

Spiritual Discernment

Biblical spiritual discernment comes from the Spirit of God within us, and is a level of discernment that is not available to those without Christ in them. Paul describes it in 1 Corinthians 2:7-16 and calls it the mind of Christ. It is more than reading and learning things from the Bible. It is part of Christ's Spirit within us. "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" (1Corinthians 2:14).

In the Bible, the things of God are received by unconditional trust in Him, which is also called humility toward God. This humility is well described in 1 Peter 5:5-7 where it says: "Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." (see also Philippians 4:6-7; Psalms 37:7; 55:22; Proverbs 3:5-6; Isaiah 26:3-4; 55:7-9; and Galatians 5:22-23).

This is how we surrender our attachments to the things of this world. God reduces them when our surrender is directed towards Him. When we apply this unconditional trust to Christ, we are filled with His Spirit. He replaces our cares with His peace and strength which are fruits of the Spirit; then God keeps our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus with His peace that passes all understanding; but we need to be anxious for nothing by casting all of our cares on Him in order for this to happen (Philippians 4:6-7).

Godly wisdom is a part of His spiritual discernment that He imparts to us: "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual"

(1Corinthians 2:13). This wisdom comes to us from God through Christ. It is not available to the natural person who does not have Christ within him; "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 1:27-30). In our present bodies, we are limited: "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1Corinthians 13:12).

God also guides us by the Spirit. The Old Testament tells us that "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way" (Psalms 37:23); and "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6). In 2 Samuel 7:3, Nathan the prophet "said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the Lord is with thee." In 1 Samuel 10:6-7, Samuel tells Saul: "And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man. And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee." This type of direction also applies to those who are in Christ.

In the New Testament, we are told to let the peace of God rule (be the umpire) in our hearts (Colossians 3:15). Peace is the natural outcome of trusting in God, and is the place from which God directs us by His Spirit; then, God can "worketh [Gr.*energeo*] in you both to will and to do of his good

pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). This guidance doesn't require listening for voices from God, either loud or still, or relying upon words from prophets. It comes from the Spirit within us. We are "led forth with peace" (Isaiah 55:12).

The Spirit also brings things to our remembrance: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). This is how the Spirit works in conjunction with Christ's message which is found in the Bible. Also: "But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost" (Mark 13:11).

The realization that we humans are weak without the grace of God should motivate us to have humility toward Him (Romans 7:14 thru 8:2). God is waiting for us to be anxious for nothing by casting all of our cares on Him, so that we can have spiritual discernment, wisdom, and direction from Him.

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