SEPTEMBER 30, 2026 STUDY NOTES

What's Running You

Session 3: Is It Discernment or Is It Anxiety?

KEY SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- 1 Kings 18–19
- Hebrews 5:14
- Philippians 1:9–10
- Matthew 6:25

Biblical Case Study: Elijah

TONIGHT'S QUESTION

How do I know whether it's discernment or anxiety?

What Is Discernment?

Biblically, discernment is the Spirit-informed capacity to distinguish rightly concerning things in life (choices, people, etc).

- Cf. Hebrews 5:14
- Cf. Philippians 1:9–10

Discernment requires spiritual formation.

What About Anxiety?

Anxiety anticipates threat.

- It asks: “What could go wrong?”

1. Your internal state can affect how you interpret external information

HERE'S THE QUESTION

How often do we assume that because we felt something strongly, we interpreted it accurately?

KEY THOUGHT

Your feelings deserve attention, but they do not automatically deserve authority. The goal isn't to become emotionless. The goal is to become emotionally discerning.

2. Anxiety often predicts, while discernment perceives

Anxiety frequently fills empty spaces with frightening possibilities.

How Does Anxiety Fit Theologically and Biblically?

Cf. Matthew 6:25

From a faith perspective, anxiety can reveal several things:

- Anxiety can reveal where I am struggling with uncertainty.
- Anxiety can expose where control has become my counterfeit security.
- Anxiety can reveal the difference between what I believe intellectually and what I have learned to trust experientially.
- Anxiety can become an invitation to dependence.

Faith doesn't always make the anxious feeling disappear. Sometimes faith is refusing to let the anxious feeling become your theology.

KEY THOUGHT

Your anxiety gets to tell you how you feel. It does not get to tell you who God is.

3. Exhaustion can sound spiritual

Cf. 1 Kings 19:5–8

Before God addresses Elijah's theology, God attends to Elijah's body.

KEY THOUGHT

And sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is allow your body to recover before deciding what God is saying.

4. Anxiety can turn possibility into certainty

KEY THOUGHT

Anxiety can turn "I'm afraid this might happen" into "I know this is happening." Those are not the

same sentence.

5. Don't confuse intensity with revelation

Cf. 1 Kings 19:11–12

- If you aren't careful, you will interpret the intensity of your emotional response as the certainty of God's revelation.

Discernment can tolerate stillness.

- Discernment doesn't always demand an immediate response because discernment trusts that if God is speaking, clarity doesn't require panic.

One of the most important questions I can learn to ask will be is God speaking, or is my nervous system shouting?

KEY THOUGHT

And sometimes the clearest evidence that I am growing in discernment is that I no longer need an earthquake to convince me that God has spoken. Because God doesn't have to shout to be God.

Personal Inventory

Take a moment and answer these honestly.

1. What exactly am I feeling?

2. What evidence do I actually have?

3. Does this remind me of something I've experienced before?

4. What condition am I in?

5. Is Scripture supporting my response, or am I using Scripture to support my feeling?

6. Have I allowed time for clarity?

7. Have I invited wise people into my interpretation?