

# Lifting Up The STANDARD

“When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him” (Isaiah 59:19).



Challenging And Encouraging God's Remnant To Remain Faithful

Issue 24

## Learning And Discerning

There are many issues confronting us today, and there are many voices claiming to have the corner on the truth. Is it possible to know the truth? The answer is yes, it is not only possible it is necessary.

Learning is the accumulation of knowledge; however, discerning is the ability to judge what is right and what is wrong.

### Where Does The Sincere Christian Begin?

With so many opinions being preached concerning the issues and the silence of others concerning the issues, where does the sincere Christian begin in a quest for the truth?

### First, We Need To Know That The Truth Is Available For All Christians

#### **John 16:13,**

*“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.”*

Someone is right and someone is wrong concerning the issues we face today; however, the Holy Spirit will guide the sincere Christian into “all truth.” All truth is **all** truth!

### God Gave Pastors

#### **Jeremiah 3:15,**

*“And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.”*

One of the main reasons for the confusion is the fact that, we started para-church ministries that we had no authority from

...continued on page two



### Understanding Is Only For Those Who Seek It!

*“Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that (1) thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, (2) thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.”*

(Daniel 10:12)





...continued from page one

God to start. As a result we have many voices in our para-church movement preaching many different versions of the truth.

## Why Are Pastors Teaching Different Things?

One needs only to check the background of today's pastors to see that most of them received their training from para-church movements. All Bible colleges that are not under the authority of a local church are part of a para-church movement. Obviously, they are going to promote whatever they learned in their movement.

A survey concerning "Young Fundamentalists" was recently taken of young people from para-church colleges. More than 90% of the responders are graduates of schools that have taken a clear stand against the defense of the KJV, with the largest representation (79% of the total) from Bob Jones University (29%), Maranatha Baptist Bible College (22%), Northland Baptist Bible College (21%).

- **58%** hold a Calvinist view of sovereign election that God has predestined some people to Hell.
- **46%** agreed that John Piper, a strong Calvinist, had helped them.
- **40%** said, "I feel more at home with the likes of John Piper and John MacArthur than many fundamental leaders." Both men are strong Calvinists.
- **70%** disagreed that teaching Calvinism is a problem.
- **13%** believe that Hell is not a literal place of eternal damnation.
- **14%** were not pre-millennial.
- **48%** disagreed that we should preach against loose music standards.
- **62%** believed "fundamentalists have majored on the minors."
- **86%** saw no problem with today's contemporary music.
- **55%** said they would use something other than the KJV.
- **20%** believe that drinking in moderation is permissible.

One has to wonder how many of the pastors who sent their students to these para-church schools are regretting it now. Again, I want to emphasize that one of the main reasons for the confusion is the fact that, we started para-church ministries. As a result we have the disturbing survey listed here.

...continued on page three



## The High Cost of Spiritual Discernment

God offers no cheap discipleship program. In Luke chapter fourteen the Lord gave three reasons why we cannot be His disciple. He warned His followers to "count the cost."

1. Christ said if family or even our own lives are more important than truth we cannot be His disciple (Luke 14:26).
2. If we refuse to bear the cross He gives us to bear we cannot be His disciple (Luke 14:27).
3. If we are not willing to forsake all that we have we cannot be His disciple (Luke 14:33).

Discernment only comes from God and He will not give discernment to anyone who is not willing to pay the price to be His disciple. Therefore, the first thing one who wants discernment must do is to decide if he is willing to pay the price. **Beware it is very expensive.**

### The First Step To Discernment Is To Earnestly Pray For Discernment

The phrase "teach me" occurs in fifteen prayers in the Word of God. Fourteen of them were prayers from the "man after God's own heart" and one time the words came from Job who was not talking to God but was talking to one of his critics. Job was humble enough to learn even from his critics. Discernment is costly. It begins with humility.

...continued on page three



...continued from page two

## The Answer To The Problem Is To Develop The Ability To Discern

**John 7:24,**

*“Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.”*

The only way we can “judge righteous judgment” is to have the ability to discern what is right and what is wrong. **How can we develop discernment?**

### Understanding Discernment

**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.”*

### A Critical Analysis

In this verse the Greek word translated “discerner” is *kritikos*. It comes from the root word *krino*, which means to pass judgment on something. It is the word from which we get our English word critic. It refers to making a critical analysis of something.

