

## Discerning Deception

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- Spiritual Discernment – judging a matter with God’s help, not by appearance

*1 Samuel 16:7* But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

*Nehemiah 6:1-4* When word came to Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab and the rest of our enemies that I had rebuilt the wall and not a gap was left in it—though up to that time I had not set the doors in the gates— **2** Sanballat and Geshem sent me this message: “Come, let us meet together in one of the villages on the plain of Ono.” But they were scheming to harm me; **3** so I sent messengers to them with this reply: “I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?” **4** Four times they sent me the same message, and each time I gave them the same answer.

- Our priorities help us not be distracted by the desires of others

*2 Corinthians 11:13-15* For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.

- Seek God’s discernment to know the difference between good and evil

*Hebrews 5:14* But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

*Proverbs 29:5* Those who flatter their neighbors are spreading nets for their feet.

*Nehemiah 6:5-9* Then, the fifth time, Sanballat sent his aide to me with the same message, and in his hand was an unsealed letter **6** in which was written: “It is reported among the nations—and Geshem says it is true—that you and the Jews are plotting to revolt, and therefore you are building the wall. Moreover, according to these reports you are about to become their king **7** and have even appointed prophets to make this proclamation about you in Jerusalem: ‘There is a king in Judah!’ Now this report will get back to the king; so come, let us meet together.” **8** I sent him this reply: “Nothing like what you are saying is happening; you are just making it up out of your head.” **9** They were all trying to frighten us, thinking, “Their hands will get too weak for the work, and it will not be completed.” But I prayed, “Now strengthen my hands.”

- False accusations can bring fear. Trust God instead of fearing \_\_\_\_\_

*Psalms 34:4* I sought the LORD, and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears.

**Nehemiah 6:10-13** One day I went to the house of Shem-a-iah son of De-la-iah, the son of Me-het-a-bel, who was shut in at his home. He said, "Let us meet in the house of God, inside the temple, and let us close the temple doors, because men are coming to kill you—by night they are coming to kill you." **11** But I said, "Should a man like me run away? Or should someone like me go into the temple to save his life? I will not go!" **12** I realized that God had not sent him, but that he had prophesied against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. **13** He had been hired to intimidate me so that I would commit a sin by doing this, and then they would give me a bad name to discredit me.

- Test "open doors" against God's Will

**Matthew 26:41** "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

- The fear of man can be a personal prison

**Proverbs 29:25** Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe

**Nehemiah 6:14-16** Remember Tobiah and Sanballat, my God, because of what they have done; remember also the prophet No-ad-iah and how she and the rest of the prophets have been trying to intimidate me. **15** So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days. **16** When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God.

- Most people see problems, but godly leaders see solutions with God's help

**Nehemiah 7:1-3** After the wall had been rebuilt and I had set the doors in place, the gatekeepers, the musicians and the Levites were appointed. **2** I put in charge of Jerusalem my brother Hanani, along with Hananiah the commander of the citadel, because he was a man of integrity and feared God more than most people do. **3** I said to them, "The gates of Jerusalem are not to be opened until the sun is hot. While the gatekeepers are still on duty, have them shut the doors and bar them. Also appoint residents of Jerusalem as guards, some at their posts and some near their own houses."

- We all need discernment to know who to allow into our lives
- **Keys to help us discern deception:**
- Stay focused on God's priorities
- Don't be motivated by fear
- Seek wisdom related to "open doors"
- Ask God for discernment
- Text **YES** to 321.574.6970 if you have chosen to accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

All Bible references are from the New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise noted. NLT = New Living Translation.