



The Examiners

Examining the Scripture daily to see whether these things were so...Acts 17:11

SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT

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Satan is tearing apart Christian churches by allowing truth to exist with a mixture of errors. The alarming point here is the fact that majority of Christians lack spiritual discernment but instead have developed the taste for doctrinal errors, rejecting the truth of Bible doctrine, fighting for their false beliefs and intimidating anyone trying to correct their fallacy.

Christians without spiritual discernment are *believers of errors* and carrying out Satan's plan for the world.

There are three wills in the world:

- The will of Satan – carry out his evil policy
- The will of man - supports Satan's policy
- The will of God - God's plan for believers

Christians must know the differences of these three wills and make sure they are executing the plan of God. The will of God is our present reality that must be sought like a valuable prize and must be proven by using spiritual discernment. True spiritual discernment comes from seeing things from God's perspective which is also called the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16).

Spiritual discernment is seeing things as the Lord Jesus Christ sees them with His mind (metabolized Bible doctrine in our souls called epignosis – 1 Cor. 2:16). One cannot have true spiritual discernment apart from the Bible and the Spirit-filled life.

Discernment is more than:

- A gift before it is anything else –the indwelling Holy Spirit in the believer is the true Discerner and Mentor (John 16:13)
- A skill to develop which requires instruction, training and practice
- A process of advancing in the spiritual life using the divinely given resources and assets.
- A discipline which involves precise usage of tools, means, methods, and operation inside the plan of God
- A call for hard work of thinking the right things with full concentration on the priority of Bible doctrine

What spiritual discernment is not:

- It is not intuition
- It is not suspicion
- It is not vibration
- It is not instinct
- It is not hunch
- It is not premonition
- It is not a hint or clue
- It is not inherent
- It is not natural
- It is not mystical

The effects of Bible doctrine to discernment:

- No Bible doctrine = false discernment
- Little Bible doctrine = mistaken discernment
- Maximum Bible doctrine = right discernment
- False Bible doctrine = confusion

Blockage to discernment:

- Negative mental attitude sins
- Arrogance –imperial view of self
- No peace within –lifestyle of panic
- Occupation with self
- Familiarity with cosmic system
- Busyness in the ministries
- Laziness to study Bible doctrine
- Indecisiveness to follow the will of God
- Retarded conscience

Retarded conscience is:

- Suffering from cosmic contamination
- Seared and defiled with Satan's policy
- perverted with doctrinal errors
- Deformed arrogance and ignorance
- Disharmonized with God and men
- Lost in the ocean of confusion
- Stripped ability to think the right things

How to be spiritually discerning:

- Desire to do the will of God (Prov. 2:2-5)
- Depend on the Holy Spirit to teach you and guide you in the work and process of discernment (Jam. 1:5, 1 Cor. 2:11-16).
- Demonstrate what you have learned that is walking by the Spirit (Gal. 5:16).
- Develop it by practice and application
- Be determined to make righteous judgments and discernment.

Reasons for lack of discernment:

- From very little or completely no Bible doctrine teaching in the soul
- Relativistic thinking – a mindset without the ability to divide into discernable parts any issue, setting, beliefs or circumstances.
- Elevated emotions and experiences that take place of Bible doctrine and reasons.
- Embracing worldly methodology being occupied with building self-images and personal reputation.
- Prioritizing in achieving prestige, reputation, fame, popularity and working hard to gain the acceptance of people.
- Inaccurate interpretation of the Scripture – most pastors today are untrained to study the Word of God through exegetical approaches.
- Most pastors are trained to mix manmade ideas with the truth. They are spiritual bartenders mixing mystical intuition with questionable experiences with some dash of Scripture verses.
- Lax discipline without perseverance that usually quits before reaching the goals and
- Spiritual immaturity
- Worldly priorities sinking in details of life.
- Fear of men
- Carnality and reversionism
- Failure to overcome distraction
- Failure to win in the angelic conflict

Truth will always create an offense to those who reject it and will make dividing wall for those who disagreed with it (John 15:18-20, Heb. 10:33). Making righteous judgment is possible only through the power of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Righteous judgment is correct, accurate and doctrinal thoughts made effectual by the Holy Spirit.

Failure of discernment:

- Judging things as men sees it not by divine viewpoint
- Magnetize by worldly approaches
- Afraid to confront sin
- Unable to use the mind of Christ
- Subjected to the world
- Compromise with the world

Discernment demands:

- Spiritual growth – advance toward maturity
- Doctrinal truth
- Hard work –close attention
- Discipline
- Determination
- Readiness to learn
- Compliance to obey
- Dependency on the Holy Spirit
- Awareness of God's guidance
- Willingness to choose the right things

The maxim of spiritual discernment:

- Learn to discern
- Yearn to discern
- Discern to abide
- Exists to discern

Questions to ask when discerning:

- Is it governed and guided by love?
- Does it center you unto the Lord Jesus Christ?
- Does it direct you to the Scripture?
- Does it edify the Church?

