

*THE **ABC**'s
of
Becoming
A Better Christian*

DISCERNMENT

Key Passages

Hebrews 5:11-14 (ESV)

- 11 About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since *you have become dull of hearing*.
- 12 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**.

Hebrews 4:12 (ESV)

- 12 For **THE WORD OF GOD IS LIVING AND ACTIVE**, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and **DISCERNING THE THOUGHTS AND INTENTIONS OF THE HEART**.

Romans 12:2 (ESV)

- 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but *be transformed by the renewal of your mind*, that by testing you may **DISCERN WHAT IS THE WILL OF GOD**, what is good and acceptable and perfect.



WHAT IS DISCERNMENT?

In its simplest definition, **DISCERNMENT** is **the ABILITY TO DECIDE between truth and error, right and wrong.**

DISCERNMENT is the process of **making CAREFUL DISTINCTIONS** in our thinking about truth.
DISCERNMENT is a “**knowing**” that can sometimes feel similar to **a gut instinct**—but **it does not originate with us.**

SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT—**the ability to CLEARLY SEE what God desires.**
Discernment is learning to think God’s thoughts, practically and spiritually...
It means having a sense of how things look IN GOD’S EYES

The word **DISCERNMENT** is used interchangeably with these words...
wisdom, understanding, discretion, prudence, insight, and sense.

To have the **SPIRIT OF DISCERNMENT** is to possess the ability **TO JUDGE WELL without BEING JUDGMENTAL**

A person who uses **SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT** will check the truthfulness of all the facts and related factors in a matter **BEFORE REACHING A CONCLUSION.** A person **WHO JUDGES** will formulate conclusions or opinions on first impressions or hearsay, and then he will look for evidence to confirm their opinions....

John 7:24 ~ "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with **RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT.**"

Introduction

DISCERNMENT is essential in making wise decisions.

Why Is This Important?

Do Not Be Unequally Yoked....

Don't Cast Your Pearls Before Swine....

Do Not Walk In The Counsel of the Ungodly....

Do Not Follow After False Teachers....

DISCERNMENT Allows You Us To “*Weigh*” and “*Assess*” Actions, Attitudes, and Intentions...

Without Being Tainted By Worldly Influences

Hebrews 4:12 (ESV)

12 For THE WORD OF GOD IS LIVING AND ACTIVE, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and DISCERNING THE THOUGHTS AND INTENTIONS OF THE HEART.

John 2:23-25 (NASB)

23 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. 24 But JESUS WAS NOT ENTRUSTING HIMSELF TO THEM, for He knew all men, 25 and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for HE HIMSELF KNEW WHAT WAS IN MAN.

The Desire For Discernment

Philippians 1:9 (ESV)

9 And *it is my prayer* that your love may abound more and more, **WITH KNOWLEDGE AND ALL DISCERNMENT,**

TRUE DISCERNMENT STARTS WITH PRAYER.

Whenever we need **wisdom/discernment**, we can **PRAY TO GOD** who generously supplies what we need.

Christians don't have to go around in the dark, **hoping to stumble upon answers.**

Pray For Discernment

1 Kings 3:5, 9-13 (ESV)

5 At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I shall give you."

9 Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people,

THAT I MAY DISCERN BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL, for who is able to govern this your great people?"

10 **IT PLEASED THE LORD THAT SOLOMON HAD ASKED THIS.**

11 And God said to him, "Because you have asked **THIS**, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have **ASKED FOR YOURSELF UNDERSTANDING TO DISCERN WHAT IS RIGHT,**

12 behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, **I give you a wise and discerning mind....**

13 I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor....

God Delights In Giving Us A Discerning Mind For Our Assignment

Proverbs 2:3-4

3 Yes, **cry out for discernment**, And **lift up your voice for understanding**,

4 **seek her as silver**, And **search for her as for hidden treasures**;

Discernment On Display

1 Kings 3:16-28 (NIV)

16 Now two prostitutes came to the king and stood before him.

17 One of them said, "My lord, this woman and I live in the same house. I had a baby while she was there with me.

18 The third day after my child was born, this woman also had a baby. We were alone; there was no one in the house but

the two of us. 19 "During the night this woman's son died because she lay on him. 20 So she got up in the middle of the

night and took my son from my side while I your servant was asleep. She put him by her breast and put her dead son by

my breast. 21 The next morning, I got up to nurse my son--and he was dead! But when I looked at him closely in the

morning light, I saw that it wasn't the son I had borne." 22 The other woman said, "No! The living one is my son;

the dead one is yours." But the first one insisted, "No! The dead one is yours; the living one is mine."

And so they argued before the king. 23 The king said, "This one says, 'My son is alive and your son is dead,'

while that one says, 'No! Your son is dead and mine is alive.'"

