

## FELLOWSHIP NOTES ~ Sunday, February 11<sup>th</sup> 2024



### Part 1: “The Need for Biblical Discernment”

1 Thessalonians 5:21-22

#### What is Discernment?

“Discernment is the ability to understand, interpret and apply truth skillfully; to decide between truth and error, right and wrong.” ~ John MacArthur

“Biblical Discernment is the ability to judge or distinguish between two things using the wisdom of God’s Word.” ~ Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth

*“Teach me good judgment and discernment, for I rely on your commands.”* Psalm 119:66

*“While he was in Jerusalem during the Passover Festival, many believed in His name when they saw the signs he was doing. Jesus, however, would not entrust himself to them, since he knew them all and because he did not need anyone to testify about man; for he himself knew what was in man.”* John 2:23-25

*“And I pray this: that your love will keep on growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment, so that you may approve the things that are superior and may be pure and blameless in the day of Christ.”*  
Philippians 1:9-10

*“Anyone who does not remain in Christ’s teaching but goes beyond it does not have God. The one who remains is that teaching, this one has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your home, and don’t greet him; for the one who greets him shares in his evil works.”* 2 John 9-11

*“For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, since it is written, He catches the wise in their craftiness; and again, The Lord knows that the reasonings of the wise are futile.”* 1 Corinthians 3:19-20



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## God's Process for Spiritual Discernment:

Step 1. \_\_\_\_\_ all things – 1 Thess. 5:21a

Step 2. \_\_\_\_\_ to what is good – 1 Thess. 5:21b

*"Hold on the pattern of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit through the Holy Spirit who lives in us."*

2 Timothy 2:13-14

Step 3. \_\_\_\_\_ from every kind of evil– 1 Thess. 5:22

*"...keep away from sexual immorality." 1 Thessalonians 4:3b*

*"...abstain from sinful desires that wage war against the soul." 1 Peter 2:11b*

*"Detest evil; cling to what is good." Romans 12:9b*

*"Do not be conquered by evil but conquer evil with good." Romans 12:21*

## Cultivating Discernment:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ for discernment

*"Ask what you wish Me to give you..." (Solomon) 1 Kings 3:5*

*"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given to him." James 1:5*

*"Teach me good judgment and discernment, for I rely on your commands." Psalm 119:66*

2. \_\_\_\_\_ the truth

*"His heart was not wholly devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been." 1 Kings 11:4*

3. Depend on the \_\_\_\_\_

*"When the Holy Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth." John 16:13a*

## IN FELLOWSHIP CAFÉ

*Ashamed of the Gospel – When the Church Becomes Like the World* – John MacArthur

# Growth Groups Study Guide for the Week of February 11<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>

## Reminder:

- Our annual Men's & Women's Summits are coming up on February 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> and February 29<sup>th</sup> – March 2<sup>nd</sup>. Registration is open online or on the Fellowship APP. Scholarships and Carpooling is available. Stop at the Summit Table in the lobby or call the church office to learn more.
- Our special guests on Sunday, February 25<sup>th</sup> will be Pastor Phil Winfield, Senior Pastor at Grace Church in Des Moines, and the Higher Power Quartet. Invite someone to join us for this special Sunday.

## Group Discussion:

What is something you've heard in the news recently that was off-the-wall, "out there" or maybe a little scary that made you shake your head in wonder and bewilderment? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Digging Deeper:

1. One of the verses we touched on Sunday was Psalm 119:66, *"Teach me good judgment and discernment, for I rely on your commands."* The word discernment here means "to taste". It's the ability to make discriminating judgments, to distinguish between and to recognize the moral implications of different situations, groups and individuals.

When we taste any or various kinds of food, what are we trying to discern? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the psalmist in this verse asking God to do? \_\_\_\_\_

What does this tell us about discernment? \_\_\_\_\_

What is it that most helps us in being discerning? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the intentional commitment the psalmist makes in this verse? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Another verse we briefly looked at on Sunday was this one: *"And I pray this: that your love will keep on growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment, so that you may approve the things that are superior and may be pure and blameless in the day of Christ."* Philippians 1:9-10

What are the two outcomes that Paul hoped would happen in the Philippian believers as a result of growing in love and discernment? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Why would it be important for them – and for us today – to possess these outcomes in our lives?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Turn to 1 Thessalonians 5 and read vs. 21.

The first step in practicing discernment is to \_\_\_\_\_. The word means to examine, to approve, to discern the worth of something. What are we test in this way and why is this important? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Where have you found it most important in your life to put this into practice? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The second step in practicing discernment is to \_\_\_\_\_. This carries the idea of embracing something. Like a mother embracing her baby against any and all harm, we are to embrace what is good according to the Word of God, including the Word of God itself. It means to love the truth with all our heart. Biblical discernment is the love of God's truth and the doctrines found in the truth of the Bible and all the good that is espoused in the Bible like a mother loves her baby and protects it.

On a practical note, how do you believe that holding on to what is good would impact your own personal spiritual growth and health? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The third step in practicing discernment is to \_\_\_\_\_.

The thought behind the phrase "stay away" carries the idea of rejecting something, abstaining, avoiding, getting as far away from something that you can. Why do you believe it would be beneficial to your walk with Christ to "stay away from every kind of evil" as much as you possibly can? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

One of the verses we noted on Sunday was "...abstain from sinful desires that wage war against the soul" 1 Peter 2:11b. When you read that verse, what is the idea it conveys in relation to the dangers of sin and why do you believe understanding this is so important? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

So there you have it! Every Christian is called by God live a discerning Christian life and we can if we follow God's step-by-step plan to: test all things, hold on to what is good, and stay away from every kind of evil. In the days we're living in, discernment is a critical spiritual discipline we all need to cultivate and even more so as move forward in God's plans for the future. We noted on Sunday 3 ways to process this cultivation of spiritual discernment:

1. Pray for discernment
2. Obey the truth (of the Word of God)
3. Depend on the Holy Spirit

Here's 3 more...

4. Desire wisdom – Read Proverbs 3:3-6
5. Follow discerning leaders – Read 1 Corinthians 11:1
6. Study the Bible – Read 2 Timothy 2:15

### Wrapping Up

Next Sunday we'll take a closer look at the developments going on in our world today. For now, let's focus this week on putting into practice Gods' step-by-step plan for discernment.

### CLOSING IN PRAYER