

Women's Thursday Bible Class

God's Distinctive Calling for Women 2022

Lesson 13 - Discernment - choosing what is best

[Not expositing what Scriptures mean by the spiritual gift of discernment, or "distinguishing spirits"]

What is discernment? We all need. Pastors and leaders, elders are especially charged with shepherding and guarding the flock.

- the skill of understanding and applying God's Word with the purpose of separating truth from error and right from wrong
- Step further, ... the application of wisdom to our choices, decisions, daily. I. **Wisdom for Life** - small decisions add up to a lifetime of living - lead us on in a trajectory toward spiritual growth or away from it
- Proverbs 9 - 2 voices - Wisdom and Folly

9: 1-12 one voice, and contrasted with another voice 9:13-18

Key: 9:10

"faculty of spiritual discernment" metaphorically

Think first of our external, physical senses and how they help us perceive, judge, make distinctions and evaluations of etc. the physical world we live in

Heb. 5:11-14 trained by practice to discern good and evil (see Rom. 12:1-2, where our minds are continually renewed by the transforming of our minds and we are transformed)

Heb. 4:12 able to judge

Phil. 1:9-11 discerning love to approve things excellent

I Sam. 25: 3,33 Abigail again

Point: we want to be so synthesized to God's Word so that we are wisely responsive, not dull, desynthesized, where we can't taste and see what is good. It is a skill that is learned as you practice it.

II. Recognizing False teachers - II Tim. 4:1-5

1. They look like Christians.
2. They have a following. Often a new twist - suits their ends and appeals to (carnal) desires of audience. Christianity is an historic faith and we should be concerned when there is a departure from historic doctrine. II Tim.4:1-4
3. Their lives will eventually expose them . II Pet. 2:1-3

Signs to be on guard about:

1. They are unwilling to respond to correction.
2. They often " cherry pick " passages, not under God's Word but using it to prove a point.
3. They depart from historic Christianity . Read quote from Melissa Krueger book.
4. Their fruit eventually exposes them. (pride, sex, money)

How can we grow in our ability to " taste" that something is off theologically, or what advice to listen to and which to reject?

1. We need God's word in every way we can get it. It is central and vital for discernment. It is how Jesus speaks to us today.
2. Ask God.
3. Listen to advice and counsel from older , matured saints. (Titus 2)

Story told by Voddie Baucham in sermon on Gospel Clarity, about strawberries

Break for discussion groups:

Next week: We will begin to look at giftedness, and what part that plays in our mentoring and overall role as women in the church.

Lesson Thirteen Discussion Questions

1. For what current situations in your life do you need discernment? Was there anything today that spoke to you in this regard?
2. How have you seen small decisions or patterns in your life or in others' lives , have a big impact over time , for good or for bad?
3. Can you think back reflectively on your life and see a (maybe a big) decision that set a trajectory for your life ? Is there a lesson you learned that you want to pass on to the younger generation?
4. Have you been impacted by false teaching? How so? (we need to take seriously that the elders and pastors leaders in the church are charged with the heavy responsibility of guarding the truth and the flock)
5. Why is it imperative that we be discerning readers, watchers of media of all kinds? Error is always mixed with truth - can be extremely subtle.
6. To gain (learn/ develop / grow/ cultivate) discernment, we need God's Word first and foremost, and God's people (church, mentors, etc) and prayer. Which of these areas do you need to grow in most?
7. Were you enabled this week to comfort, come alongside anyone to encourage?