

their feelings and soft preaching

- d) Those who listen to contemporary music or worldly music – music that is worldly or sounds like the world’s music corrupts good discernment.
- 3) We can be friendly toward such people, but we are not to walk with them or be their companions.

b. Choose doctrinally sound media

- 1) We need God’s discernment to choose our media. What you absorb through the media will have a bearing on your spiritual discernment.
- 2) Choose your books, magazines and Internet reading carefully.
- 3) YouTube can be a dangerous place to find your mentor.
- 4) Many of the TV preachers promote subtle false teachings.
- 5) Before reading or listening, find out what church the author belongs to.
 - a) If his church is heretical, his message will be as well.
 - b) If his church is a generic church, he will likely have a soft generic Bible philosophy.
 - c) If his church is Calvinistic or Reformed, that will taint his philosophy.
 - d) If the author is an Independent Baptist, he is more likely trustworthy, but still be cautious. Only the Bible is perfect.

5. Prove All Things

a. Test every option biblically

- 1) (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22) "*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.*"
- 2) Prove (test) it with the Bible not your opinions.

b. Apply the Bible

- 1) Hold fast the good
- 2) Abstain from all that appears as evil

Conclusion: (Review) We desperately need to be more discerning. If you will apply these five tips, I know your discernment will improve.

Song: Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord - 337

How Can We Develop Discernment?

24 November 2019 PM – 1 Kings 3:9 – Discern – Scott Childs

Introduction: Last week we sought to answer the question, “What does God say about discernment?” From a Christian perspective, discernment is the ability to understand the mind of God when considering various options. A good definition by another preacher is, “**Discernment is the skill of understanding and applying God’s Word with the purpose of separating truth from error and right from wrong.**”

<https://www.challies.com/articles/defining-discernment/> (Good article, but author is a Calvinist) It is as “seeing things through God’s eyes.” We learned that the Bible reveals our desperate need discernment and we noted Bible examples that confirm our need for discernment.

Discernment and wisdom are closely related. Both wisdom and discernment come from God through His Word. The Bible is the lens through which we can see things God’s way. Discernment is always connected with spiritual maturity. God wants us to use the tools he has given us to be able to distinguish truth from error, right from wrong, good from bad, genuine from fake, biblical from heretical, pure from polluted and wholesome from harmful.

Transition: Let me give you **five tips for developing discernment.**

1. Passionately Study the Bible

a. True discernment comes from God

- 1) Unbelievers can have a degree of discernment if they unknowingly apply biblical principles.
- 2) The world says everything is **relative**. It claims there is no truth or error, good or bad, pure or polluted. Truth is up to the individual. Secular education will not instill true discernment in our hearts.

b. It is the Bible that reveals the mind of God

- 1) The Bible is God’s mind about everything we need to know to live for His glory.
- 2) The Bible is **always** right **even when we feel otherwise**. The Bible **MUST** be our standard of truth.
 - a) (Psalms 119:160) "*Thy word is true from the beginning; and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.*" The better you know the truth,

the more easily you will spot error.

- b) The Bible is our light. (Psalms 119:105) "*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*" (Psalms 119:130) "*The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.*"
 - c) Seek to understand the mind of God. (2 Timothy 2:15) "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*"
- 3) The book of Proverbs is very helpful in understanding God's mind. It is full of principles for discernment.
- a) Read from Proverbs every day.
 - b) Mark helpful verses with coloured pencils.
 - c) Memorise as many key verses as you can.

2. Pursue Intimacy with God

a. Get to know God well

- 1) Obviously, you must truly know the Lord as your Saviour.
- 2) Learn God's character. God always evaluates every option with perfection. We may make wrong judgments but God never does.
 - a) God is wise – He is the source of wisdom.
 - b) God is holy – He cannot do wrong.
 - c) God is just – He always does right.
 - d) God is immutable – He never changes.
- 3) Seek to learn God's mind and follow it.
 - a) The better you know God, the more you will begin to think as God thinks.
 - b) Asking yourself, "**What would Jesus do?**" can sometimes be helpful.
- 4) Learn to fear the Lord. (Proverbs 1:7) "*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*" Reverence and respect His directions and commands in the Bible. That is the beginning of discernment.

b. Grow spiritually

- 1) One preacher said, "**Discernment is always connected to spiritual maturity.**" I believe he is right. Immature

Christians always lack discernment.

- 2) Maturity comes from Bible study, biblical preaching, Bible meditating, application, and time alone with God.
- 3) This is what Ken Ham was saying on Wednesday night about biblical apologetics. Seek to master the Book!

3. Pray Ferently for Discernment

a. God wants to give you discernment.

- 1) It is great to know that God is the author of wisdom and discernment and that He longs to instil it in our lives. (James 1:5) "*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*"
- 2) Ask God to teach you His way. (Psalms 86:11) "*Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.*"

b. God will never lead you contrary to the Bible.

- 1) The Bible is God's holy Word. It is truth. He will never lead you to make a decision that is contrary to the Bible.
- 2) When a person says they are doing God's will yet they are disobeying a clear Bible command, he is either lying or he is terribly deceived.
- 3) God's will NEVER contradict His Word.

4. Pick Wise Mentors

a. Choose spiritually mature wise friends

- 1) Spending time with wise friends will make you a wiser person and more discerning. (Proverbs 13:20) "*He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.*" Often, without even realizing it, we learn much from our friends – good or bad.
- 2) Many Christians make wrong choices because unwise friends sway their thinking. The kind of people who are unwise friends include the following.
 - a) Unsaved people – they have no connection with God's wisdom.
 - b) Carnal Christians – those who seldom read the Bible and do not separate from the world.
 - c) Charismatic Christians – their judgments are tinted by