

***A Father Speaks to His Son about Discernment***  
***Proverbs 2***

A definition of discernment:

- ✓ *Discernment is having an \_\_\_\_\_ of the true \_\_\_\_\_ of something or understanding the \_\_\_\_\_ between two things.*
- ✓ *Discernment is evidenced by a \_\_\_\_\_ of God's \_\_\_\_\_ standards in \_\_\_\_\_ and a corresponding \_\_\_\_\_.*

**1. The need for discernment (a quick review of 1:10-33)**

- The warning of \_\_\_\_\_ : Satan's world system is designed to deceive believers so their faith and testimonies are damaged/destroyed.
  
- The warning of \_\_\_\_\_ : there are friendly-fire dangers that may lead us astray—

- The warning of \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ : we are prone to self-deception.

**2. What man does to pursue discernment (vv. 1-5)**

- Pay \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 2)

*“...the ominous thing is that [entertainment's] power is almost exclusively evil, rotting the inner life, crowding out the long eternal thoughts which would fill the souls of men if they were but worthy to entertain them. And the whole thing has grown into a veritable religion which holds its devotees with a strange fascination, and a religion, incidentally, against which it is now dangerous to speak.” [Tozer, “The Great God Entertainment,” The Root of the Righteous.]*

- Seek \_\_\_\_\_ (vv. 3-4)
- Stimulate \_\_\_\_\_ desires (v. 5)

### 3. What God does to provide discernment (vv. 6-9)

### 4. What discernment produces (vv. 10-22)

- Discernment provides godly \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 10).
- Discernment provides godly \_\_\_\_\_ (vv. 11-19)
  - ✓ Discernment will protect one from perverse TALKING (vv. 11-12).
  - ✓ Discernment will protect one from perverse LIVING (vv. 13-14).
  - ✓ Discernment will protect one from perverse THINKING (v. 15).

*“If the mind falls to identify a sin as evil, wicked, vile, and bitter, the affections will not be safe from clinging to it, nor the will from giving consent. This is one side of the castle wall, the first line of defense: to keeping mind that every sin is a forsaking of God (Jeremiah 2:19), to never forget the polluting, corrupting, defiling power of sin — to be shaken to the core by how much God loathes sin.”*

*[Kris Lundgaard, The Enemy Within.]*

*“You can never have a Christian mind without reading the Scriptures regularly because you cannot be profoundly influenced by that which you do not know. If you are filled with God’s Word, your life can then be informed and directed by God your domestic relationships, your child-rearing, your career, your ethical decisions, your interior moral life. The way to a Christian mind is through God’s Word!”*

*[R. Kent Hughes, Disciplines of a Godly Man.]*

- ✓ Discernment will protect one from perverse “COMPANIONS” (vv. 16-19).
- Discernment provides godly RESTITUTION (vv. 20-22).

## 5. Some practical guidelines in cultivating discernment

- What KINDS of discernment do we need?
  - ✓ We need discernment for *understanding* Biblical truth
  - ✓ We need discernment for *applying* Biblical truth
  - ✓ We need discernment for *self-examination*
  - ✓ What we want is to cultivate godliness and avoid worldliness.

*“Worldliness is departing from God. It is a man-centered way of thinking; it proposes objectives which demand no radical breach with man’s fallen nature; it judges the importance of things by the present and material results; it weighs success by numbers; it covets human esteem and wants no unpopularity; it knows no truth for which it is worth suffering; it declines to be a ‘fool for Christ’s sake’. Worldliness is the mind-set of the unregenerate. It adopts idols and is at war with God.” [Iain H. Murray, Evangelicalism Divided.]*

