

週一嗎哪 午間查經分享祈禱會

MONDAY MANNA
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DELIBERATELY DEVELOPING DISCERNMENT

By Jim Langley

Discernment: It is defined as the innate ability to recognize the moral and practical consequences of our decisions. Discernment also is a quality rarely demonstrated in the business and professional world today. In these times, when we seem to find evidence of moral decline everywhere we look, it would be wise to consider ways of deliberately developing discernment.

An obvious place to start would be in our own lives. Once we have learned to become more discerning personally, then hopefully others will ask what they can do to develop discernment skills. They may recognize this would require cultivating traits such as wisdom, knowledge, insight, perception and understanding. We need great discernment to confront the many moral and ethical ambiguities of our world today.

How can we learn to gain discernment and wisdom? Psalm 111:10 would be a good starting point. It declares, "The fear of the LORD is all wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise." Notice the psalmist refers to the "beginning of wisdom," rather than having full wisdom. I believe this means deliberately striving to develop wisdom for as long as we live. It is true that some people without any spiritual convictions display some form of discernment, but God is the One who promises discernment for those who intentionally pursue it.

Over the past 37 years as a Christian businessman, I have often witnessed the value of discernment, as well as what happens when people lack it. I can recall times where I lacked godly wisdom but have learned from my unwise choices. Fortunately, consequences from most of my bad decisions have been minimal. God has shown remarkable patience as I have strived to learn from mistakes – both my own and ones I have seen others make. Life is an ongoing adventure in learning.

Hebrews 5:11-14 addresses this learning process: "We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil."

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Sadly, many followers of Jesus Christ do not appear to have much desire for or commitment to growing in discernment. Yet I have no doubt that God wants all His people to be wonderfully discerning. Imagine how different things could be if we approached moral and ethical decisions with godly discernment.

What is a first step toward becoming a person of great discernment? Consider the advice of Jesus' half-brother, James, as he exhorted members of the early Church. In James 1:5 he stated, "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously without finding fault, and it will be given to him."

In a world that increasingly questions the existence of absolute truth, when right and wrong are regarded as flexible, depending upon circumstances, the need for divine discernment has never been greater. May we all take this discussion seriously – for the good of mankind and for God's glory!

© 2022, all rights reserved. Jim Langley has been writing for more than 30 years while working as a life and health insurance agent. In recent years, his passion has turned to writing about his relationship with God. His goal is to encourage others to draw near to Him as well. A long-time member of CBMC, he started writing "Fourth Quarter Strategies" in 2014.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. How would you define "discernment"?
2. Do you agree with the assertion that discernment – godly discernment – is generally lacking in today's marketplace, but is desperately needed? Why or why not?
3. From your experience, what might be an example of a situation or circumstance where great discernment was needed to arrive at a proper decision, one that was best for everyone involved?
4. Why is discernment not more greatly emphasized and valued in today's workplace? What are factors that can work against the development and use of godly discernment and wisdom?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages: Proverbs 1:1-6; Ephesians 1:15-17; Philippians 1:9-11; James 1:5-8, 3:17-18

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