Abuses of discernment:

- False discernment: using it as catch word to speak ill of others
- Mistaken discernment: using it for judging and condemning others
- Shallow discernment: using it to claim that what you are doing is the will of God
- True discernment: using it to pursue the goal beyond the written Scripture

The deception of false discernment:

- To tell others that your decisions are the will of God apart from spiritual discernment.
- To tell others that your decision and action are the will of God apart from the plan of God.
- To tell others that you are in the will of God when in reality you are drowning in the flood of confusion.

Recipe for discernment:

- Desire to know the truth
- Craving to have the wisdom of God
- Dependency on the Holy Spirit
- Consistent studying of Bible doctrine
- Steady momentum
- Follow and observing discerning leaders
- Unwavering obedience
- Learn and apply discernment

Wrong diagnosis: Most Christian churches are asking for revival when in reality the problem is the lack of spiritual growth. Revival for them means numerical growth and statistics not spiritual growth. What is needed is to go back to Bible doctrine of discernment. Immature and ignorant believers needs Bible doctrine in their soul (1 Thess. 5:21-22) which is the standard to judge the truth (function of spiritual discernment). Scriptures alone are authoritative for doctrine, practice and relevant existence. People want what is practical and relevant and yet rejecting the eternal things which are ultimately relevant. Most false ministers of God assumed they have the answers from twisted Scriptures. They lack spiritual discernment to examine everything carefully (1 Thess. 5:21) because they are lazy to study the Bible using the isagogics, categorical and exegetical approaches.

Works of spiritual discernment:

- Cutting through the frontage of confusion and ignorance to reveal the reality.
- Knowing exactly the place of the situation in the plan of God.
- Knowing the schemes and strategies of the devil under the dark clouds of deceptive lies.
- Knowing where evil lurks in what appears as good things.
- Knowing where the purpose of God hides beneath the clouds of evil situations.
- Knowing where the Spirit is working when things are going wrong.
- Knowing where the spiritual lies are hiding behind the bushes of truth.
- Knowing where false doctrine are masquerade by pretense of works in the name of God.
- Knowing what is hiding behind the harmless looking snares of the devil.
- Knowing when the surprise assaults of the adversary are coming in what seems like peaceful situation.
- Knowing the real position of the enemies since they are pretending far when there so close and pretending close when they are quite far.

The catch of the devil's vicious traps:

- The arrogance Christians – thinking they are too smart to fall into the devil's snares.
- The ignorant Christians – not knowing the subtle and dangerous schemes of the devil.
- The pseudo-spiritual – thinking they are stronger than the fallen angels.
- The spiritual believer – who lost concentration and focus on his priority of Bible doctrine.
- The undiscerning believers – who cannot see the multitude of snares the devil has laid in waiting.

We have the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us **but**:

- In most situations we fail to discern what He is saying and therefore fail to apply it.
- We live a life that is practically not leaded by the Holy Spirit but by our old sinful nature.
- We plot the course of our own life being the master of our own fate and the captain of our own souls.
- We plan our calendar, agendas, itineraries or schedules and asking God to bless our plans.
- We are always in hurry being panic by the confusion of the cosmic rush.
- We are trapped in the busyness of the details of life robbing us the precious time for God.
- In most situations we fail to think according the doctrinal viewpoint because we are threatened and pressurized by the cosmic system.
- We do not have the desire to discern and to do the will of God.

Effectual discernment is carryout by unobstructed search for truth which eliminates and disregards:

- Previous concepts you have
- Emotional appeal
- Demands for orthodoxy
- Not demands of men
- Accepted beliefs
- Accepted practices
- Human opinion
- Human emotions

Complete objective investigation in search for truth:

- Has no regards for persons or things on earth
- Has no regards for personal benefits, wealth, riches, honor, earthly power or promotion
- Has no regards for beliefs or unbelief
- Has no regards for human opinion or ideas
- Has no regards for bias, prejudices, concepts or anything that will obstruct the quest for the truth and reality.

The pure Word of God in the souls will result to:

- Pure thoughts
- Pure motives
- Pure decisions
- Pure determination
- Pure actions

The four major areas of application of discernment today:

- Discerning spirits (teachings and practices)
- Actions – decisions
- Intents – motivation
- Times and situations

Welcoming and compromising with doctrinal error of the church will take the best of men to stand for the truth of the Scripture. If the church is infected with false teaching but hesitant to deal with it, then anything that disregard and insult God will replace the Scriptures as the sole authority for doctrine and practice. Majority of churches today have pastors that cannot discern doctrinal errors.