- What do *YOU* do to cultivate discernment?
  - ✓ PRAY —
  - ✓ READ —

### *Practical Tips for Reading Your Bible and Submitting to the Spirit*

1. Read with the intent of knowing God and His mind, not “solving problems.”
2. Establish a time and place that you will meet God every day — on sofa at 6:30 a.m.
3. Keep a Bible, pad & pen (and maybe a devotional book) at that location.
4. Read the Bible systematically & with balance (history, poetry, prophets, gospels, epistles). Bible reading plans can be accessed at <http://www.discipleshipjournal.com>.
5. For every two minutes you read, meditate for one minute.
6. Keep a log of what passage you read.
  - What is the main idea/central truth?
  - What does this passage reveal about God?
  - What is one key verse that you can think about today?
  - Pray the passage.
  - Commit to do (at least) one thing that day that will reinforce what you learned.

✓ LISTEN —

✓ WATCH —

✓ ASK questions —

- *Does it honor and glorify God? (1 Cor. 10:31)*
- *Does it present a temptation to sin? (2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Jn. 2:16)*
- *Is it beneficial? (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23)*
- *Is it enslaving? (1 Cor. 6:12)*
- *Does it cause anyone to stumble? (1 Cor. 10:32)*
- *Does it promote the good of others? (1 Cor. 10:33)*
- *Does it arise from a pure motive? (Jer. 17:9)*
- *Am I the only one who advocates believing or doing this? (1 Cor. 11:1; Eph. 4:14)*

✓ COUNT the cost —

*Some Helpful Resources:*

Deffinbaugh, Bob. "The Way of the Wise: Studies in the Book of Proverbs."

This series of sermon manuscripts is available at: [www.bible.org/series.asp?series\\_id=103](http://www.bible.org/series.asp?series_id=103).

Lungaard, Kris. *The Enemy Within: Straight Talk about the Power and Defeat of Sin*. Phillipsburg, PA: P & R Publishing, 1998.

MacArthur, John. "A Call for Discernment."

This 3-part series on 1 Thess. 5:21-22 can be accessed at <http://gtv.org/resources.php?section=transcripts&aid=216037>.

MacArthur, John (ed). *Fool's Gold: Discerning Truth in an Age of Error*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005.

This book deals with some specific issues (including worship music and politics) and specific books (including *Wild at Heart* and *The Revolve New Testament*). It also provides an overview of what discernment looks like, and practical discussions about how to cultivate it.

MacArthur, John (ed). *Think Biblically: Recovering a Christian Worldview*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003.

This book, written by the faculty of The Master's College, provides a Biblical foundation for a Biblical worldview, and then deals with a number of specific issues that frame the way we look at life (e.g., masculinity and femininity, worship, counseling and psychology, science, education, history, politics and faith, economics, and art).

Piper, John. "The Supremacy of God in the Life of the Mind."

The manuscript for this sermon is at: [www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/EventMessages/ByDate/1465\\_The\\_Supremacy\\_of\\_God\\_in\\_the\\_Life\\_of\\_the\\_Mind/](http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/EventMessages/ByDate/1465_The_Supremacy_of_God_in_the_Life_of_the_Mind/). If you'd like an audio copy, ask me, and I'll be happy to make one for you.

Probe Ministries ([www.probe.org](http://www.probe.org)).

This ministry is headed by author and radio speaker Kerby Anderson. It is reliable and helpful on a variety of apologetic issues.

Reasoning from the Scriptures ([www.ronrhodes.org](http://www.ronrhodes.org)).

This ministry of author Ron Rhodes is an excellent place to start in seeking answers to Biblical questions, and particularly about apologetic and cult issues.

Sovereign Grace Ministries. "In the World, but Not of the World" ([www.sovereigngracestore.com/ProductInfo.aspx?productid=A1170-00-21](http://www.sovereigngracestore.com/ProductInfo.aspx?productid=A1170-00-21)).

This set of six messages based on 1 Jn. 2:15 is extremely helpful in setting Biblical boundaries without letting them become legalistic standards. The primary topics covered are media (TV, movies, internet, games), music and modesty. Highly recommended, a copy is available through our library.