:7

The Peace That Is From God

True spiritual consolation is marked by a deep peace that comes from God, a peace that surpasses understanding, that draws a woman toward God and increases her faith, hope, and love. The consolation that comes from the Holy Spirit is marked by a particular quality of peace, deep and surpassing understanding, that settles the soul, draws a woman toward God, and increases her faith, hope, and love, so that true consolation is not mere pleasant feeling but a peace that orients her to God and bears spiritual fruit, the genuine touch of the Spirit on her soul. This means a woman can recognize true consolation by its depth and its direction, for the peace that is from God surpasses understanding and draws her toward Him, increasing the theological virtues, so that genuine consolation is distinguished by these marks from mere emotional pleasure. The woman who knows the peace that is from God recognizes true consolation by its depth and its drawing her toward God. The peace that is from God marks true consolation, a deep peace surpassing understanding that draws a woman toward God and increases her faith, hope, and love.

Counterfeit Peace

Not every feeling of peace is from God, for there is a counterfeit peace, a false calm that can accompany a wrong path, a settling of conscience that is really its dulling, so that a woman must not trust every peaceful feeling. A feeling of peace is not an infallible sign of God's will, for there is a false or counterfeit peace, a superficial calm that can accompany a wrong choice, a quieting of conscience that is really its numbing, a complacency that feels like peace but is not from God, so that a woman cannot simply trust any peaceful feeling as the Spirit's confirmation. This means a woman must discern the quality and source of her peace, not assuming that every calm feeling is from God, for a counterfeit peace can accompany sin or self-deception, so that she tests her peace rather than trusting it blindly, distinguishing the true from the false. The woman who recognizes counterfeit peace does not trust every peaceful feeling but tests its quality and source, wary of a false calm. Counterfeit peace is a false calm that can accompany a wrong path, a dulling of conscience that feels like peace but is not from God, so that a woman must not trust every peaceful feeling as the Spirit's confirmation.

Reading the Movements Rightly

A woman learns to read the interior movements of peace and unrest rightly by attending not only to the feeling but to its direction and fruit, discerning whether a given peace or disturbance is drawing her toward God or away from Him. Discernment of consolation requires reading the interior movements with care, attending not merely to whether a woman feels peace or unrest but to what the feeling is doing, whether a peace is drawing her toward God and the good or lulling her into complacency, whether a disturbance is

the enemy's discouragement or the healthy unrest of a conscience rightly troubled, so that she reads the movements by their direction and fruit. This means a woman does not take her feelings at face value but interprets them, discerning whether a given peace or unrest is from God by where it leads and what it produces, so that she reads her interior movements rightly rather than being ruled by them. The woman who reads the movements rightly interprets her peace and unrest by their direction and fruit, not taking her feelings at face value. Reading the movements rightly means attending not only to the feeling of peace or unrest but to its direction and fruit, so that a woman discerns whether a given movement is drawing her toward God or away from Him.

CHAPTER SIX

The Danger of Self-Deception

Baptizing Your Own Will

The greatest danger in discernment is self-deception, the ease with which a woman can baptize her own preferences and call them the Spirit's will, so that discernment requires humility, honesty, and safeguards against the deceptions of her own heart. Understanding the danger of self-deception and the safeguards against it protects a woman from the subtle error of mistaking her own desires for the voice of God.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? — Jeremiah 17:9

Mistaking Desire for the Spirit

The commonest self-deception in discernment is mistaking one's own desire for the Spirit's will, unconsciously dressing up what one already wants as a prompting from God. The easiest error in discernment is to take what one already wants and call it the will of God, for a woman's heart inclines toward its own desires and can unconsciously present them as spiritual promptings, so that she convinces herself that the Spirit is leading her exactly where her own preference already pointed, mistaking her desire for His voice. This means a woman must be especially wary when a supposed prompting conveniently aligns with what she already wanted, for the heart is deceitful and readily baptizes its own will, so that she examines such promptings with particular honesty rather than trusting them because they please her. The woman who guards against mistaking desire for the Spirit examines her promptings honestly, especially when they align with what she already wants. Mistaking desire for the Spirit is the commonest self-deception, a

woman unconsciously dressing up what she already wants as a prompting from God, so that she must be wary when a prompting conveniently aligns with her own preference.

The Safeguard of Humility

The chief safeguard against self-deception is humility, a distrust of one's own certainty and a willingness to be wrong, which keeps a woman honest before God about the true source of her promptings. Against the deceptions of the heart, humility is the great safeguard, for the humble woman does not trust her own certainty absolutely, remains willing to be wrong, submits her discernment to testing, and is honest with herself about her mixed motives, so that humility keeps her from the proud self-assurance that is most easily deceived, holding her open to correction and to the truth about her promptings. This means a woman discerns most safely in humility, distrusting her own certainty, remaining open to being wrong, and refusing to cling to a prompting merely because she is sure of it, so that humility guards her against the self-deception that pride invites. The woman who keeps the safeguard of humility distrusts her own certainty and remains open to correction, guarded against self-deception. The safeguard of humility protects against self-deception, a distrust of one's own certainty and a willingness to be wrong, so that a woman remains honest before God about the true source of her promptings.

