

How to Tell if It's God or Just You: A Discernment Checklist

([Intro Video](#))

Struggling to know if it's God's voice or your own thoughts? This practical discernment checklist breaks down the difference between ego, intellect, and hearing God clearly.

It's not always obvious. Sometimes what feels like leading is really just momentum — a passing thought, a bread crumb I've extrapolated into a mandate. Sometimes it's an opinion wearing spiritual clothes: something I want, or don't want, dressed up as discernment. And sometimes it's a charismatic expectation — the assumption that God will simply come to me, speak to me, without my having to go anywhere for it. That expectation feels pious, but it quietly produces breadcrumbs, hunches, and hints instead of actual conversations. Underneath it is a belief I don't often say out loud: that I don't have to ascend as a son to hear Father. I can just wait, and Holy Spirit will come.

That's Ego-Identity. And it comes in three flavors, all of them presumption wearing different masks:

- 1) What I should do — because of my identity, my role, my gifting. This is the voice of religion and worldly stature: I should do this because of who I am.
- 2) What I can do — because I want to, because I'm good at it. This is carnality dressed as capability: I can do this because I want to.
- 3) What I can't do — because I'm not qualified, not equipped, afraid. This is insecurity: I can't do this because I'm not _____.

All three sound like intellectual self-knowledge. None of them are conversations.

Living Words Are a Different Category

Living Words don't come from analyzing my identity — they come from being in my seat in the Council, having the conversation. This is the difference between the Path of Life and mere self-direction: the Path of Life comes from Words of Life, not from intellect applied to circumstances, however sanctified that intellect feels.

Proverbs 16:3 puts it simply:

Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established.

And Psalm 37:4-5 pairs delight with commitment:

Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart...

Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this.

Commit your way — not consult after the fact, not run it by Him once I've already decided. Sons commit their way before they decide, act, or work. That order matters. It's the difference between bringing Father a plan to invoke His blessing and bringing Father the plan itself, still unformed, and asking what's on His heart.

Two questions surface this: Have you had a conversation about your plans in the Council, or are they the presumption of your identity? And: Are there accusations or strongholds obstructing your way? If there's no Living Word underneath a plan, ego-identity is all that's left holding it up.

Sons Lay Down Identity to Pick It Back Up

Here's the good news: identity isn't the enemy. It's meant to complement following the Lamb, not compete with it. The problem isn't having an identity — it's when ego-identity competes for the driver's seat instead of walking in step with what Father is actually doing.

Sons can lay down their lives — their identity — and course-correct. That's what spiritual agility looks like: not opinionated, not preachy, not defending a position because it's mine. Righteousness, in this frame, is simpler than we usually make it: being on the same page with Father, keeping in step with the Spirit (Galatians 5:25), doing what Father is doing (John 5:19). Not doing what I think Father would probably want, but doing what I've actually heard.

This is also why sons can stay agile without becoming anxious — Father's mercies and manna are new every day. Laying down yesterday's identity isn't loss; it's making room for today's Living Word. The Council isn't a one-time download that then gets applied by memory. It's daily bread.

Jn 10:17 – *For this reason the Father loves Me,
because I lay down My life so that I may take it back.
18) No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it (my Identity) down on My own.
I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it back.*

The Practical Test

When it's time to make a plan, a decision, or choose a direction, it's worth pausing on the front end and asking which category it's actually in:

- Is this what I should do — identity, role, obligation?
- Is this what I can/want to do — capability, desire, ambition?
- Is this what I can't/won't do — fear, self-assessed disqualification?

Or is it something else entirely: a Living Word, committed in conversation, received before the decision was made rather than justified after?

None of the three identity-flavors are inherently sinful. But none of them are Living Words either, and intellectual presumption is never a substitute for hearing Father. The invitation is the same one it's always been — come to your seat in Heaven, have the conversation, commit your way — and let what's said there, not what's assumed about yourself, be what moves your feet.

One place this shows up concretely: conspiracy theories.

Conspiracy Theories — There's one more practical implication. A conspiracy theory is neither confirmed nor denied by how compelling it feels — it stays in the realm of intellectual conjecture until discernment or hard data settles it. The danger is that our opinions on conspiracy theories can become a substitute for hearing God: a way to feed intellectual confirmation bias while feeling like charismatic discernment; aka, a temptation that feeds a carnal appetite in us. That's why propaganda narratives in marketing, social media, and politics are designed to feed predispositions. That's why propaganda narratives work so well. Sons who *follow the Lamb wherever* are not led by their predispositions, nor fed by propaganda narratives. We follow best when we are comfortable with what we don't know and control — a key ingredient in Sonship is trusting Father.

This blog was inspired by a Council session with much more that you will enjoy:

[2026-07-26 Council - Discerning My Way Vs His](#)

Quick Checklist: My Ways vs. His Ways

	<i>My Ways (Ego-Identity)</i>	<i>His Ways (Living Words)</i>
Source	A passing thought, opportunity a bread crumb extrapolated	A conversation, a seat in the Council
Posture	Waiting for God to come to me, “Feeling” His presence	Ascending as a son to the <i>Place He Prepared</i> (Jn 14:2-3)
Timing	Decide first, then run it past God	Committing to conversations before deciding, acting, working
“Should” voice	What I should do because of my identity, role, gifting	What Father is actually Saying and Doing
“Can” voice	What I want to do, because I can, I’m good at it	What Father is doing, that I’m invited into
“Can’t” voice	What I won’t do because I’m not qualified, afraid	The different Spirit built on Living Words, not intellectual self-assessment
Tone	Opinionated, preachy, defending a position	Spiritually agile, pliable, ready to course-correct
Alignment	My Intellectual plan, sanctified after the fact	Keeping in step with the Spirit (Gal 5:25); doing what Father is doing (Jn 5:19)
Renewal	A one-time download applied from memory	Mercies and Manna that are new every day
Confirmation	A conspiracy narrative that confirms what I already feel/want to believe	Tested by Spiritual discernment & data, not by how compelling it feels
Fruit	Presumption — Breadcrumbs, hunch, hints mistaken for direction	The Path of Life, Father’s plans (Pro 16:3, Ps 37:4-5)

Take the Next Step:

Progression to Sonship – Your Kingdom purpose and redemptive stories form the basis for your personal identity, purpose, value creation, and your business offer. Becoming your authentic self is the Father's non-religious key to flow and fruit in business and life. We offer practical and prophetic coaching to help you get there, flowing with your Father (co-laboring) instead of fighting circumstances and resistance alone. *Is this You?*

Read [the book](#) and Zoom with John for an overview of our process in [Kingdom Business Coaching](#).

Explainer Video – <https://youtu.be/k-jmiKK7gT0>

