



MESSAGE/SERIES:

The Disappearance of Discernment *_Mini Series*

(Part 1) The Need for Discernment

DATE: September 1, 2019

SCRIPTURE FOR THIS WEEK:

(These verses will help you understand themes within as you read our core text as scripture proves scripture)

Hebrews 5:14, 1 Corinthians 2:14-16, 1 John 4:1-6, Acts 17:11-12, Romans 2:18, 12:2, Hebrews 6:12, Proverbs 22:29, Hebrews 2:1-4, 5:10, 11-14, 10:24-25, 1 Kings 3:9-12, Psalms 1:1-2, 7, Matthew 7:15, 26:41 Acts 20:20-30, Revelations 2:2, Ephesians 4:11-12, Deuteronomy 6:6, Philippians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 5:15-26, Colossians 3:16

OPENING SCRIPTURE:

HEBREWS 5:11-14

*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.*

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Heb 5:11–14.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:14-16

*¹⁴ The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and **he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.** ¹⁵ The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. ¹⁶ “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.*

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Co 2:14–16.

BACKGROUND & OTHER STUDY HELPS:

Background: "...Platonists disparaged mere sensory knowledge and Skeptics (another philosophical school) valued it even less, Stoics believed that one's senses (of which there were five, as in Aristotle) were useful, and Epicureans particularly trusted them. Those who thought the senses at all reliable, like Seneca and Philo, wanted them trained for moral sensibility. The ability to differentiate critically between good and bad, i.e. between truth and falsehood, was important to Greco-Roman writers in general, although the specific application to moral sensibilities is more often Jewish (2 Sam 14:17; 1 Kings 3:9; Ezek 44:23). **The writer borrows the language of Greek ethics, which would impress his Diaspora Jewish readers, and uses it to call them to study the Bible more thoroughly.**

Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Heb 5:14.

Gift of Discernment: "Discerning spirits is a gift given by the Holy Spirit, enabling a person to instantly discern between the Spirit of God and evil spirits. It is not human intelligence, experience, or ability. It is directly from God. It is not fortune-telling."

Croft M. Pentz, *Outlines on the Holy Spirit*, Sermon Outline Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1978), 61–62.

(Greek) αἰσθητήριον (*aisthētērion*)- capacity to understand, faculty for distinguishing the real nature of something (Heb 5:14+)

James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

John Chrysostom (Ver. 14) "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age [perfect], even them who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Those had not "their senses exercised," nor did they "know good and evil." He is not speaking now concerning life [conduct], when he says "to discern good and evil," for this is possible and easy for every man to know, but concerning doctrines that are wholesome and sublime, and those that are corrupted and low. The babe knows not how to distinguish bad and good food. Oftentimes at least it even puts dirt into its mouth, and takes what is hurtful; and it does all things without judgment."

John Chrysostom, "Homilies of St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Gospel of St. John and Epistle to the Hebrews*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. T. Keble and Frederic Gardiner, vol. 14, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1889), 406.

Warren Wiersbe on Maturity:

“I once heard a preacher say, “Most Christians are ‘betweeners.’ ”
“What do you mean by that?” I asked.

“They are between Egypt and Canaan—out of the place of danger, but not yet into the place of rest and rich inheritance,” he replied.

“They are between Good Friday and Easter Sunday—saved by the blood but not yet enjoying newness of resurrection life.”

Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 295.

Sinclair Ferguson on Discernment: “Thus, discernment is like the physical senses; to some it is given in unusual measure as a special grace gift (1 Cor. 12:10), but some measure of it is essential for us all and must be constantly nourished. The Christian must take care to develop his “sixth sense” of spiritual discernment. This is why the psalmist prays, “Teach me good judgment and knowledge” (Ps. 119:66)”

Survey from Barna On Maturity: “One of the reasons churches struggle with making disciples may relate to the lack of clarity that pastors have about the underlying biblical passages that address the process of spiritual maturity. This is most clearly reflected in the huge proportion of pastors who give *generic* responses when asked to identify the most important portions of the Bible that define spiritual maturity. In fact, one-third of pastors simply said “the whole Bible.” Other generic responses included “the gospels” (17%), the New Testament (15%), and Paul’s letters (10%). In all, the survey showed that three-quarters of pastors mentioned some type of generic answer to this query. In addition, one out of every five pastors gave a *semi-generic* response, such as “Romans” or the “life of Christ.”

OUTLINE:

(The effects of lack of Discernment in the Church)

Many Christians today are *easily lead astray* when not grounded in God’s word...

- *People can be led astray into false doctrine*
- *People are led astray into false views of self and of God*
- *People are led astray into false views of our world*

The Church of today does not know the authentic word of God well enough... the church must know the truth to not be led astray by counterfeit truths

Just what has God said on the big issues that confront us in this day and age? Do we know and are we striving to understand His direction for the church more?

I. SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT

1 Corinthians 2:14–15 ESV *“The natural person does not accept the things 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 person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one.”*

The Natural man has nothing to brag about... the natural man in this context is speaking about *the finite and the unspiritual part of you and me... the part of us that is affected by the fall and sin... this includes our organic mind/ the material mind.*

- *We cannot understand the things of God with our minds alone.*
- *They are Spiritually discerned meaning **the Spirit of God guides our Spirit to truth** and Judges the situations and questions of our lives*
- *The Spirit of God utilizes the word of God to reveal the will of God*

“The divinely given ability to distinguish God’s thoughts and ways from all others...”-Dr. Jay Adams

The Natural man cannot and does not know the thoughts and ways of God... but only seeks to please self.

But the mature man is led by the Spirit of God and **is given Discernment**

Hebrews 5:14 ESV *“But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.”*

This Solid food requires digestive juices to break the meat of God’s word down....

The mature believer has and is learning daily to break down scripture for themselves... no longer skimming and skipping the harder matters.

Application:

- *Notice that Hebrews says, their powers of Discernment are trained by constant practice to distinguish*
 - Constant evaluation of self against scripture alone
 - Constant diet of pointed study
 - A Stretching of the deeper questions of life and God from scripture
- The idea here of constant practice reveal 2 things that change our ideas of Spiritual Discernment
- *Every believer has some Spiritual Discernment because **Discernment comes from the indwelling Spirit of God** (positional/transformational linked to regeneration & conversion)*
- **Discernment becomes stronger as we exercise it** in a daily sense... as we stretch our studies and exploration of God and His word

Spiritual Discernment is not *(common misconception):*

- Equated somehow in our value to our God...
 - *Discernment has nothing to do with understanding our own worth*

- But comes from understanding the value and character of our personal savior Jesus Christ (imputed righteousness)
- *Therefore Spiritual Discernment has nothing to do with self-esteem, self-worth, or self-respect*

Application:

We must understand Discernment is not a badge or a trophy that God gives to His most valuable servants... *Discernment is not the MVP trophy of the game of life... and just a giftedness.*

II. DANGER OF DISAPPEARING DISCERNMENT

WE LOOK LIKE THE WORLD= When discernment is absent **the church looks like the world** *because we are walking the same path...the one driven by building up self*

Ephesians 5:18–21 ESV “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

A. **DANGER OF CONFUSION**= When we have lost or Discernment we are no longer filled with the Holy Spirit but we are filled with confusion...

- The example of being drunk with wine here is a great view of a church that lacks discernment... the church will stumble around
 - *there will be majoring on the minors*
 - *there will be an overlooking of Sin*
 - *there will be an abundance of divorces*
 - *there will be an early departures from this world*
 - *there will be a lack of love for one another*

- *there will be a lack of joint and focused worship of Jesus alone*
- *there will be very little discipleship and therefore no effective evangelism...*

Application:

Where there is a lack of discernment in the Church there is confusion...

B. DANGER OF DISORIENTATION= *there is a drunkenness and disorientation to our current surroundings... and the world sees our staggering around and says they are no different than me!*

Application:

When there is not discernment we forget this is not our home- ...As a child of God... this is not my home.

Discernment- “The divinely given ability to distinguish God’s thoughts and ways from all others...”

When I am in the word and training my biblical heart to know God’s will from His love letter to me ... I will learn the difference between:

- God’s Truth and Satan’s counterfeit
- I will recognize the lies when things are attributed to my God
- I will know what to do because I will discern/know what pleases Him and what does not please Him.
- I will not be confused and disoriented but will know when I have to stand because His ways are not our ways... they are far greater and more noble

- **The church will not stand for the political junk/sin that the world shoves down our throats** but we will stand firm on the commands of God because we will know truth from error!
- With Discernment...There will be no more grey areas in the Church, it will only what God has said and what He desires **that we teach and live without regret.**

III. DEALING WITH THE DEFICIT OF DISCERNMENT

Hebrews 5:11–14 ESV “About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 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, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.”

WE HAVE TO ACKNOWLEDGE= The church has become “**dull of hearing**”= unable to discern what God wants and desires... what is right and wrong

The church today cannot live the present abundant life where Jesus is the eternal High Priest because we have fallen away from exercising and training our spiritual senses

- We have settled for mediocrity
- We have settled for getting by
- We have settled for just going to church
- We stand for nothing

=The Church in many cases has become a nursery for the baby believers

Application: WE HAVE TO RECOMMIT TO THE LORD= but with practice and much chewing on the deeper things of God, *out a pursuit for our God's character in scripture*, we will know the truth and we will know error

- GOD will not go against His character
- God's word does not contradict itself

=Therefore we can know truth...

-----Message from Pastor Michael-----
Church,

Discernment comes as we walk closely with the Lord searching His word to know truth and therefore accepting no counterfeit. In order to not be led astray as a believer we must understand the dangers for His church and recommit to a deeper desire and understanding of Him through His word. I pray God puts a burn and moves you to dig up every morsel in your study this week that we may know what thus says the Lord from Him! We are growing here... now let's pour gas on the fire in your heart that He has set!

Love in Christ,
Pastor Michael

MY PERSONAL STUDY NOTES:
