

Discipline of Spiritual Discernment

Lesson #1 "A Call to Discernment"

□ Read the Introduction and Chapter One (pages 9-35) and answer the following questions.

- 1) What did Solomon request from the Lord in **1 Kings 3:6-9**?

- 2) What does the phrase "understanding mind" mean?

- 3) Lack of discernment is proof of what one of three things? Support each with Scripture.

- 4) What are immature believers prone to do?

- 5) **Romans 1:31** "Undiscerning" "Points not only to the _____ of a _____ of discernment, but to the inevitable conclusion that a _____ of discernment , utter _____, is a _____ of one who is spiritually _____ and bankrupt."

- 6) Why are unbelievers unable to be spiritually discerning?

- 7) "To _____ discernment is to _____ against _____. It is the inevitable _____ of _____ from Him."

- 8) What two things is having spiritual discernment a proof of?
- 9) What is the starting point of all spiritual discernment?
- 10) Why did Christ rebuke His disciples regarding the feeding of the four thousand?
- 11) Why did Jesus declare the disciples blessed in **Matthew 13:16-17**?
- 12) Based on **Hebrews 5:14**, how do we gain discernment?
- 13) When God saves His people what do they begin to value as their supreme treasure?
- 14) What has God given us to guard the purity of the Gospel?
- 15) “Spiritual discernment allows us to _____ the gospel _____ and allows us to _____ and _____ against _____.”

Quote: “Spiritual Discernment is about the skill of thinking Biblically about life.” **Tim Challies**

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Lesson #2, "The Challenge of Discernment"

□ Read chapter 2 (pages 37-51) and answer the following questions.

- 1) What has God provided us with to withstand attacks of false doctrine, error and falsehood?

- 2) How is spiritual discernment obtained?

- 3) Why does having discernment make one unpopular?

- 4) What internal forces work against us in our pursuit of discernment?

- 5) What did God give us to overcome the internal struggle for discernment?

- 6) "If we are to be people of _____, we need to _____ our _____ by _____ out to the _____ and asking Him to _____ and to _____ us as we _____ after discernment."

- 7) What strategy does Satan use to lead us astray from the truth?

8) In reference to the believer, what is Satan committed to?

9) What are the four cultural influences that keep us from having razor sharp discernment?

10) Sadly, _____ who consider _____ Christian have a _____
that is _____ inconsistent with their _____ of faith.

11) How does a Christian allow what happened in question 10?

12) How does a secular mindset discourage discernment?

13) “The Bible _____ that _____ allow it to be sufficient to address _____ areas of
_____ and _____, whether evangelism, sanctification, guidance, social
reform, or discernment.”

14) What is the key to the process of sanctification?

15) Why is God’s holiness at the heart of our need for discernment?

8) “Discernment is _____ in black-and-white terms, drawing _____ lines
_____ what is _____ and error, what is _____ and evil.”

9) Define understanding. (Strong’s #998)

10) Define skill. (Strong’s #8394)

11) What was the author’s definition for discernment?

Quote: “Discernment skillfully applies wisdom to real-life situations.” *Tim Challies*

Quote: “Discernment is “the ability to understand, interpret, and apply truth skillfully.” *John MacArthur*

“Discernment is the skill of understanding and applying God’s Word with the purpose of separating truth from error and right from wrong.” *Tim Challies*

- 8) How are we able to see things as God sees them?
- 9) What has God given to us as a standard to separate what is true from what is false?
- 10) Why do we need to discern truth from error and right from wrong?
- 11) Can an unregenerate person be discerning?
- 12) “_____ those who are _____ by the _____ Spirit have the _____ to exercise _____ spiritual discernment.”
- 13) What is wrong with the subjective approach to discernment?
- 14) To gain spiritual discernment, what always must be engaged?
- 15) Why do we need discernment?

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Lesson #5 “The Heart of Discernment”

□ Read Chapter 4 and answer the following questions from pages 73-90.

1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 Test all things; hold fast what is good. **22** Abstain from every form of evil.

- 1) What is unpopular in our culture today? Why?

- 2) Define antimony.

- 3) What is caused by the sin of not exercising spiritual discernment?

- 4) What are we not to judge?

- 5) How do we sin by judging beyond what is written?

- 6) “the ability to see _____ the _____ rather than the _____, means that humans are _____ of _____ judgments about matters of the heart and conscience.”

- 7) Why should we not pass judgment on the hearts of others?

- 8) How is one guilty of legalism?

9) What happens when we accept a teaching or doctrine?

10) What is the test and response of **1 Thessalonians 5:21-22**?

11) What does the Greek word for 'test' mean in **1 Thessalonians 5:21**?

12) We _____ rely on _____ to be _____ on _____ behalf. We cannot _____ on _____ to do this _____ for us.”

13) What are we commanded to test in **1 Thessalonians 5:21**?

14) What did the author mean when he said we are to test everything but not try everything?

15) Any _____ to which we are _____ is to be tested. Any _____ we face is to be tested. There _____ be no _____, no teaching, no _____ in the life of the Christian or in the _____ that has not been _____ tested or scrutinized.”

16) List the 'Theological Triage.'

Quote: "The sin of judging is a root cause in most of the interpersonal conflicts that arise in the lives of believers, and so learning to identify and avoid this sin will go a long way toward promoting peace and joy in the body of Christ. **Dave Swavely**

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Lesson #6 "Truth and Discernment"

- Read the Chapter Five (pages 91-107) and answer the following questions.

Ephesians 5:8-10: For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light **9** (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), **10** finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.

- 1) What happens when someone counterfeits Christian doctrine?

- 2) “We do not know _____ there is to _____, but what God _____ us through _____ and through the _____ is indeed both _____ and trustworthy.”

- 3) What is Biblical Christianity according to Francis Schaeffer?

- 4) What is the simple definition of “truth”?

- 5) What is good versus evil NOT determined by?

- 6) As humans what are we prone to giving too much authority to?

- 7) What does a discerning Christian constantly return to?

8) Why must we have right thoughts about God?

9) What happens when we ignore the right study of God?

10) “Men and women of discernment will _____ truth from error _____ on the _____ of what seems to _____ but on the basis of the _____ truth of the Bible.”

11) How can we best discern what is wrong?

12) What happens when we increase and practice discernment?

13) Where are we to begin when dealing with “gray areas”?

14) “Spiritual discernment _____ us to believe in God in a way that is _____ with His _____ of Himself. It _____ us to _____ Him _____ so that we might _____ Him rightly.”

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Lesson #7 “The Will and Discernment”

□ Read Chapter Six (pages 109-122) and answer the following questions.

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

1) Why is there so much confusion on what Christians should believe and how they should live?

2) What is the meaning of God’s will of decree?

3) Why is God’s secret will hidden to us?

4) What is the purpose of God’s commanded will?

5) Where do we find the commanded will of God?

6) What are the three general principles that God commands in Scripture?

7) How do we discover God’s will?

8) John MacArthur says, “As we are _____ to what we _____, our knowledge of the _____ and of His _____ increases and _____. As we are _____ to the light, we are given _____ of this light.”

9) What are we to do with God’s explicit commands?

10) How are we to make choices when there is no clear command or guidance?

11) Why are we not to worry about making the “right” decisions?

12) “Discerning God’s will ..., is the _____ of understanding and _____ God’s Word with the _____ of separating right from wrong. It is discernment in a _____ or ethical dimension in which we _____ to act in a way that is _____ with _____ and that brings _____ to God.”

13) What are we to do when we encounter a crossroad in life?

14) What are the three stages to understanding and obeying God’s will?

“The life of discernment is, therefore, a Word-focused and a Word-directed life which develops a Word-saturated mind.” Sinclair Ferguson

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Lesson #8 "The Gift of Discernment"

□ Read Chapter Seven (pages 123-137) and answer the following questions.

1 John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

1) What were the gifts of the Spirit given for?

2) Who dispenses spiritual gifts to people?

3) Who is given spiritual gifts?

4) What two reasons are given for spiritual gifts?

5) "All _____ are _____ to test _____ of _____ and prophecy."

6) Why does God give the gift of spiritual discernment to some?

7) Every _____ about _____ or that supposedly comes _____ God _____ be _____ tested and _____ in light of the Bible."

8) What are we to do when we need, but lack discernment?

9) Those with discernment are passionate about what?

10) In church history, when does the church struggle with false teachers and doctrine?

11) What is the primary task of spiritual discernment?

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Lesson #9 “The Dangers of Discernment”

□ Read Chapter 8 (pages 139-152) and answer the following questions.

Romans 16:19 For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil.

- 1) Why does the word discernment have a negative connotation to it?

- 2) One of the _____ dangers of discernment is that _____ will _____ so _____ in what is _____ and ungodly that we _____ ourselves to _____ immersed _____ it.

- 3) Why is it better to focus on what is true?

- 4) What is meant by “guilt by association” in a spiritual sense?

- 5) Why do people fall into the guilt by association trap?

- 6) What is meant by “honor by association?”

- 7) What happens when third-order doctrines are raised to first-order importance?

8) What is the significance of discernment taking a defensive approach to error?

9) What do we risk by trusting someone we do not know?

10) “We need to _____ in the security of the _____ guiding and
_____ ministry in our _____ rather than in _____
ourselves _____ views that _____ not always _____ with ours.”

11) What one sin must we avoid as we mature in discernment?

12) What is considered the greatest danger to discernment?

13) What must we never allow in our eagerness to defend the truth?

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Lesson #10 “Developing Discernment”

□ Read Chapter 9 (pages 153-162) and answer the following questions.

Philippians 1:9-10 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, 10 that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,

- 1) “Discernment is _____ something that is _____ or that can be _____ apart from other _____ of the Christian life.”
- 2) What are the four prerequisites for gaining discernment?
- 3) How do we actively pursue discernment?
- 4) How are we to value discernment in reference to gaining wealth?
- 5) Why should we cry out to God in prayer for discernment?
- 6) To be a person of discernment what must we commit ourselves to?
- 7) What has God not ordained us to?

8) “Christians are to _____ in spiritual communities and are _____ to one another. The local church is provided by _____ as a _____ of grace and as the _____ for much of the personal _____ that Christians experience.”

9) What was the turning point for Aspah in **Psalm 73** and why?

10) List the five reasons Mark Dever says a person must join a church.

11) “A person who _____ to be discerning must be a person of _____. Discernment _____ flourish where there is a _____ or _____ attitude.”

12) How do we display our humility before God?

13) How do we manifest our humility before others?

14) How are we to address another person’s erroneous understanding of the Scripture?

15) Discernment is _____ than a mere _____ judgment about _____ or error. Discernment _____ a _____; it requires _____.”

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8) What is a more reliable standard than our instincts and conscience?

9) What are we to do during the 'observation' stage of our discernment?

10) List the five steps of observation and explain each.

11) How can a reliable translation prove to be helpful?

12) What do you do after the investigation stage?

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7) What are we to do once we have come to the conclusion and have separated truth from error?

8) What is the Biblical meaning of “evil” in **1 Thessalonians 5:22**?

9) Explain the substitution principle.

10) What does “hold fast” mean in **1 Thessalonians 5:21**?

11) How does discernment function in the church?

12) What does the lack of discernment do to the believer?

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