Counsel and Patience

Two further safeguards against self-deception are counsel, seeking the guidance of a wise and trusted other, and patience, not rushing to act on a prompting but letting it be tested by time. Besides humility, a woman guards against self-deception through counsel and patience, for seeking the counsel of a wise spiritual guide or trusted other brings an outside perspective that can see what she cannot, and patience, refusing to act hastily on a prompting but letting it be tested over time, allows a true movement of the Spirit to be confirmed and a false one to be exposed, so that counsel and patience protect her from the errors of her own heart. This means a woman should not discern important matters alone or in haste, but seek wise counsel and give the prompting time, so that these safeguards expose self-deception and confirm genuine promptings, protecting her from acting on a deceived heart. The woman who uses counsel and patience seeks wise guidance and lets her promptings be tested over time, guarded against self-deception. Counsel and patience are safeguards against self-deception, the guidance of a wise other and the testing of a prompting over time, so that a woman is protected from acting hastily on the errors of her own heart.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Responding to His Voice

Acting on What You Discern

Once a woman has discerned a genuine prompting of the Holy Spirit, discernment is completed in response, in acting on His voice promptly and generously, for a prompting discerned but ignored bears no fruit. Understanding how to respond to the Spirit's voice, acting on what is discerned with promptness and generosity, completes the work of discernment and lets the Spirit actually lead a woman's life.

Do not quench the Spirit. Test everything; hold fast what is good. — 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21

Discernment Completed in Action

Discernment is not complete until a woman acts on what she has discerned, for the purpose of recognizing the Spirit's prompting is to follow it, so that a genuine prompting discerned but not obeyed bears no fruit. The work of discernment aims not merely at recognizing the Spirit's voice but at following it, so that discernment is completed only in action, in a woman's actually doing what she has discerned the Spirit to be asking, for a prompting correctly identified but then ignored accomplishes nothing, the Spirit's guidance frustrated by a lack of response. This means a woman must carry her discernment through to action, actually following the promptings she has discerned to be from God, so that her discernment bears fruit in a life actually led by the Spirit rather than merely recognizing His voice and failing to obey it. The woman whose discernment is completed in action follows the Spirit's promptings, letting her discernment bear fruit in obedience. Discernment completed in action means a woman acts on what she has discerned, for a genuine prompting recognized but ignored bears no fruit, and the purpose of discernment is to follow the Spirit's voice.

Promptly and Generously

A woman responds best to the Spirit by acting promptly and generously, not delaying or half-obeying but following His prompting fully and without reserve, so that she cooperates wholeheartedly with His leading. The right response to a discerned prompting of the Spirit is prompt and generous, for delay can let the prompting fade or self-will reassert itself, and half-hearted obedience holds something back, so that a woman does best to respond promptly, acting while the prompting is clear, and generously, following it fully and without reserve, giving herself wholeheartedly to what the Spirit asks. This means a woman cooperates most fruitfully with the Spirit by a prompt and generous

response, not delaying or obeying partially but following His discerned prompting fully and at once, so that her response matches the generosity of the God who prompts her. The woman who responds promptly and generously follows the Spirit's prompting fully and without delay, cooperating wholeheartedly with His leading. Promptly and generously is how a woman responds best to the Spirit, acting without delay and following His prompting fully rather than half-obeying, so that she cooperates wholeheartedly with His leading.

Growing in Discernment

As a woman practices discernment and responds to the Spirit, she grows in the ability to recognize His voice, so that discernment becomes surer over time and she is increasingly led by the Spirit through her life. The practice of discernment, like any skill, grows with use, so that as a woman attends to interior movements, tests them, and responds to the genuine promptings of the Spirit, she becomes more familiar with His voice, more able to recognize it, more attuned to His particular way of leading her, so that her discernment grows surer and more refined over time. This means a woman's discernment is not static but develops through practice and response, growing more reliable as she exercises it, so that over a lifetime she becomes increasingly able to recognize and follow the Spirit's voice, led by Him more and more surely. The woman who grows in discernment becomes ever more able to recognize the Spirit's voice, her discernment refined through practice and response. Growing in discernment comes through practice and response, so that as a woman tests and follows the Spirit's promptings she becomes more familiar with His voice and more surely led by Him over time.

CONCLUSION

Follow His Voice

The woman attuned to interior movements but unsure which were from God now has a framework for discernment. We have seen that her attunement is a gift that needs training; that the Spirit is not the only voice, for movements come also from herself and the enemy; the marks by which His promptings can be recognized, their direction toward God, their deep peace, their good fruit; how to test a prompting against Scripture, the Church, and her duties; how to tell true consolation from its counterfeits; the danger of self-deception and the safeguards of humility, counsel, and patience; and how to respond promptly and generously to what she discerns.

Through all of it runs a single aim: follow His voice. The gift of your sensitivity to the inner life is meant to lead you to the Holy Spirit, and discernment is what lets you tell His voice from the others, so that you can follow Him with confidence rather than being misled by your own heart or deceived by the enemy. Do not quench the Spirit, but test everything and hold fast to what is good.

So follow His voice. Value your attunement to the inner life, and train it in discernment. Remember that the Spirit is not the only voice, and learn to tell the sources apart. Look for the marks of His promptings, their drawing toward God, their deep peace, their good fruit. Test every prompting against Scripture, the Church, and your duties, for the Spirit never contradicts the truth. Distinguish true consolation from its counterfeits. Guard against self-deception with humility, counsel, and patience. And when you have discerned His voice, respond promptly and generously, growing in discernment as you go. Your sensitivity to the inner life is a gift. With discernment, it becomes a way of following the Holy Spirit, so that you can tell His voice from the others and go where He leads.

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