

Discernment

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There is a crying need in the Church today for discernment. Discernment is needed in all areas of life. In a complex world, filled with myriad daily decisions, discernment is needed for the split-second decisions that confront us and also for the weighty matters that take hours in the board room.

-Direction of the Holy Spirit of God

Is Indispensable

1Co 2:13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit.

1Co 2:14 The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. (RSV)

Thus a quality of mind and heart that result from the indwelling Holy Spirit of God that causes one to love right and hate wrong - thus providing a "moral compass" for discernment. One who does not possess the **goodness** of God cannot be discerning. Goodness (not human but Godly) is prerequisite to discernment. (Romans 15:14)

Unspiritual and carnal persons can be clever and shrewd in worldly wisdom but only Spiritual persons can be discerning in the Biblical sense.

Much Church leadership is taught using a "business model" (John Maxwell).

-Knowledge of the situation

Discernment is willingness to objectively assess the details of every situation from God's perspective.

To see with unbiased accuracy and to see what is not evident to the average mind is a gift of the Spirit of God.

To perceive the mind of God in a given situation, thus to view it as God does. It is, not so much a greater intellectual capacity but a deeper Spiritual apprehension.

-Wisdom in proper judgment for decision making

Men of Issachar – "understanding of the times to know...what to do"- I Chron. 12:32

Not based on political considerations. Neither is it arrived at by reasoning powers. It is critical, Godly knowledge - neither ideology nor politics - able to set aside personal preferences and politics and temporal gain. Integrity must always come before loyalty. Loyalty destroys integrity.

Discernment is the capacity to evaluate the information acquired by knowledge.

Heb 5:14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (NKJV)

Therefore, those who feed on the solid food of the Word of God and shun the world's fare develop Spiritual senses that discriminate at all levels and are able to make Godly decisions

based on the indwelling Holy Spirit. The “milk” of the Word has nurtured them and prepared them to long for and to digest “strong meat.”

Discernment is needed in all areas. Love needs discernment - judgment, leadership, teaching, counseling, parenting, occupation but especially in leadership - It is needed for those daily, moment by moment moral choices that confront all of us.

*Phil. 1:9-11 – And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with **knowledge** and all **discernment**, so that you may approve what is excellent, and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruits of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. (RSV)*

Scripture must be the filter in our lives. Scripture brings integrity to all of life.

Genuine, Godly love is a result of knowledge and discernment and leads to maturity (see International Standard Bible Encyclopedia)

Discernment is to ask the right questions- when we ask the wrong questions we get the wrong answers. Discernment is to know what questions God is asking and getting God's answers to those questions. It is to see from God's perspective.

Pattern for discernment

Create safe environment

- Pray

- Comfortable

- Tissues

- Assure confidentiality

Have boundaries set in your mind

Listen

- Pay attention

- Take notes (explain this to the person)

- Give “hope”**

- Reflect

 - To prove you heard

 - To allow the person time for reprocessing

Question

- Ask good, leading questions

- Do not put words in their mouths or minds

- Be forthright but not inappropriate

Empathize

- Understand hurts and problems

Listen for patterns

Thinking

Behaving

Insight

Ask God for Holy Spirit wisdom

Think of Scripture that impacts the situation

Help the person see self in light of their behavior

Help the person see self in light of God's perspective

Be directive

Challenge

Give "homework"

Keep boundaries established in your mind

If not capable to help – admit and refer to someone who is more able