Again, to be a discerner is to have the ability to follow the command of our Lord when He commanded us to “judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24).

### Some Non-discerners Rebuked

**Hebrews 5:11-14,**

*“Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.*

*12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.*

*13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.*

*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.**”*

In verse fourteen we read we are to have our “**senses exercised to discern both good and evil.**” The Greek word translated “exercised” is “gymnazo.” It is where we get our word gymnasium.

### Exercising Our Spiritual Senses

Our physical senses have to do with *sight, smell, sound, taste, touch* and *hearing*. If we exercise our spiritual senses we will know when something doesn’t *look, smell, sound, taste* or *feel* right in a spiritual sense.

...continued on page four

...continued from page two

### The Second Step To Discernment Is An Earnest Desire For The Truth

The only source of total truth is the Word of God. The only way to discern the truth concerning the things we read in God’s Word is to genuinely allow the Holy Spirit to guide us into “*all truth*” (John 16:13).

This means we are not looking for Scriptures to support what we already think we know about any issue. It also means we will not be concerned about what our peers think. If we genuinely want the truth it will cost us some friends; however, the gift of discernment is costly.

### The Third Step To Discernment Is Applying The Truth

The Psalmist prayed “*Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.*” Notice that the prayer includes “*I will walk in thy truth.*” This might include that you will need to admit that you have been wrong about some issue. **Discernment is costly.** Count the cost before you go seeking discernment.

Discernment put Noah and his family against the entire world. Discernment totally changed the lifestyle of Abraham. It caused Enoch to walk alone, Joseph to be hated by his brothers, sold as a slave, and spend many years in a dungeon. It put Moses on the backside of the desert, the three Hebrew children in the furnace. Discernment caused all of the disciples to be hated, Paul to be lied about, whipped, imprisoned and forsaken by most Christians.

This is why Christ took His disciples up on the mountain at the beginning of their ministry and explained the true cost of discipleship. He said to be His disciple would be to walk the narrow path. He forewarned them it would be a lonely path. He said, “*few there be that find it*” (Matthew 7:14).

**God offers no cheap discipleship program.**



...continued from page three

**How Do We Exercise Our Spiritual Senses?**

Physical exercise enhances and maintains physical fitness and general health. Spiritual exercise enhances spiritual fitness and spiritual health, and like physical exercise it requires a concentrated effort.

**Proverbs 2:1-9,**

- “My son, **if** thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;
- 2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;
- 3 Yea, **if** thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;
- 4 **If** thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;
- 5 **Then shalt thou understand** the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.
- 6 For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.
- 7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.
- 8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.
- 9 **Then shalt thou understand** righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.”

The Hebrew word translated “understand” in the verses above is *biyn*. It is the same word as used in First Kings 3:9 when Solomon asked God for “an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may **discern** between good and bad.”

How do we exercise our spiritual discernment? The answer is simple, “**if** thou wilt receive my words” (Verse1), “**if** thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding” (Verse3), “**if** thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures” (Verse4). “**Then shalt thou understand**” (discern).

**There is much more to discerning the Scriptures than sitting in a classroom for forty minutes listening to a professor profess he knows the facts about some issue.**

Below are only a few of the verses in Proverbs with the word “understanding” that is translated from the same Hebrew word that occurs when Solomon asked God for discernment.

**Proverbs 1:5,**

“A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding (discern) shall attain unto wise counsels.”

...continued on page five

**First Thessalonians 5:21**

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”



**Apostasy is not the absence of truth it is the subtle mixture of truth and error.**

**Discernment is critical in these last days!**

**Jeremiah 3:15**

“I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.”

There is much more to a successful church than having a large group of people without discernment

**Hosea 4:6**

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.”



