

## **Discernment as a Superpower of Faith**

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**Session Description:** Discernment is the ability to distinguish between what is pleasing and displeasing to the Lord in unclear situations. It is an ability granted to believers by the Spirit and through faith. Paul often identifies this superpower as key to living a godly life (Rom 12:1–3; 1 Cor 2:14; Eph 5:10; Phil 1:9–10). Counseling is full of unclear situations, so biblical counselors with their believing counselees should seek to foster faith leading to discernment.

### **Introduction**

Night vision makes distinction between light and dark more apparent to you. This distinction keeps you safe on your journey through the darkness.

### **Main Point from Romans 12:1–2**

God gives believers new life. As they offer that life back to God, they grow in their ability to distinguish the difference between what is pleasing to the Lord and life-giving to them versus what is displeasing to the Lord and destructive to them. A primary goal in counseling is to help someone discern what responses lead to life.

- 1. God gives believers new life by faith. (v.1a)**
- 2. Believers actively offer that life back to God. (v.1b)**
- 3. Believers grow in the ability to discern what is pleasing to him in their life situations. (v.2)**

### **Application to a Counseling & Care Ministry**

Counseling is full of unclear situations, so biblical counselors with their believing counselees should seek to foster faith leading to discernment.

### **Counseling that is actively biblical:**

- 1. Prioritizes the transformation of the heart *by* God and *for* God.**

**Trust:** In counseling, we emphasize God's character and his action *more* than that of the counselee. Who God is and what he has done is *more important to their experience* than who she is and what she has done.

**Obey:** In counseling, we inspire counselees to offer their lives back to God by faith. We were made for God, and we work right when we're loving him.

This does not mean that all problems go away, but it is the baseline transformation that helps her distinguish between what responses from her are pleasing to the Lord and life-giving to her versus what is displeasing to the Lord and destructive to her.

## **2. Detects the various models of this age forming a person's responses.**

Models are not "things," but relationships. We imitate what we see modeled in people we love or respect or look to for guidance. Many types of models present themselves to us.

Examples:

- Sexual Existential Models – People who display sexual expression as the way to resolve the inner estrangement you feel about yourself, helping you find your true identity.
- Vocational Accomplishment Models – People who display achievement and dominion in their field, giving us tips on how to do it, what kind of person you have to be, the kind of decisions you need to make.
- Personal Excellence Models – People who display a perfected physical or intellectual or social self.
- Political Paradise Models – People who display a vision of a just, comfortable, fair society through public policy.

## **3. Assists a counselee in the necessary labor of distinguishing between what is pleasing to God and pleasant to the soul from what is displeasing to God and destructive to the soul.**

Discernment is an intentional process of thinking through a present situation for the purpose of determining how to respond in a way that pleases the Lord and builds up the soul.

It requires effort. The Holy Spirit enables our active efforts to discern.

- Ephesians 5:7–10
- Philippians 1:9–11
- Hebrews 5:14

The more obvious, the less effort to discern. But still just as much effort to avoid. Examples:

- Models of sexual immorality
- Models of greed and envy
- Models of harshness and hatred

The less obvious, the more effort to discern. And still the same effort to avoid. Examples:

- A godless view of beauty

- A godless view of strength

## **Conclusion**