



# HOAW Newsletter

*But solid fuel is for the mature,  
for those who have their  
power of discernment trained  
by constant practice to  
distinguish good from evil.  
Hebrews 5:14*

**September 2023**

HELPING MEN LIVE LIVES OF INTEGRITY AND HONOR

## The Importance of Discernment

**Dr. Greg Bourgond**

In the early 90's I was on the pastoral staff of a church in Southern California. On one occasion, John MacArthur was a speaker for a large gathering at the church. Before his presentation he received an important call. I was asked to escort him to my office to take the call. Not wanting to waste an opportunity I asked him a question on the way to the office. "What do you think will be the greatest challenge to the church in the future?" Without hesitation he said, "Lack of discernment." He was prophetic given the current state of affairs in many evangelical churches today. In my opinion, many of us have become lazy or apathetic leading to a lack of spiritual discernment, the intuitive ability to determine right from

wrong and truth from falsehood. There are many reasons for this malady. I will suggest one of them – a growing ignorance of Biblical truth.

Some people are ignorant through no fault of their own, they are simply unaware or lack knowledge of a given topic or subject. Some people are ignorant due to laziness or apathy. Still others are ignorant on purpose. These people are intentionally ignorant about the truth and are arrogant about their ignorance. They choose to ignore the truth because it doesn't fit their preconceived notions or adopted ideology or their personal worldview. They are not 'discerning' or purposely lack discernment. Their heads are 'in the sand' and refuse to be informed about the truth. I believe there is an underlying reason for this. The Bible tells us that Satan has

"blinded the minds of unbelievers (2 Corinthians 4:4)."

Discernment is defined as "the quality of being able to grasp and comprehend what is obscure; an act of perceiving something; a power to see what is not evident to the average mind." The definition also stresses accuracy, as in "the ability to see the truth." Spiritual discernment is the ability to tell the difference between truth and error. It is basic to having wisdom.

Discern. discerned, discerning or discernment is found 36 times in the bible; 10 in the New Testament and 26 times in the Old Testament.

The verb refers to knowledge which is superior to the mere gathering of data. It is necessary to know how to use knowledge one possesses (*Pirke Abot* 3:12). Its main

English usage is “understanding” or “insight.”<sup>1</sup>

Followers of Christ are to be ‘discerning’ in our observations and deliberations. God’s word admonishes us to be wise and discerning.

- 1 John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but **test the spirits** to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.
- Philippians 1:9-11 And this I pray, that your love may **abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment**, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.
- Romans 12:2 - And do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.**
- 1 Kings 3:9 - So give Your servant (Solomon) an understanding heart to judge Your **people to discern between good and evil**. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?”

- 1 Corinthians 2:14 - But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually **appraised (discerned – NKJV, NIV)**.
- 1 Thessalonian 5:21-22 - **But examine everything carefully**; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil.

Why do so many Christians seem to lack DISCERNMENT (or spiritual insight) today? It is so easy to become armchair experts on any given subject by simply Googling a subject, collect other’s opinions on the matter, and present them as our own. When questioned on our ‘knowledge’ we often find that one’s understanding is an inch deep lacking true discernment and depth of understanding. We may have a knowledge ABOUT something but no real knowledge OF something. We haven’t done the hard work of study and analysis. Instead, we pass of a ‘sound bite’ adopted from someone else as our own.

### There are three (3) Levels of Discernment:

Many of us are living at the information level which is simply the ordered understanding of RAW DATA. We do not give enough time to reflection leading to comprehension. The tyranny of the urgent, the frenzied activity of our daily lives, and the constant

bombardment of data (TV, newspapers, magazines, Internet, e-mail, radio, social media [i.e., Tik Tok, X formerly known as Twitter, etc.], podcasts, superficial conversations, etc.) rob us of an ordered analysis of our world. We operate off of sound bites instead of measured and thoughtful examination.

Many others are stuck at the KNOWLEDGE LEVEL, satisfied with the acquisition and accumulation of information ordered in such a way as to produce a seemingly intellectual grasp of the essentials, enough to converse intelligently on the subject but little more. The trouble with remaining at this level is that our mental comprehension doesn’t move on to applied wisdom. It never reaches our hearts. “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life (Proverbs 4:23).”

