

Hold Fast - May 17th - Posers Among Us Part 1 - Troy Knight

TALK IT OVER

Key Scriptures:

2 Peter 2:1-3 NLT
Galatians 1:6-9 NLT

Start reading

2 Peter 1:16-18 NLT

But there were also false prophets in Israel, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will cleverly teach destructive heresies and even deny the Master who bought them. In this way, they will bring sudden destruction on themselves. Many will follow their evil teaching and shameful immorality. And because of these teachers, the way of truth will be slandered. In their greed they will make up clever lies to get hold of your money. But God condemned them long ago, and their destruction will not be delayed.

Galatians 1:6-9 NLT

I am shocked that you are turning away so soon from God, who called you to himself through the loving mercy of Christ. You are following a different way that pretends to be the Good News, but is not the Good News at all. You are being fooled by those who deliberately twist the truth concerning Christ. Let God's curse fall on anyone, including us or even an angel from heaven, who preaches a different kind of Good News than the one we preached to you. I say again what we have said before: If anyone preaches any other Good News than the one you welcomed, let that person be cursed.

Start talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- What's your favorite movie based on the life of Bible character? What's your least favorite?
- Why does Hollywood so often screw up a good Biblical character?

Start thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- Read 2 Peter 2:1-3. When Peter talks about false teachers, what does he mean?
- Pastor Troy called out several religions and teachers by name. Some would say that's being intolerant; what do you say? How do we practice discernment and tolerance at the same time?
- What are the 3 qualities of a false teacher that Troy listed? Share and discuss.
- Most false doctrine has an element of truth, why is that so dangerous?
- What is wrong with the gospels of Thomas and Philip? Why aren't they to be trusted as absolute truth?
- Why is it so important for followers of Christ not to get swayed by false teachers in the world today?

Start sharing. Choose a question to create openness.

- Have you experienced false teaching in your life? Maybe in the church of your youth, at a conference, or in school? How did you determine the teachings were false?
- How would you discuss what you know to be a false teaching with someone who wholeheartedly believes it is truth? Have you ever lost a friendship or relationship over sticking to the Truth of the scriptures?
- Is there anything you think we, followers of Christ, should tolerate even though it is wrong according to scripture? Explain why? (e.g. This is 2020, bible is outdated, Bible was never written to be followed completely.)
- What steps do you personally take to make sure that you aren't being influenced by false teachers?

Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Commit to studying the Bible more so you don't get swayed by false teachers.

Start praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- Father, thank you for the absolute truth of the Bible. Open our eyes to false teachers in the world and help us to stand firm in the truth of what Your Word says. In Jesus Name. Amen.

Start digging. For further study.

- Read the article on the 2nd page and discuss it.

Question: "How can I increase my spiritual discernment?"

Answer: 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.

Arguments and debates surround spiritual truth because it is obscure. Jesus, speaking to His disciples about the Pharisees, said, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given” (Matthew 13:11). Satan has “blinded the minds of unbelievers” (2 Corinthians 4:4), so God must shed light on the human mind to enable us to understand truth. It is impossible to attain wisdom without God. He gives discernment or takes it away (Job 12:19-21).

Some have mistakenly defined spiritual discernment as a God-given awareness of evil or good spiritual presences—the ability to tell if a demon is in the room. While some people may possess this capability, it is not the biblical meaning of discernment. Spiritual discernment ultimately has to do with wisdom and the ability to distinguish truth from error.

Wisdom is personified in Proverbs 1 and described as someone that we can “get to know” (vv. 20-33). The Bible says that Jesus Christ is “wisdom from God” (1 Corinthians 1:30). Therefore, wisdom, or spiritual discernment, is something that comes from knowing Jesus Christ. The world’s way of getting wisdom is different from God’s way. The learned of the world gain knowledge and apply reason to knowledge to solve problems, construct buildings and create philosophies. But God does not make the knowledge of Himself available by those means. First Corinthians 1:18-31 says the “wisdom of the wise” is frustrated by God who delivers wisdom to the “foolish” and the “weak” by way of a relationship with Jesus Christ. That way, “no human being can boast in His presence” (verse 29). We learn to be spiritually discerning by knowing Him.

It is not wrong to possess knowledge or have an education, and it is not wrong to use reason and logic to solve problems. However, spiritual discernment cannot be attained that way. It must be given by the revelation of Jesus Christ to the believer, and then developed by way of training in righteousness (Hebrews 5:14) and prayer (Philippians 1:9). Hebrews 5:11-14 shows how spiritual discernment is developed. The writer speaks to those who had become “dull of hearing,” meaning they had fallen out of practice discerning spiritually. The writer of Hebrews tells them that everyone who lives on “milk” (rather than the “solid food” desired by the mature) is unskilled in the word of righteousness; however, the mature Christian has been “trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.” The keys, according to this passage, are becoming skilled in the Word of God (by which we define righteousness) and “constant practice” (through which we gain experience).

So, how does one increase spiritual discernment? First, recognizing that God is the only one who can increase wisdom, pray for it (James 1:5; Philippians 1:9). Then, knowing the wisdom to distinguish good from evil comes by training and practice, go to the Bible to learn the truth and, by meditation on the Word, reinforce the truth.

When a bank hires an employee, he is trained to recognize counterfeit bills. One would think that the best way to recognize a counterfeit would be to study various counterfeits. The problem is that new counterfeits are being created every day. The best way to recognize a counterfeit bill is to have an intimate knowledge of the real thing. Having studied authentic bills, bank cashiers are not fooled when a counterfeit comes along. A knowledge of the true helps them identify the false.

This is what Christians must do to develop spiritual discernment. We must know the authentic so well that, when the false appears, we can recognize it. By knowing and obeying the Word of God, we will be “trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.” We will know God’s character and will. This is the heart of spiritual discernment – being able to distinguish the voice of the world from the voice of God, to have a sense that “this is right” or “this is wrong.” Spiritual discernment fends off temptation and allows us to “hate what is evil; cling to what is good” (Romans 12:9).