

Is It Really Discernment? Emy Moore Brookins Calls Out a Toxic Trend in the Church

“Discernment” has become one of those Christian words that gets tossed around everywhere. Someone gives you a bad feeling? Discernment. Don’t you trust a ministry? Discernment. You watched three Instagram reels and decided you know someone’s spiritual condition? Somehow, that gets called discernment too.

But Emy Moore Brookins says Christians need to pump the brakes.

In a fiery teaching on her Saved Not Soft podcast, Brookins confronted what she believes is a growing problem in the church, particularly among Gen Z: believers using biblical language without understanding its biblical meaning.

“We’re incredibly passionate and possibly incredibly illiterate,” Brookins said of her generation, explaining that Christians are living in times far too important to casually throw around spiritual terminology.

And “discernment” is squarely in her sights.

“Discernment is not suspicion. Discernment is not instinct. Discernment is not gossip. Discernment is not assumption,” Brookins said. “Discernment is not cynical.”

Brookins defines biblical discernment as the ability to perceive clearly and judge wisely according to God’s truth. Using Philippians 1:9-11 as her foundation, she emphasized that discernment does not begin with a gut feeling about somebody. It begins with love.

And that is where things get uncomfortable.

“I think the discernment problem that we’re seeing in modern church is how we’re weaponizing this word on the behalf of judging and holding other people accountable,” she said.



To order Abby Trivett’s new book, The Power of Suddenly, visit .

Brookins discussed, in particular, the online Christian culture that puts believers, pastors and ministries under a social media microscope. She warned that reaction channels and Christians who constantly bash other believers can masquerade gossip and slander as spiritual accountability.

Her warning was sharp: “When we slander in the name of discernment, it is a satanic assignment.”

“It’s not accountability,” Brookins continued, warning Christians to “get a grip of the fear of God” before speaking loosely about someone who belongs to Him.

That does not mean sin gets swept under the rug.

Brookins specifically distinguished legitimate accountability, including serious moral or criminal wrongdoing among ministry leaders, from internet speculation and petty attempts to read between the lines of someone else’s life. She noted that Scripture provides an order for addressing wrongdoing.

She also targeted what she called “rebuke culture,” which can give Christians the satisfaction of appearing righteous while making somebody else the villain.

“Rebuke culture, I believe, is the lethal injection into the body of Christ because it’s condemnative more than it is corrective and it lacks grace,” Brookins said.

For Brookins, real discernment should look radically

different. It should produce truth, wisdom, obedience, peace, justice, repentance, restoration, holiness and love. It does not produce an endless trail of arguments, accusations and takedowns.

And with eternity in view, the stakes are much bigger than winning the latest theological fight online.

“Heaven is going to be filled with people that you don’t like here on earth,” Brookins said. “Learn a way to love them.”

That may be the gut check the church needs.

Before hitting “post,” exposing another believer or creating suspicion about someone with the word “discernment,” Christians would do well to ask one question: Is this producing the fruit of the Spirit, or is it simply feeding the noise?

Abby Trivett is a writer and editor for Charisma Media and has a passion for sharing the gospel through the written word. She holds two degrees from Regent University, a B.A. in Communication with a concentration in Journalism and a Master of Arts in Journalism. She is the author of the newly released book, *The Power of Suddenly: Discover How God Can Change Everything in a Moment*. For interviews and media inquiries, please contact media@.