**We need to move to the WISDOM LEVEL where spiritual discernment resides by prioritizing the acquisition and accumulation of knowledge into godly wisdom. This is accomplished by processing gained knowledge through the filter of God’s word, the Bible. Our ultimate goal should be to apply that wisdom to life in general and our lives specifically so that we are equipped for every good work.**

But many of lack a rubric, a standard, a plumb line, to see

<sup>1</sup> Goldberg, L. (1999). [239.ו'ב](#). In R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr., & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), *Theological*

*Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed., p. 103). Moody Press.

where what we read, hear, and see is evaluated. We may not even have a Biblical worldview, a Biblical lens, by which we understand and interpret information. In fact, we might have what I call a 'smorgasbord' worldview, an integration of elements from multiple worldviews. In essence, we go along the line, pick what we want, and leave the rest.

In summary, information is the ordered understanding of raw data. Knowledge is meaning derived through study, reflection and comprehension. Wisdom is knowledge applied based on one's core beliefs and value system hopefully based on Biblical truth.

By way of illustration, in the 10 Commandments as presented in Exodus 20 we are exposed to **information**, the existence of 10 commandments. We develop a **knowledge** about them when, through study and reflection we comprehend their meaning (i.e., the first 4 commandments address our relationship with God and the remaining 6 commandments address our relationship with others). Knowledge becomes **wisdom** when we understand the commandment's implications to us individually and we personally apply them to our lives as we process them through a belief system that has established our values.

As alluded to earlier, there is a vast distance between having a knowledge ABOUT something and having a personal knowledge OF something. The bridge from one to the other is godly wisdom applied to our lives.

Solomon was given an opportunity to ask for whatever he wanted. He requested wisdom to rule his people justly. God not only gave him what he asked for but much more than he asked for (1 Kings 3:3-14).

Godly wisdom is available to every believer who asks for it in faith. "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him (James 1:5)."

As followers of Christ, we are to be spiritually discerning. Spiritual discernment has to do with wisdom and the ability to distinguish truth from error.

**So, how do we develop spiritual discernment? How do we interpret circumstances, events and encounters? How do we make sense of our observations? How do we connect the dots and draw accurate conclusions from what we hear, read, and see? How do we develop a godly perspective?**

**First, making sense of the world in which we live and develop discernment, requires that we have the "mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16)."**

According to Biblical scholarship, *"having the mind of Christ means sharing the plan, purpose, and perspective of Christ, and it is something that all believers possess (in varying degrees depending on one's spiritual maturity). In order to have the mind of Christ, one must first have a saving faith in Christ (John 1:12; 1 John 5:12). After salvation, the believer lives a life under God's influence. The Holy Spirit indwells and enlightens the*

*believer, infusing him with wisdom—the mind of Christ. The believer bears a responsibility to yield to the Spirit's leading (Ephesians 4:30) and to allow the Spirit to transform and renew his mind (Romans 12:1-2)."*

With the mind of Christ, we begin to see (and understand) the world from God's point of view. We interpret the world through the lens of a **Biblical worldview** as opposed to all other worldviews.

A Biblical worldview begins with acknowledging that God exists and is actively engaged with His world and the people in it. A Biblical worldview embraces the fact that humans are created in the image of God and that sin has marred that image. A Biblical worldview understands that God has provided a solution for the main dilemma facing mankind—that sin is the root cause of evil in the world and the Enemy is main promoter. The solution to this dilemma facing mankind is receiving Christ as Savior and Lord who paid for sin with His life, death, and resurrection. The Gospel is the only lasting solution for an ever-darkening world. Our ultimate destiny is forever determined by our response to God's solution for what ails mankind.

**Secondly, discerning good from evil requires continual exposure to THE truth, God's word (the Bible), to effectively distinguish the truth from falsehood, the good from the evil.**

Years ago, treasury agents were trained to distinguish legitimate currency from forged currency by only handling the real thing for many weeks. When forged currency was introduced along with



real currency, the agents in training were able to tell the forged bills immediately. Why, because they knew what the real bills looked like having been exposed only to the truth for the majority of their training. They were trained to distinguish the false from the true by repeated exposure to the true bills.

**Hebrews 5:11-14** shows us how spiritual discernment is developed. The writer of Hebrews writes to those who had become 'dull' in their understanding, how they had lacked spiritual discernment.

