

*a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and **understandeth** all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever."*

- 4) Ezra viewed or discerned among the people that no Levites were among the travellers. (Ezra 8:15) "*And I gathered them together to the river that runneth to Ahava; and there abode we in tents three days: and I **viewed** the people, and the priests, and found there none of the sons of Levi."*
- 5) Nehemiah appointed preachers to cause the people to understand or discern God's law. (Nehemiah 8:7) "*Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, caused the people to **understand** the law: and the people stood in their place."*

b. New Testament examples

- 1) Jesus said that those who could discern the weather should be able to discern the future. (Matthew 16:3) "*And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can **discern** the face of the sky; but can ye not **discern** the signs of the times?"*
- 2) The Bible is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of our hearts. (Hebrews 4:12) "*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a **discerner** of the thoughts and intents of the heart."*

Conclusion: Remember, discernment is the ability to understand the mind of God when considering various options. Folks, we need to be able to discern between good and bad, right and wrong, truth and error, genuine and fake, biblical and heretical, pure and polluted, wholesome and harmful. Parents, once you grasp this yourselves, work diligently to instil discernment into the hearts of your children.

This evening, we have primarily looked at the meaning and use of discernment in the Bible. Lord willing, next week we are going to look at how to develop discernment.

Song: Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord - 337

What Does God Say About Discernment?

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

Introduction: Two mice were examining the cheese on a mousetrap. As the young mouse was ready to dive in for a feast, the older mouse shouted, "**Stop!**" The younger said, "**What's wrong?**" The elder said, "**There are some important facts you have overlooked. I smell human around this cheese. Not only that, but my brother ate some cheese from a platter just like this one and something hit him and he died.**" The younger responded, "**You worry too much. Other mice have told me of the beautiful meals they have found on such platters and they did not get hurt. Come on, let's feast.**" The difference between those two mice is that the young one was foolish and the old one had discernment.

Read text. When God asked young King Solomon what he wanted most in life, he asked for *a heart to discern between good and bad*. Discernment is closely related to wisdom, but it deals more with understanding what is right, thus it is often translated "understanding."

Our lives are full of decisions. Some are minor. Others are major. Which brands of food is best? Which watermelon will be ripe and sweet? Which pair of shoes will last the longest? Which job does God want for your life? Who is the right person for me to marry? Is this healthy or harmful? Would this person make a good or a bad friend? Is this YouTube video truth or error? What is the correct doctrinal interpretation? Every one of us desperately needs discernment every day.

Transition: This evening I want to uncover **three things** about discernment that ought to reveal our great need for it.

The first thing about discernment that ought to reveal our need is ...

1. A Bible-based Definition of Discernment

a. Dictionary definition of discern

- 1) To notice something, especially after thinking about it carefully or studying it. – Macmillan
- 2) To see, recognize, or understand something that is not clear – Cambridge

b. Dictionary definition of discernment

- 1) The ability to make good judgments about things – Macmillan

- 2) Discernment is the ability to judge which things of a particular kind are good and which are bad. – Collins
- 3) The trait of judging wisely and objectively – WordWeb

c. A Christian definition of discernment

- 1) Discernment is the ability to understand the mind of God when considering various options.
- 2) True discernment is from God. A discerning person is not gullible and is not easily deceived.

The second thing about discernment that ought to reveal our need is ...

2. Bible Verses about Discernment.

a. Our text, 1 Kings 3:5-12 (read)

- 1) Solomon asked for an understanding heart *to discern between good and bad.*
 - a) As king, Solomon faced major decisions every day. Wisely, he asked God for the ability to discern between good and bad.
 - b) Like Solomon, every working man, homemaking mother and every maturing youth, daily make decisions between good and bad, right and wrong, truth and error, genuine and fake, biblical and heretical, pure and polluted, wholesome and harmful.
 - c) We all desperately need discernment.
- 2) God gave Solomon understanding to discern (v.11)
- 3) God gave Solomon a wise and understanding heart (v.12)
- 4) Solomon became the wisest man (other than Christ) to ever live, yet he did not always **use** the discernment God gave to him. Beware!

b. Other Bible verses about discernment

- 1) Before we go on, let me identify some of the primary Bible words that refer to discernment.
 - a) One of the primary words is identified by the Strong's number H995. It is found in 162 Bible verses. It is translated in various ways, but often with the words "*understanding*", "*perceive*" or "*consider*". We find it at least 30 times in the book of Proverbs alone.
 - b) In the KJV N.T., we find the English word "*discern*" in

it various forms nine times in seven verses.

- 2) Here are some key verses about discernment found in the Bible. I have underlined the words.
 - a) (Proverbs 8:5) "*O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.*"
 - b) (Proverbs 14:8) "*The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit.*"
 - c) (Proverbs 14:33) "*Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding: but that which is in the midst of fools is made known.*"
 - d) (Proverbs 17:10) "*A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool.*"
 - e) (Proverbs 21:29) "*A wicked man hardeneth his face: but as for the upright, he directeth his way.*"
 - f) (Proverbs 28:5) "*Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the LORD understand all things.*"
 - g) (1 Corinthians 2:14) "*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*"
 - h) (Hebrews 5:14) "*But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*"

The third thing about discernment that ought to reveal our need is ...

3. Bible Examples of it.

a. Old Testament examples

- 1) Joseph was discreet or discerning. (Genesis 41:39) "*And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art.*"
- 2) Eli perceived or discerned that the Lord was calling Samuel. (1 Samuel 3:8) "*And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child.*"
- 3) The Lord understands or discerns all the imaginations of the thoughts. (1 Chronicles 28:9) "*And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with*