

2021 R12.2 Conference
Callaway Gardens

Spiritual Discernment

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Discernment

- Definitions:
 - The ability to judge well, to distinguish, to separate
 - Not just the difference between right and wrong, rather it is the difference between right and almost right (Spurgeon)
 - Spiritual discernment is a habit formed by using Scripture under the Spirit's power and direction to distinguish good from evil. Like any other habit of mind, it is established by regular, repetitive action. (Jay Adams)

Discernment

Synonyms:

Distinguish (NAS20 replaces Discernment with distinguish)

Perceive

Ascertain

Determine

Bible Facts -- Discern

- Greek words for Discern (17), Discerning (10), Discernment (11) are used 38X in NASB.
 - 34X in OT; 4X in NT
 - Matthew 16:3; Philippians 1:9
 - **Hebrews 5:14 → This will be our focus verse**
 - Other versions may have more (NET-56) or less (NLT-12)

Bible Facts – Discern (new)

- God can give it supernaturally:
 - 1 Kings 3:9-15
 - God gave Solomon his request plus more
 - v 14 contingent
- God can take it away:
 - Isaiah 29:14
 - Job 12:20
- Discernment is not about feelings. It is about doctrine. It is about facts. It is about black and white and not gray.

Hebrews 5:14

- But solid food
 - Is for the mature
 - Who because of practice
 - Have their senses trained
 - To discern good and evil
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- Read Hebrews 5:11-14, 6:1,5 for context

Solid Food

- Milk-->infants, then a progression. Baby food in jars, mac and cheese (my daughter is stuck here), ultimately steak, vegetables, fruit, etc.
- I Corinthians 3:1-3 => Paul agrees with the author of Hebrews. Milk is fine for infants, but we must move on. We must grow.
- 1 Peter 2:2 => As infants we long for milk and ultimately it helps us grow.

Is for the Mature

- Greek word used 19X in NT
- Perfect 11X => Matthew 5:48
- Mature 6X => 1 Corinthians 2:6
- Complete 2X => Matthew 19:21

Spiritual Maturity

- Is not related to your physical age
- Is not related to your spiritual age
- Is not related to your Biblical knowledge
- It IS the result of Bible study and application of what is learned. It takes time. It is not too late to start. Start now!
- Jhn 16:13 Spirit will guide you into all truth
- Deut. 32:47 the word...is your life

Because of

- G1223 -> dia
- The channel of an act
- Through
- By reason of
- On account of

Practice

- Practice used 18X in NT
- 7 different Greek words for practice
- G1838 – hexis – used once in NT
 - A habit of body or mind
 - A power acquired by custom, practice, use
- When you want to be good at a sport, what do you do? The same is true of understanding the Bible

Have their senses

- Faculty of the mind for perceiving, understanding or judging
- Jeremiah 4:19 -> he could not remain silent because his soul heard the alarm of war
- Hebrews 5:14 -> Senses

Trained

- G1128 -> gymnazo
- KJV 4 uses -> always translated exercise
- To exercise vigorously, in any way, either the body or the mind
- 1 Timothy 4:7 “discipline yourself for godliness”
- Heb.12:11 “training..discipline..righteousness”
- 2 Peter 2:14 (training the wrong way)

To Discern (NASB20 – Distinguish)

- Passing judgment (Romans 14:1)
 - Distinguishing spirits (1 Corinthians 12:10)
 - Discern (Hebrews 5:14)
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- Matthew 16:2-3
 - John 7:24

Other key passages (new)

Acts 17:11-12a—Bereans searched the scriptures for truth in fallible man's teaching

John 5:39—Pharisees searched the scriptures for error in infallible man's (Jesus) teaching

I Thessalonians 5:20-21

I John 4:1-3

Why the lack of discernment?

- Lack of commitment to sound doctrine:
 - In the home—impact to family
 - In the church
 - 1 Timothy 6:20; 2 Timothy 1:13—we are responsible
- Lack of knowledge
 - 1 Corinthians 5:1
 - 2 Corinthians 11:1-4
 - Galatians 1:6-10
- Preoccupation with being popular with the culture → the world wants agreement (Coexist)
- Lack of discipline
- Immaturity in the faith

Why the lack of concern about the lack of discernment?

- We don't understand the short/long-term costs (Luke 10:13-15; Matthew 10:21-24)
- We understand, but do not fear, the short/long-term costs
- Pre-occupation with this life...selfish ambition (James 3:16)
- We don't want to offend anyone with absolute truth (2 Timothy 4:3)

What is the result of a lack of discernment?

- We fail to grow in the word
- We fail to grow spiritually
- We fail to grow in grace
- We fail to experience the benefits of faithfulness and grace
- Our failure in these negatively impacts our families, our friends and our churches
- Our children will be catechized by the world (the flesh) instead of by the Spirit