Discerning the spirits (1 John 4:1-4) is essential because Satan is the great deceiver promoting errors in the world. This discernment is based on the confession of the believers concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. *To confess* here means to agree and submit your life to the Lord (Rom. 10:9-10). The phrase "*has come*" means to accept and believe His deity and phrase "*in the flesh*" means to accept His true humanity.

Discernment is proven by doctrinal evidence (1 John 4:4-6)

- From God: refers to those who have overcome false teachings by the Spirit (4:4)
- From the world: refers to those who are teaching false doctrine and those who follow their teachings.

Tests for discerning the spirits (false teachings):

- Does the teaching magnify, glorify, honor, and exalt God or put man and their works on the pedestal of glory?
- Does the teaching call for putting the Lord Jesus Christ in the center stage and the Word of God or the man, ministry, gifts, talents and great accomplishments?
- Is the teaching in agreement with whole counsel of God's truth and magnified the Word of God or magnified the preacher and his works?
- Does the teaching result for people to act on the crucifixion of self or building false hope, unrealistic expectations on God and promises that will never be fulfilled.
- Does the teaching contribute to the starvation of the old sinful nature and crucifying the world for the believers or honoring, exalting and boasting in the world?
- Does the teaching results to consideration of sins and lusts intolerable or drawing Christians to more lustful lifestyle of materialism, arrogance or demonic involvement?

The spiritual transformation process (Rom. 12:1-2) also known as the renewing of the mind through the resident metabolized Bible doctrine in the soul and the power of the indwelling Holy spirit, which is a lifelong process. Spiritual discernment therefore is a lifelong process of selecting the good, acceptable and perfect will of God. To approve God's will in your life means to understand and agree with what God wants us to have in life and practice. There are four things we need to note on this aspect:

- To know and identify (to discern) God's will
- To have the desire to be transformed
- To have total dependency on God for the process of transformation
- To enjoy the results of such transformation

Spiritual discernment is to know (within our souls) what to do to please God in any given situation.

With the knowledge and understanding that the Holy Spirit is leading you, spiritual discernment will result to actions that are shocking and contrary to the world.

- You will become committed to being undone by God (put under the fire of adversity).
- You will become ready to be transformed by Him
- You will be prepared and determined to suffer all the way for sake of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- You will be committed to God's pruning and chiseling out the rough edges.
- You will be committed to knowing the truth and living for the truth (rejecting doctrinal errors).
- You will be committed to executing the plan and purpose of God for your life, no matter what people around you may say.

Symptoms of lack of discernment:

- Unfamiliarity with biblical doctrinal teachings
- Work-oriented instead of grace oriented
- Unwillingness to evaluate new ideas or teachings
- Accepting mystical stories and experiences
- Easily carried away by new religious trends
- Easily victimized by deceitful schemes
- Not speaking the truth in love (not rebuking, refuting and correcting) Eph. 4:14-15
- Working hard to break down any differences and distinctions for the sake of unity
- Supporting and patronizing the teaching of many TV and radio ministries without seeing their doctrinal errors.
- Welcoming the idea of one world church unity of Rick Warren.
- Lacking the ability to pinpoint and define the religious suckers with their multifaceted scams and deceptions.

Spiritual discernment is the ability to recognize, receive and respond to God's will. It is the byproduct of spiritual transformation (Roma. 12:1) initiated and operated by the indwelling Holy Spirit while pushing the question of conformity toward the cosmic system or to the image of Jesus Christ. The advancing believers have the opportunity to prove their worshipful life by living under God's power. The spiritual life is a life of worship and all of our life is meant to be worship.

The primary hindrance to a life of worship and spiritual discernment is the lifestyle of panic and confusion. In the cosmic system, Satan is rushing the people into immediate actions that are not important. When a person is rushing on something of his own plans and power he becomes confuse. In the plan of God, God is leading the believers who are desirous of knowing and doing His will (Rom. 8:14) patiently waiting for God (Isaiah 30:18).

The prayer for discerning the will of God is the prayer of indifference toward anything and anyone except toward God and His Word. Such believer is indifferent except to know the will of God and executing it. Christian without spiritual discernment will become doctrinally confused.

Confused Christians are:

- Disoriented to truth and reality being unclear in their direction, plan and will of God for them.
- Debilitated to make good decision and right actions by divine resources and assets.
- Disheartened to stand for his faith, conviction and God's purpose for his life.
- Disconsolate that is unable to be happy for who and what he is in God but frantically searching for happiness in the world.

