



How things fit together in the Kingdom

The Difference Between Discernment and Judgement

Most of us confuse discernment and judgement. That mix-up will occur, either, when we're doing them, or we're at the receiving end of them. However, for truly spiritual people (and I don't mean hyper-spiritual believers), ones who are operating out of Father's heart, there should be no confusion.

As there is confusion about these two types of inter-personal assessment, I will deal with them here so it's quite clear how we are to distinguish them and use them.

(1) Judgement

I've completely dealt with the topic of judgement in the past.

READ:

- "Judging Others"¹
- "They Still Say Don't Judge"²

Among believers, judgement is usually a negative activity based on possible thoughts and intents. It's very often about second-guessing another person's motives. Usually, it's placing themselves in our King's position of evaluating a person's actions or speech. This is not right. Judgement of this type has a strictly limited use for us. (Read "Judging Others"³ for the full details)

Judgement is also done within the unconscious attitudes we have towards people, groups, nations, races, political parties, enemies, etc. This is also totally unacceptable and must be eliminated. As hard as it will be to locate these unconscious judgements, the easiest way to identify them is to monitor what you think and what you say. These attitudes are so detrimental to our spiritual lives that Father has issued a warning about them:

*"You are free to walk in oneness with Me when you completely abandon your own life, opinions, **judgments** and perceptions of love to receive mine. The greatest hindrance to walking in oneness with Me is relying on your own **judgments**, understandings, feelings and opinions that you assume are Mine."*⁴

(2) Discernment

Essentially, 'discernment' means to intuitively know what's going on by using special senses which are used to detect hidden factors. Discernment usually defies that which is obvious or logical.

For example: There's 'women's intuition' (AKA 'sixth sense'). This is a perceptive awareness that women have which allows them to get an understanding of something that's outside of any physical sensation. Using this 'sixth sense', a woman's intuition can alert her to the fact that one of her children is in danger, despite the child being completely out of her sight and beyond her ability to hear them call out to her. That's how extraordinary (extra-ordinary) that perception is.

1 – canberraforerunners.org/wp-content/uploads/Judging-Others.pdf

2 – canberraforerunners.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/They-Still-Say-Dont-Judge.pdf

3 – canberraforerunners.org/wp-content/uploads/Judging-Others.pdf

4 – Kriston Couchey (2021) "An Adventurer's Guide To The Next Age: A Prophetic Journey Out Of Religion Into Union With God" [Kindle Ed. p:15] www.amazon.com.au/ADVENTURERS-GUIDE-NEXT-AGE-prophetic/dp/B097BSKTKS

For sons, we have spiritual perception, which the NT calls ‘discernment’. But what does the NT actually say about ‘discernment’?

There are three Greek words which can be translated as ‘discernment’:

(i) Aisthésis

Aisthésis (αἴσθησις) means ‘perception’, ‘understanding’, or ‘discernment’.⁵

Usage: Only once.ⁱ

(ii) Diakrinó

Diakrinó (διακρίνω) means ‘to properly or thoroughly investigate’; ‘to separate throughout or wholly’; ‘to separate’, ‘to make a distinction’, ‘to discriminate’; ‘to learn by discrimination’, ‘to try’ (i.e. ‘to test’), ‘to decide’; ‘to separate out’, ‘to discern’ and hence ‘to judge’.⁶

Usage: Eight times.ⁱⁱ

1 Corinthians 14:29 (NKJV) – *Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.*

(iii) Diakrísis

Diakrísis (διάκρισις) means ‘a discernment’ or ‘a conclusion’ which distinguishes "look-alikes"; ‘to choose which one is to be preferred as the more correct’; ‘distinguishing’ and hence ‘deciding’; ‘passing sentence on’; ‘the act of judgement’; ‘discernment’.⁷

Usage: Three times.ⁱⁱⁱ

IMPORTANT: All three Greek words can be translated as ‘judge’^{iv}, ‘judging’^v or ‘judgement’^{vi} in some English Bibles. This is why there is so much confusion in this discern/judge issue.

From the Greek (as well as common English), discernment is about making choices by assessing the available information and deciding on which option to choose. That’s why the Greek words are often translated as ‘judge’, because that’s what judges and magistrates do – weigh up the evidence and decide what the conclusion is. However, the confusion of interchanging ‘judge’ and ‘discern’ means we must know what the difference is so we can operate righteously as sons.

(3) Test Cases

(These are real-life types of experiences which I’ve written as hypotheticals.)

(a) I drive into the local mall’s parking lot looking for a parking space. Seeing 2 green lights ahead, my wife says, “There’s two up there”. I respond, “Are you sure?” – indicating that I don’t think there are two free. We arrive at the spots with the green lights and find there’s a small car in one (hence the sensor wouldn’t detect it’s presence) and one spare space for me to use.

Was my response to my wife one of discernment or judgement? It was a judgement that I made based on logic, from past experience. Holy Spirit gave me no input so I could make my decision about whether or not there were any free spaces under the green lights.

(b) I plan to cook some rhubarb because I’m going to my son’s home for lunch tomorrow and rhubarb is one of his favourites. “Should I cook it or not?” I muse. Rather than pick the stems and start cooking them, I listen with my spirit for any spiritual communication. I feel that I should send my son a text message (SMS) to check if he would like any rhubarb. He replies that his in-laws have given him some, so he doesn’t need me to bring him a container of it. I don’t cook the rhubarb and use that time to mow the front lawn before Christmas Day (which was the following day).

