

Psalm 14:2: Biblical Discernment

Definitions

- Hebrew (*sakal*) = “to eat from an open palm”
- Greek term *diakrino* = “to separate”

I. False View of Discernment

A. Some Christians have been taught that discernment is a **matter of the heart** more than a **matter of the head**.

1. According to this definition, discernment is an *intuitive* or *subjective* matter of the Spirit working through the heart.
2. This definition does not consider discernment to be an **objective, intellectual** matter of using the mind to test, weigh, and judge.

- **Psalm 119:66**
- **Philippians 1:9**
- **Proverbs 15:14**
- **Proverbs 18:15**

B. Should we Trust our Heart?

- **Jeremiah 17:9**
- **Proverbs 28:26**

II. What is the Biblical View of Spiritual Discernment?

- A. “Spiritual discernment is a habit formed by using Scripture under the Spirit’s power and direction to distinguish good from evil” (Jay Adams).
- B. “Discernment is the skill of understanding and applying God’s Word with the purpose of separating truth from error and right from wrong” (Tim Challies).

III. What is the goal of discernment?

“Our goal in discernment is to...see things through God’s eyes through the Bible and thus to see things as they really are” (Tim Challies).

IV. Why do we need discernment?

A. “God values discernment and honors those who seek after it” (1 Kings 3:6-9).

1. Media

- a. Your first question should not be, “Is this appropriate?”
- b. Instead, you should ask: “Who owns my eyes? Whom do they belong to? Who owns my ears?”

2. **Clothing**

- a. **Modesty** says, "I know that physical attractiveness is given to me for your glory, God, and for my spouse."
- b. **Immodesty** says, "You know what, Lord? I own my own body and I will do with it what I want and wear what I want."

3. **Money**

- a. Our checkbook reveals what we worship, doesn't it?
- b. Tithing and otherwise spending with God's glory in view says, "My money is not my own."

V. **Scripture commands us to test everything.**

A. **Romans 12:1-2**

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by **testing** you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

1. Lack of discernment is proof of spiritual immaturity.

Hebrews 5:11

2. What does it mean to be dull of hearing?

Ephesians 4:14

VI. **How Do We Develop Spiritual Discernment?**

1. Prayer (James 1:5)
2. Bible Study (Psalm 119:66, 100, 104)
3. Church attendance (Ephesians 4:11-16)
4. Follow the example of others (2 Thess. 3:7-9)
5. Rely on the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:20)
6. Give to the Lord
7. Serve the Lord with your whole heart

Conclusion

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 so be **pure** and **blameless** for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Philippians 1:9-11