

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 No. 23

Discernment

The dictionary defines discernment as **“the ability to judge things,”** and it defines it in a Christian context as **“obtaining spiritual direction and understanding.”** Notice it includes **“direction.”** The main reason to understand something is to know what course of action we should take.

First Thessalonians 5:21 says,

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

The word *prove* in this verse has been translated **discern** twice.

Luke 12:56 Jesus said,

“Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?”

Jesus sharply rebuked them because they were not able to figure out what course of action needed to be taken at that time. We are commanded to discern **“all things”** concerning what course of action we are to take during the time in which we live.

Christ spent three years dealing with His disciples about the urgency of discerning what is right and what is wrong so that they might take the right course of action.

John Chapter 13

- Verse 7, “Thou shalt know.”
- Verse 12, “Know ye?”
- Verse 17, “know these things.”
- Verse 35, “By this shall all men know.”
- Verse 35, “By this shall all men know.”

Chapter 14

- Verse 4, “Ye know.”
- Verse 4, “Ye know.”
- Verse 7, “Ye know.”
- Verse 17, “Ye know.”
- Verse 20, “Ye shall know.”
- Verse 31, “May know.”



“Thy Word Is Truth”
(John 17:17)



Chapter 15

- Verse 18, “Ye know.”
- Verse 21, “They know.”

Chapter 17

- Verse 3, “They might know.”

We Have The Promise of Holy Spirit Guidance.

John 16:13,

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

First John 2:20,

“But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.”

First Thessalonians 5:21,

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

First John 4:1,

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits (Put them on trial) whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”

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First John 4:6 continues,

“Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.”

The word know in this verse has been translated “understand” eight times.

The Urgent Need For Discernment In The Last Days

Second Timothy 3:1,

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.”

Discernment Is Not Optional For Christians

It is critical that we discern the will of God in these days of apostasy or we will be discouraged which will lead to compromise.

If parents do not discern between right and wrong their family will suffer the consequences. If pastors do not discern the right path to take in our day of apostasy churches will be destroyed.

Why Are Christian Leaders Going In Different Directions?

It is unlikely that any Christian parent or any sincere Christian leader sets a goal to compromise; however, compromise is inevitable to everyone who does not learn to discern. That is why Christ focused on the importance of His leaders understanding.

Consider the following verses.

Matthew 15:10,

“Hear, and understand.”

Matthew 15:17,

“Do not ye yet understand?”

Matthew 16:9,

“Do ye not yet understand?”

Matthew 16:11,

“How is it that ye do not understand?”

Matthew 24:15,

“Whoso readeth, let him understand.”

Mark 7:14,

“Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand.”

Mark 8:17,

“Perceive ye not yet, neither understand?”

Mark 8:21,

“How is it that ye do not understand?”

Mark 13:14,

“Let him that readeth understand.”

Luke 24:45,

“That they might understand.”

John 8:44,

“Why do ye not understand?”

That is why Paul, the apostle focused on the importance of understanding.

Romans 1:13,

“Now I would not have you ignorant.”

Romans 11:25,

“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant.”

I Corinthians 10:1,

“I would not that ye should be ignorant.”

I Corinthians 12:1,

“I would not have you ignorant.”

I Corinthians 14:38,

“But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.”

2 Corinthians 1:8,

“For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant.”

2 Corinthians 2:11,

“Satan... ignorant of his devices.”

I Thessalonians 4:13,

“I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren.”

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God’s Will Is Not Difficult To Know

If your child came to you wanting to know what your will was would you make it difficult for him or her to know what your will is?

Obviously not! Neither does God make it difficult for His sincere children to know what His will is.

Our children do not come and ask us what our will is because they really don’t want to know. You might say cut the grass.

The only reason any Christian does not seek the will of God is because he or she does not really want to know His will. God might say He wants them to cut their relationship with some friends who are going against the Scriptures.

Jeremiah 29:13,

“And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”





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Discernment Is Conditional

Discernment does not come by reading commentaries or articles like the one you are reading now. Discernment comes only through the Word of God.

The Doorway To Discernment (V.9, "Then shalt thou understand")

Proverbs 2:1-12

- 1 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.
- 10 When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and **knowledge** is pleasant unto thy soul;
- 11 Discretion shall preserve thee, **understanding shall keep thee**;
- 12 To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things;

For many years, to my shame, I would rely on what my heroes said in a sermon or a commentary on a subject. If Scofield said it, I believed it. If M.R. DeHaan said it I believed it.

Then one day I decided to put my commentaries away and study the Scriptures. I had studied the Book of Acts extensively for many years; however, in recent years I have put over 400 hours into studying the Book of Acts again, this time without any commentaries. I have concluded that what the commentaries say and what the Word of God says does not always line up.

Warning! Do not believe anything in the article you are reading now until you check the Scriptures! "Searched the scriptures" to see if these things are so. Never get direction from an article like the one you're reading. I might be wrong! Discernment comes from the Word of God not from the word of anyone who writes books or articles.

We Lose God's Guidance When We Choose Our Own Way

Matthew 13:10,

10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

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CONVICTION

I was sitting there relaxed listening to the preacher. But my heart began to pound when I heard the preacher say, "Unless you're born again you will never get to Heaven, Why don't you come and be born again today?"

My heart was getting heavy, and the Devil said, "STAY HERE!" But I heard the Lord whisper softly in my ear, "Don't let the Devil keep you, come on and take your stand, I'll guide you through your troubles, I'll always hold your hand."

I began to think back at all the sin I'd done. My heart was loaded with them, and I could no longer run, So I took the Lord's advice and I stood up on my feet. And back from the Lord I will never, ever retreat.

Bob Kirkland
October 8, 1955

Written the day following being saved at the age of twelve years.



