


the epistle of
1 JOHN



*LIVING IN DISCERNMENT AND CERTAINTY IN AN
UNCERTAIN WORLD*


MESSAGE THEME: *Living With Certainty in an Uncertain World by
Growing in Discernment*

1

Discernment Defined

Webster's Dictionary defines discernment as follows:

- a: the quality of being able to grasp and comprehend what is obscure; skill in discerning*
- b: an act of discerning; a power to see what is not evident to the average mind ...stresses accuracy; the power to distinguish and select what is true or appropriate or excellent.*



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Discernment Defined

“Discernment is not knowing the difference between right and wrong.

It is knowing the difference between right and almost right.”

- Charles Spurgeon



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Discernment is a matter of the Spirit

Philippians 1:9: “And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment...”

- *GR: aisthēsis - “perception ...[or] judgment;” from root word “to grasp or apprehend (by the senses) or to perceive.”*
- *Capacity to tell the difference between spiritual truth and spiritual error.*
- *To judge both the nature of the source of the content and the content itself.*
- *To perceive and judge what is perceived by the spirit vs Natural senses*



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Discernment is a matter of the Spirit

Apostle Paul: those who operate strictly in the realm of the “natural man” are not able to discern spiritual gifts and matters:

1 Corinthians 2:14 (RSV): The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man judges all things...



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Jesus Rebuked People for Failing to Exercise Discernment

Matthew 16:1-3 (NASB95): The Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Jesus, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. But He replied to them, “When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ “And in the morning, ‘There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times?”



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Jesus Rebuked People for Failing to Exercise Discernment

- *Jewish leaders were well-verse in OT Scriptures – yet not discernment*
 - *Jesus rebuked the religious, Scripture experts, and community leaders*
 - *We should take His rebuke very seriously today*
 - *We should ask ourselves, “is there more to this situation than meets the eye?”*
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Growing Need for Discernment Today

Rom 1:21: For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

2 Tim 4:3: For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires (NASB)



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Growing Need for Discernment Today

1 John 2:26: I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you.

2 Cor 11:3: But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

Mt 24:24: For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

We are in a spiritual and moral war - "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8 – ESV)



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Growing Need for Discernment Today

The Greatest Dangers of the 20th Century - General William Booth

William Booth (circa 1885-1910)	Meaning for Us Today - 6 Deceptions	Sample Scriptures
Religion w/o the Holy Spirit	Entertaining Teaching Style without Real Power	1 Cor 4:18-20
Salvation w/o Regeneration	"Saved" but Don't Change	James 2:19
Faith w/o Repentance	Mental Agreement with No Heart Brokenness	Jas 2:26; Acts 26:20
Politics w/o God	Progressive Culture with a Philosophy of Tolerance	2 Cor 11:19
Heaven w/o Hell	No Personal Responsibility or Consequences for Actions	Luke 12:4-5
"Christianity" without Christ	"Jesus" without Lordship	2 Cor 4:5; Phil 2:9-11



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Developing Discernment

The Asset of God's Truth

1 John 2:24 (ESV) Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father.

In 8:31-32: ... Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, **"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."**



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Developing Discernment

The Asset of God's Truth

Hebrews 4:12: For **the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**

PS 119:105: **Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.**



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Developing Discernment

The Asset of God's Truth

James 3:13-18: Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.



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Developing Discernment

The Asset of God's Truth

James 3:13-18 Provides Clarity

Earthly, Natural, Demonic	Godly "Wisdom From Above"
Bitter Jealousy (<i>heart issue – Discernment Required</i>)	Pure
Selfish Ambition (<i>heart issue - Discernment Required</i>)	Peaceable
Arrogant	Gentle
Lie against the Truth	Reasonable
Disorder	Full of Mercy and Good Fruits
"Every Evil Thing"	Unwavering
	Without Hypocrisy



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Developing Discernment

The Asset of the Holy Spirit

*1 John 2:20 (ESV) But you have been **anointed by the Holy One**, and you all have knowledge.*

*1 John 4:13 (ESV) By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because **he has given us of his Spirit**.*



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Developing Discernment

The Asset of the Holy Spirit

John 16:13: But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

Col 3:15: And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.



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Developing Discernment – “The Trouble with Tribbles” – Star Trek

Captain James T. Kirk – with “Tribbles”



1st Officer
Mr. Spock



Ship's Doctor
“Bones”



Klingon
Captain Koloth

A Federation Official
Serving on Deep Station K7



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APPLICATION – Growing in Discernment

We must live with discernment regarding the antichrist spirit!

1. Be Alert to the Holy Spirit in You; always listen for His guidance

“It must just be me”

Matt 7:15 (*Jesus*): “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”



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Developing Discernment

The Asset of the Holy Spirit

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APPLICATION – Growing in Discernment

Learn how to discern the spirit – 4 Simple Questions:

1. Ask yourself, “What am I feeling right now?” or, upon reflection, “What did I feel when I heard that or when I was with that person?”
2. Ask the Lord, “Is this feeling just me?” If so, or not certain, deal with it (4 R’s)
3. Once dealt with biblically, ask yourself, “Is the feeling still present?”
4. If it is still present, ask yourself, “Based on Scripture, is what I am feeling consistent with the fruit of the Spirit, or another biblical and godly attribute?” – Scripture is the test!

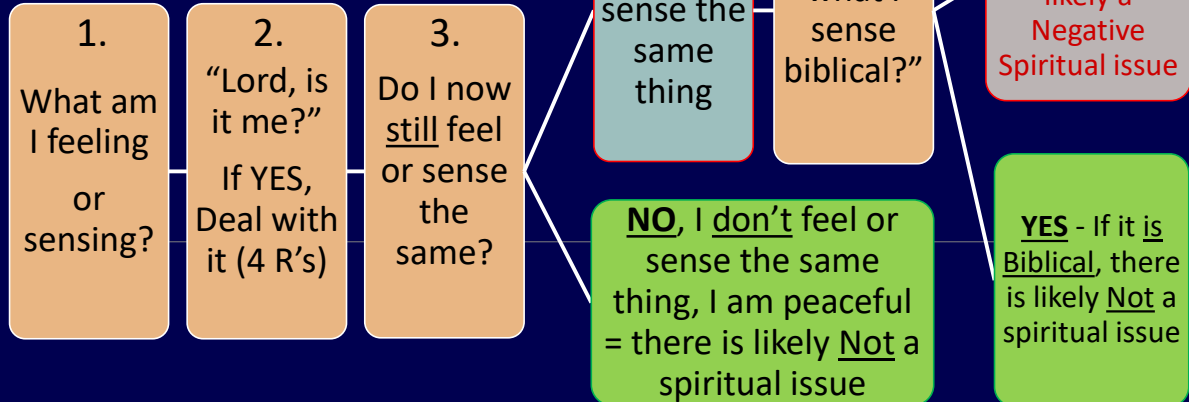
If the answer is “no,” you have likely discerned the presence of spiritual evil or error – or both!



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APPLICATION – Growing in Discernment

4 Simple Questions



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APPLICATION – Growing in Discernment

Practice discerning based on Scripture will lead to increased Maturity

Hebrews 5:12–14 (ESV) For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, 13 for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. 14 But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

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APPLICATION – *A Healthy Church is Critical in the Last Hour!*

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APPLICATION – *A Healthy Church is Critical in the Last Hour!*

THE EPISTLE OF
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We must live with discernment regarding the antichrist spirit!

1. Be Alert to the Holy Spirit in You.
 2. Be Grounded in the Firm Foundation of Scripture
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