5 – Strong’s Greek: 144 biblehub.com/greek/144.htm

6 – Strong’s Greek: 1252 biblehub.com/greek/1252.htm

7 – Strong’s Greek: 1253 biblehub.com/greek/1253.htm

Was my decision one of discernment or judgement? It was discernment. I used the Spirit's advice to make the decision about cooking, rather than my desire to bring pleasure to my son.

- (c) Our Community connects with a woman who we think is very spiritual, based on what she says and declares. However, as time passes, we notice that she uses either pressure, cunning, 'sweet-talk' or manipulation to get what she wants. Those mannerisms cause us to become wary of her. As we question the spiritual standing of the woman, the Spirit gives one of us the word 'Jezebel' for her. That alerts us to the true source of her spirituality, so we confronted her about it, which she rejects. Eventually we break fellowship with her because she refuses to renounce her ways.

Was our assessment of her, discernment or judgement? It was discernment. We allowed the Spirit to give us advice to enable us to decide the hidden source of her spirituality. We didn't use our minds, the Bible or the advice of a Pastor.

- (d) A church leader I associated with in the past says I'm a heretic to another person I know.

Was that Christian's assessment of me one of discernment or judgement? It was a judgement. They made it based on their theology, without talking to me and finding out that Father has shown me about the difference between religion and the Kingdom.

- (e) A parent watches one of the children angrily attack one of their siblings. The child is chastised for their aggression and for being angry.

Was that parent's assessment of the child one of discernment or judgement? It was a judgement. This is a natural assessment that parents make in the role of molders of their children's behaviour.

- (f) A person is criticised for not going to church because she feels closer to God when walking in the bush.

Was that person's assessment of the woman one of discernment or judgement? It was a judgement. It was based on the person's theology and worldview, not an assessment the Spirit gave them.

- (g) I attend a casual meeting of believers where I happen to come across a friend from a church organisation I had once attended. I go over to greet the person with a hug, but I'm confronted by a strong wall of resistance, even though we hug.

Was what I felt about the Christian based on discernment or judgement? It was a discernment. The 'wall' of resistance that I felt was sensed in my spirit, not my natural senses.

(NOTE: I could discern that there was a spiritual barrier between us, but I wouldn't be able to assess the reason behind it. Even if I saw in their eyes their negative response to me, I shouldn't make a judgement about the root cause using my mental analysis. It could be their disappointment in me for leaving the group, their rejection of me for abandoning their theology, or any one of a number of reasons. I must refrain from making a judgement about the cause, because I must allow the Spirit to give me what I needed to know when it's necessary.)

(4) KINGDOM PERSPECTIVE

Discernment is an ability beyond the physical senses which allows us to know something that others don't have the privilege or ability to know. That's the difference in distinguishing options, between how people do it and how Father's sons do it. Sons only use mental and logical processes for distinguishing and discriminating options when it's appropriate. All other times, they use their spirit and connect to Holy Spirit to get the wisdom, knowledge, understanding and discernment they need to make choices and decisions.

Therefore, the process of mentally making choices is not the main option for sons. Theirs is the spiritual method because they are (or should be) listening with their spiritual ears at all times, waiting for information to help them in their decision-making. If the natural method is regularly used, or is the default method, the believer is not operating properly as a son. This is why there's so much trouble in the churches because judgement is what is occurring, not spiritual discernment.

To get the right idea of how we are to view judgement and discernment as Kingdom sons, Marsha Burns' Spirit-inspired statement 'lays it out' very well:

*“Do not confuse discernment with judgment. Discernment is a work of the Spirit to distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil. Judgment stems from the human nature and is an evaluation by comparison, which often leads to condemnation. Set your heart to live and walk in the Spirit and treat others as you want to be treated”*⁸

To operate accurately in discernment (and judgement, when required) input from the Spirit is essential. If we don't get that input, the enemy will more than likely interfere with our assessment of another person or a situation. He loves to cloud issues and lead us in the wrong direction so we make the wrong decisions and cause chaos and trouble for ourselves and others. That's often the source of church schisms (splits).

BTW: The Greek work translated as heresy means to cause a split.⁹ It doesn't mean an error. Heresies can occur over good/righteous things, such as what occurred with the Charismatic Movement.

Here's a word from Father about the need to be aware of the enemy's operation when we use our mental capacities and not our spirit:

*“The Lord says that the enemy has been bringing a fog into your spiritual atmosphere. This has caused you to be unable to see clearly. It has created doubt around the things that you are making decisions for. It has caused you to be unclear about that which you are to pray and that which you are to do...”*¹⁰

Be very careful. Use discernment on a continual basis, but leave judgement to those who have that as one of their Kingdom function – unless the Spirit shows you that you need to make a judgement yourself.

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References are on the next page

8 – Marsha Burns “Small Straws in the Soft Wind” (December 18, 2021) www.ft111.com/straws2021.htm

9 – "COMMUNITY: Are We Heretics" canberraforerunners.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/are-we-heretics.pdf

10 – Bill Burns “The Trumpet” (December 19, 2021) www.ft111.com/trumpet2021.htm

REFERENCES

i – Philippians 1:9

ii – Matthew 16:3; Acts 11:12; 15:9; 1 Corinthians 4:7; 6:5; 11:29, 31; 14:29

iii – 1 Corinthians 12:10; Hebrews 5:14; Romans 14:1

iv – e.g. 1 Corinthians 14:29 (NKJV)

v – e.g. 1 Corinthians 11:29 (Disciples' Literal New Testament)

vi – e.g. Philippians 1:8 (KJV)