*"About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of **discernment** trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil."*

There is no substitute for hearing, reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating on the word of God. Hearing and reading the word may expose you to the 'milk' of the word. But study, memorization, and meditation on the word gives you the 'solid food' needed to sustain the believer and distinguish right from wrong; to develop spiritual discernment and avoid being carried away by every destructive ideology and philosophy.

## Spiritual discernment requires the mind of Christ and immersion in the word of God!

### OTHER NEWS



**Heart of a Warrior Ministries** offers four journeys you can take to become who

God created you to be.

**The Foundation** (Ground Zero) helps establish strong biblical foundations for the battles ahead.

**The Compass** (Phase I) calibrates a warrior's heart and tunes that heart to the heart of God. I am currently leading 45 at Calvary Church WBL Campus on this journey.

**The Map** (Phase II) helps men focus on what matters in accordance with their unique divine wiring.

**The Guide** (Phase III) develops the spiritual discipline of being mentored and mentoring others.

**In October 2023, we will be presenting an orientation on these journeys. People attending the orientation will be given an opportunity to join one of the groups. If you are in the area, please consider this opportunity. You will not regret your decision. Stay tuned to my website for more information to follow.**

Go to our website for more details.  
[www.heartofawarrior.org/journeys/](http://www.heartofawarrior.org/journeys/)

Previous newsletters dating back to January 2018 may be found at  
[www.heartofawarrior.org/newpage-1](http://www.heartofawarrior.org/newpage-1)

If you would like to contact me directly, email me at [Greg@HeartofaWarrior.org](mailto:Greg@HeartofaWarrior.org)

## Donations



Please consider giving to Heart of a Warrior Ministries. HOAW Ministries needs your financial support. Our ability to help men live God-honoring lives

depends on the resources we can use to that end. Simply go to the donations tab on [heartofawarrior.org](http://heartofawarrior.org).

Thank you for being a subscriber.

You can make a one-time donation by either selecting **Donate to Heart of a Warrior Ministries** or selecting **Donate Now with PayPal** to make a one-time or recurring donation.

Check out **The Store** on our website ([www.heartofawarrior.org](http://www.heartofawarrior.org)). There are downloadable resources you can use to lead a group through Phases I, II, or III, Foundations of a Warrior, and Bible Study Guidelines.

## Websites for Men

**Heart of a Warrior Ministries**  
[www.Heartofawarrior.org](http://www.Heartofawarrior.org)

**A Chosen Generation**  
[www.achosengeneration.info/](http://www.achosengeneration.info/)

**Band of Brothers**  
[www.bandofbrothers.org/](http://www.bandofbrothers.org/)

**Church for Men**  
[churchformen.com/](http://churchformen.com/)

**Every Man's Battle**  
<https://newlife.com/emb/>

**Every Man Ministries**  
[www.everymanministries.com](http://www.everymanministries.com)

**Iron Sharpens Iron**  
[ironsharpensiron.net/](http://ironsharpensiron.net/)

**Iron Works**  
[www.ironworksmen.com/](http://www.ironworksmen.com/)

**Legacy Minded Men**  
[www.legacymindedmen.org](http://www.legacymindedmen.org)

**Life Way Men**

[www.lifeway.com/en/shop/ministries/men](http://www.lifeway.com/en/shop/ministries/men)

**Man in the Mirror**

[maninthemirror.org/](http://maninthemirror.org/)

**Man 2 Man**

[www.man2man.org/](http://www.man2man.org/)

**Man Up God's Way**

[www.manupgodsway.org/](http://www.manupgodsway.org/)

**Men's Fraternity**

[www.mensfraternity.com/](http://www.mensfraternity.com/)

**Men's Ministry Catalyst**

[mensministrycatalyst.org/](http://mensministrycatalyst.org/)

**Men with No Regrets**

[www.menwithnoregrets.org/](http://www.menwithnoregrets.org/)

**National Collision of Ministries to Men**

[ncmm.org/](http://ncmm.org/)

**Ransomed Heart Ministries**

[www.ransomedheart.com/](http://www.ransomedheart.com/)

**Resolute**

[beresolute.org/](http://beresolute.org/)

**Restoration Generation**

[resgen.org/](http://resgen.org/)