24 THEN THE KING SAID, "BRING ME A SWORD." SO THEY BROUGHT A SWORD FOR THE KING.

25 He then gave an order: "**CUT THE LIVING CHILD IN TWO AND GIVE HALF TO ONE AND HALF TO THE OTHER.**"

26 The woman whose son was alive was filled with compassion for her son and said to the king, "Please, my lord,

give her the living baby! Don't kill him!" But the other said, "Neither I nor you shall have him. **Cut him in two!**"

27 Then the king gave his ruling: "**Give the living baby to the first woman. Do not kill him; she is his mother.**"

28 When all Israel heard the verdict the king had given, **THEY HELD THE KING IN AWE,**

BECAUSE THEY SAW THAT HE HAD WISDOM FROM GOD TO ADMINISTER JUSTICE.

God gave Solomon **the understanding of human nature** to discern which woman had love in her heart,

which had malice, and **HOW TO EXTRACT THE TRUTH.**

DISCERNMENT DON'T RELY ON FEELINGS.... IT ALLOWS YOU TO REVEAL FEELINGS

Discernment On Display

Deuteronomy 4:5-6 (ESV)

5 See, *I have taught you statutes and rules*, as the Lord my God commanded me, that *you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it.*

6 *Keep them and do them*, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding **IN THE SIGHT OF THE PEOPLES**, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, '*Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.*'

Scripture implies that *if we are wise and walk in the ways of the Lord*,
OUR LIVES ARE EVIDENCE OF A SPIRIT OF DISCERNMENT.

Acts 4:13 (ESV)

13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And *they recognized that they had been with Jesus.*



The Development Of Discernment

Hebrews 5:13-14 (ESV)

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.

If we are going to grow in discernment, we need to **Meditate on the Scripture!**
Consulting God in prayer and **Studying the Scripture** helps **Cultivate a Spirit of Discernment.**

DISCERNMENT is essential for **Spiritual Growth.**

To grow from infant Christians to mature Christians {Milk to Solid Meat}
We must **DEVELOP IN OUR DISCERNMENT.** We must **TRAIN** our conscience,
our senses, and our minds to **DISTINGUISH** between **good from evil.**

The maturing believer is empowered by the Spirit of God through the Scriptures to tell the difference between good and evil, and, beyond that, he can also distinguish between what is good and what is better.

1 Timothy 4:7-11 (NLT)

7 **Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives' tales.** Instead, **TRAIN YOURSELF TO BE GODLY.**
8 **“Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better**, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come.” 9 This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it. 10 This is why we work hard and continue to struggle, for our hope is in the living God, 11 **TEACH THESE THINGS AND INSIST THAT EVERYONE LEARN THEM.**

Keys To Development

Environment Exposure Experiences Enlightenment

Personal Example

Zion Hill Baptist Church Environment

Mt. Zion Nashville ~ Lake Providence Nashville

Avenue Baptist Church

Devoted To The Word Of God Through Teaching And Training



The Distribution Of Discernment

EVERY BELIEVER is to operate and function *WITH DISCERNMENT* in their everyday lives, but *SOME* have *THE GIFT OF THE DISCERNING OF SPIRITS...*

1 Corinthians 12:4-11 (NKJV)

- 4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one FOR THE PROFIT OF ALL: 8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, TO ANOTHER DISCERNING OF SPIRITS, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, DISTRIBUTING TO EACH ONE INDIVIDUALLY AS HE WILLS.*

The gift of discerning spirits, or “distinguishing” spirits, is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit who disperses these gifts to believers FOR SERVICE IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

These Gifts Are Not For Personal Use...But For Kingdom Edification

If you have the gift of discernment, then, it isn't something that is evidenced by your wisdom and savvy in the workplace or your strong opinions that stand out among unbelievers.

It is A GIFT that is given to you TO UPLIFT AND ENCOURAGE THE BODY OF CHRIST.

The Duty Of Discernment

Acts 17:10-11 (NLT)

10 That very night the believers sent Paul and Silas to Berea. When they arrived there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. 11 And the people of Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, and **they listened eagerly to Paul's message**. They searched the Scriptures day after day **TO SEE IF PAUL AND SILAS WERE TEACHING THE TRUTH.**

WE ARE ALL COMMANDED TO BE SPIRITUALLY DISCERNING...

The spiritually discerning are so **familiar with the Word of God** that they instantly recognize what is contrary. They do not receive special messages from God; they use the Word of God to “test the spirits” to see which line up with God and which are in opposition to Him. The spiritually discerning know the Word For Themselves!!!

1 John 4:1 (NIV)

1 Dear friends, **do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, BECAUSE MANY FALSE PROPHETS HAVE GONE OUT INTO THE WORLD.**

John's concern for the readers... was that they would **BE CAREFUL OF WHO INFLUENCES THEM.** When it comes to spiritual teaching, he says, **we need to know what's true and what's false**

Be Spiritually Discerning... Don't Just Take My Word For It!!!!

In Conclusion.....

DISCERNMENT is *the ABILITY TO DECIDE between truth and error, right and wrong*

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2024 Vision Campaign



GOAL: \$1,000,000

