

The Dictionary definition for the word Discernment is:

Discernment is the ability to make a smart judgment about something. The noun discernment describes a wise way of judging between things or a particularly perceptive way of seeing things.

Over these next 3 weeks, we will explore what it means to be Spiritually discerning and how we can grow towards discernment in our Christian walk.

Here is what we can look forward to on our Sundays through this period. Following is suggested studies for Small Groups to follow:

7 July - Discernment pt 1 - Who can hear God? Living from the New Covenant. - Holly.

14 July - Discernment pt 2 - Deception...where it comes from. - Joel M.

21 July - Discernment pt 3 - The Spirit and the Body. - Mia K.

Life's a minefield. What's the right step to take? What is truth? What's a lie? What's God's voice? What's my voice? What's the world's voice? What's Satan's voice? What's just useless noise?

Discernment is the process by which we try to navigate this minefield.

The world is full of deception. Our fallen, sinful nature is prone to both deception and ungodliness. Fortunately, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ went up such that the Spirit of Truth – the Holy Spirit – could come down to in-dwell born-again Christians, helping us navigate the minefield of this life.

The Holy Spirit will guide us to paths congruent with the inerrant word of God in the Holy Bible, particularly the four Gospels of Christ – the four eyewitness accounts of the ministry of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

Not all who profess to be Christians are known to God. So, automatically agreeing with what other Christians say is not a foolproof way to discern the voice of God. If the guidance of other professing Christians directly conflicts with the Gospel truth, it must be considered false. There will be times when there is valid debate/discussion on interpreting the bible text (exegesis) and times when the Holy Spirit seemingly infuses personal meaning into scripture (eisegesis). What are we to do when even bible scholars debate, and individual followers expound personalised meanings to scripture?

Anything that dilutes the centrality of Jesus Christ and his commandments is untruth. We will all stumble and fall short – but that is an opportunity to rely more on the Holy Spirit – our chief comforter and helper, as we sanctify in this life. Our heavenly Father is a kind Father – he makes it a light, not heavy, yoke.

7 July: Discernment Part 1

Who can hear God? Living from the New Covenant.

Holly's main theme she brought last Sunday was based very simply on the verse from John 8:47- 'Whoever is of God, hears the words of God.' As His creation, who loves Him, we can all hear from Him. The New Covenant life we lead gives us permanent right standing with the Father, who will help us discern His desires for our lives.

Read John 8:47 in your group.

Spend time discussing what you think it means.

Some other verses you can look at (feel free to do just a couple as suits best):

Isaiah 30:21

Romans 12:2

James 1:5

1 John 4:1

1 Cor 2:14

Take some time to share what discernment looks like in your life.

Where have you seen God lead you when you have listened to Him?

Can you remember times when you deliberately sought God's wisdom and instruction for your life, discerning His words from the world's?

14 July: Discernment Part 2

Deception. Where it comes from.

Joel preached last Sunday for us and talked of 3 main areas that deception can come from:

1. Satan- The Deceiver

Do you know the voice of the deceiver? Do you know how to combat his lies?

Matt.7:13-14

2. Others + The world

How quickly are you influenced by the people around you? Do you fear man more than God? Do you face persecution for your faith?

Jeremiah 17:5-8 2 Timothy 3:12-13

3. Ourselves- Our Heart

How often do you find yourself clinging to the things that are not forever?

Jeremiah 17:9-10

We prevent ourselves from being deceived by reading God's Word daily and being led by His Spirit.

- Reading the Word of God- means knowing the Truth

- Being led by His Spirit- means knowing the voice of Truth

Other Key Scriptures:

Matthew 13:18-23 (Parable of the sower)

1 Peter 5:8-10

Jeremiah 17:5-8

Jeremiah 17:9-10

2 Timothy 3:12-13

Matthew 24:24

Key question - "what is the truth?"

21 July: Discernment Part 3

The Spirit and the Body

Mia spoke last Sunday at Church...4 of her key questions were:

1. What is God doing?
2. Who am I?
3. What stage of Life is this?
4. What are my circumstances?

Key verse: **Exodus 33:15**

God said, “My presence will go with you. I’ll see the journey to the end.” Moses said, “If your presence doesn’t take the lead here, call this trip off right now. How else will it be known that you’re with me in this, with me and your people? Are you traveling with us or not? How else will we know that we’re special, I and your people, among all other people on this planet Earth?”

Discuss what you think this verse is about?

Key Small Group questions:

- When do you feel most connected to God? How do you work that into your discernment processes?
- How do you make choices? (clue: we usually make all our choices, big and small, the same way)
- When do you usually seek God for a decision?
- Do any of the 4 questions for discernment grab your attention right now?