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11 He answered and said unto them, **Because** it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: **because** they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

15 **For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed;** lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

God Is No Respector of Persons. It matters not if we call ourselves Pharisees or Fundamentalists, to reject the teaching of the Holy Spirit leaves us incapable of discerning the Word of God.

Lining Up With Our Friends In "The Movement"

It is an insult to the Lord to say "no thanks, we have our mighty men who will guide us into all truth." But, "How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!" (Second Samuel 1:25).

We Need To Understand That Understanding And Action Go Together

Exodus 36:1,

"Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whom the LORD put wisdom and understanding **to know how to work** all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the LORD had commanded."

First Chronicles 12:32,

- "Men that had understanding of the times, to know **to do.**"

First Kings 7:14,

- "He was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning **to work.**"

First Chronicles 22:12,

- "Only the LORD give thee wisdom and understanding...that thou mayest **keep the law** of the LORD thy God."

Second Chronicles 2:12,

- "Endued with prudence and understanding, that might **build an house** for the LORD, and an house for his kingdom."

Psalms 119:34,

- "Give me understanding, and I shall **keep thy law**; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart."

Psalms 119:73,

- "Give me understanding, that **I may learn** thy commandments."

Points To Ponder



God's Plan

"The church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

Our Plan

We decided we wanted to do things like the world does things.

(First Samuel 8:5, "...like all the nations.")

The World Has Colleges

We organized colleges outside of churches.

The influence of pastors faded and the influence of presidents took control. Soon the phrase, "As goes the colleges, so goes the churches" became an unscriptural fact.

The World Gives Doctors Degrees

We give Doctors Degrees outside of the local church.

The World Has Newspapers

We started newspapers outside of the local church.

The World Has Magazines

We published magazines outside of the local church.

The World Has Seminars

We organized seminars outside of the local church.

The World Has Associations

Baptists alone have over 300 different associations outside of the local church.

The World Has a Board of Directors

Our para-church ministries have their Board of Directors outside of the local church.

The World Thinks Bigger Is Better

We think bigger is better.

The World Has Offices

We replaced the "Pastor's Study" with the "Pastors Office."

The World Has Platforms For Her Performers

We renamed "the pulpit area," the "platform."

How is all this working out for us?



Psalm 119:104,

"I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way."

We Need To Understand That Separation Is Not Isolation

Matthew 28:19-20 says,

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

We Need To Understand That Spiritual Discernment Is Critical

A Christian without spiritual discernment in this age in which we live will become discouraged and discouragement can lead to compromise. Compromise is inevitable for the one who cannot discern, *"the difference between the holy and profane,"* or *"discern between the unclean and the clean"* (Ezekiel 22:26).

How Do I Learn To Discern?

1. We Must Realize That We Have Two Natures.

The old nature, referred to as the *"natural man"* wants control.

First Corinthians 2:14,15,

"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. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man."

Spiritual discernment is *spiritual*, therefore, the *"natural man"* or our old nature, *"receiveth not the things of the Spirit."* Paul was writing to Christians. The phrase *"natural man"* is not only referring to unsaved people, it refers to the old nature in all Christians. Paul was talking to Christians in Corinth who were under the control of their old nature.

First Corinthians 3:1,

"I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ."

First Corinthians 2:14,

Paul continued, *"he that is spiritual judgeth all things."*

First Corinthians 6:5,

"I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge."

2. We Must Realize That Discernment Is Conditional.

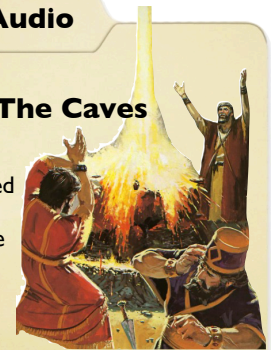
Romans 12:1,2,

*"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, **that ye may prove** (Trans. "discern" twice.) what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*

Audio

Get Out of The Caves

100 Cowardly Prophets Remained Hiding In The Caves While One Man Fought The Battle



Audio

The Reality The Reason & The Recovery From Discouragement

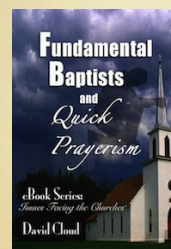


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Face The Facts And Face The FUTURE!



eBook



David Cloud

Free Download Concerning An Extremely Important Issue



Luke 12:56,

Jesus rebuked those who could, "...discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?" He continued, "Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?"

Once Again, It Is A Choice Christians Must Make.

Proverbs 2:1-5 says "If"

1. "My son, **if** thou wilt receive my words,
2. and hide my commandments with thee;
3. So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;
4. **If** thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;
5. **If** thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;
6. **Then** shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find **the knowledge** of God."

Proverbs 2:6 continues,

"For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding."

3. We Must Realize That Discernment Is Available For All Christians. However; It Is A Choice!

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 Greek word translated "exercise" is *gymnazo*. It is where we get our word gymnasium. If we are in the Word we have our senses "exercised to discern both good and evil."

Second Peter 2:1 warns us of the other choice.

Verse 14,

"They have exercised with covetous practices."

The Greek word translated "covetous practices" is *pleonexia*. It means to "desire to have more" (Strong's Concordance). It is a constant danger for pastors to sacrifice the truth of the Word of God because he has a desire to have more people.

The Invisible Church

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Points To Ponder



The Heart & Mouth Connection

(Psalm 12:2)

"They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak."

(Psalm 15:2)

"He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart."

(Psalm 17:3)

"Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress."

(Psalm 19:14)

"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."

(Psalm 39:3)

"My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue."

(Psalm 49:3)

"My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding."

(Proverbs 4:23,24)

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee."