...continued from page four

**Proverbs 1:6,**

*“To understand (discern) a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.”*

**Proverbs 2:5,**

*“Then shalt thou understand (discern) the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.”*

**Proverbs 2:9,**

*“Then shalt thou understand (discern) righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.”*

**Proverbs 8:5,**

*“O ye simple, understand (discern) wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.”*

**Proverbs 14:8,**

*“The wisdom of the prudent is to understand (discern) his way: but the folly of fools is deceit.”*

**Proverbs 19:25,**

*“Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware: and reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand (discern) knowledge.”*

**Proverbs 20:24,**

*“Man’s goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand (discern) his own way?”*

**God Only Gives Discernment To Those Who Seek It**

**David was teachable**

**Psalm 25:4,**

*“Shew me thy ways, O LORD; **teach me thy paths.**”*

**Psalm 25:5,**

*“Lead me in thy truth, and **teach me:** for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.”*

**Psalm 27:11,**

*“**Teach me thy way,** O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.”*

**Psalm 86:11,**

*“**Teach me thy way,** O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.”*

**Psalm 119:12,**

*“Blessed art thou, O LORD: **teach me thy statutes.**”*

**Psalm 119:26,**

*“I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: **teach me thy statutes.**”*

**Psalm 119:33,**

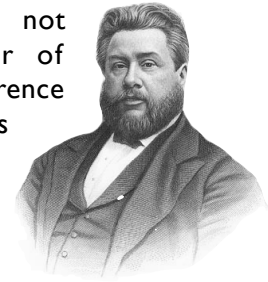
*“**Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes;** and I shall keep it unto the end.”*

**Psalm 119:64,**

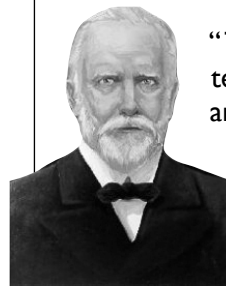
*“The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy: **teach me thy statutes.**”*

...continued on page six

“Discernment is not simply a matter of telling the difference between what is right and wrong; rather it is the difference between right and almost right.”



Charles Spurgeon



R. A. Torrey

“The man who has no technical knowledge of Greek and Hebrew but has spiritual discernment is a far more competent critic of the Bible than he who has a rare technical knowledge of Greek and Hebrew but no spiritual discernment. It is exceedingly unfortunate that, in some quarters, more emphasis is laid on a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew in training for the ministry than is laid on spiritual life and its consequent spiritual discernment.”

Article

**For The Complete Survey Concerning Young Fundamentalists  
Click Here**



...continued from page five

**Psalm 119:66,**

*“Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments.”*

**Psalm 119:68,**

*“Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes.”*

**Psalm 119:108,**

*“Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me thy judgments.”*

**Psalm 119:124,**

*“Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes.”*

**Psalm 119:135,**

*“Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; and teach me thy statutes.”*

**Psalm 143:10,**

*“Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.”*

## Sometimes God Will Attempt To Teach Us Through Our Critics

Job’s critic came to him with an *untrue, unfavourable, unfriendly* and *uninvited* opinion. He said Job was suffering because of his sin. It was to his critic that Job said...

**Job 6:24,**

*“Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred.”*

It was unlikely that Job thought he was the best example of a believer on the face of the earth. Job was obviously a humble man who was willing to be taught by one of his critics.

**How do we develop discernment?** Discernment only comes from the Word of God. To have our senses exercised on the issues of our day we must have a vigorous workout in the Scriptures concerning each issue. It means hours and hours of study not just reading an article like you are reading now. You might have picked up some information from this article; however, discernment only comes from God and He only gives it to those like David or Job who pray “*Lord teach me.*”

**Psalm 119:130,**

***“The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.”***

## Discerning What It Is That We Need To Discern

Discernment is nothing more than the God-given ability to determine between truth and error; right and wrong; however, discernment is not the ability to simply have the truth about everything in general.

### All Things Must Be Judged Separately

**First Corinthians 2:15,**

*“But he that is spiritual judgeth all things.”*

The Greek word translated “*judgeth*” in verse fifteen is the same word translated “*discerned*” in verse fourteen, where we read “*all things*” are “*spiritually discerned.*”

The truth about “*all things,*” all the issues, such as the separation issue the CCM issue, etc. must be discerned separately.

Prayerfully running issues through Proverbs 2:1-9 and other Scriptures concerning whatever subjects we want the truth about is the **ONLY** way to get God-given discernment.

Let us not think that we will get discernment concerning any issue without many hours of prayerfully seeking the truth from the Word of God. Discernment comes only from God.

**Isaiah 28:9,**

*“Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk.”*



**Articles like this one or commentaries are simply a little milk.** We might receive a little knowledge from them; however, discernment is another matter. Learning to discern demands hours and hours of prayerful study in the Word.