

# Discernment

Part 2

## Why Do I Need It?

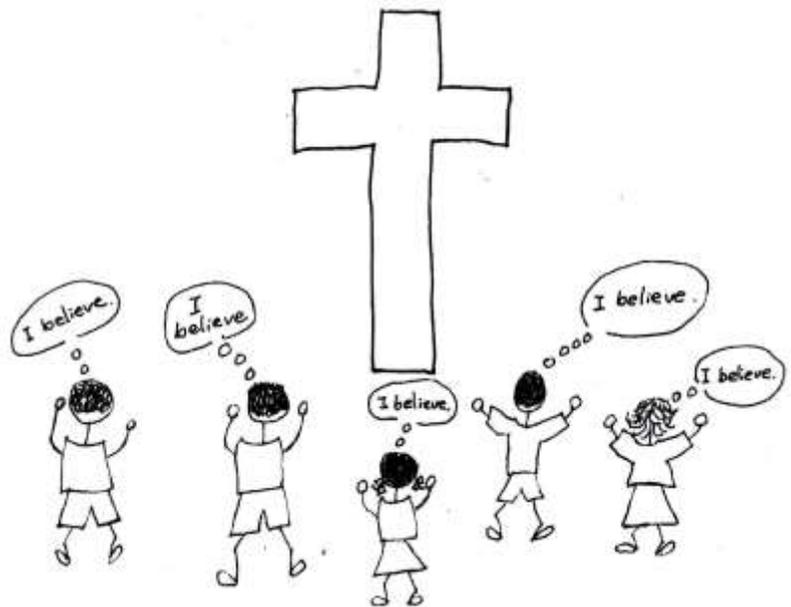
James 3:13-17 Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom [divine viewpoint].

(Revised: 4/3/2013)

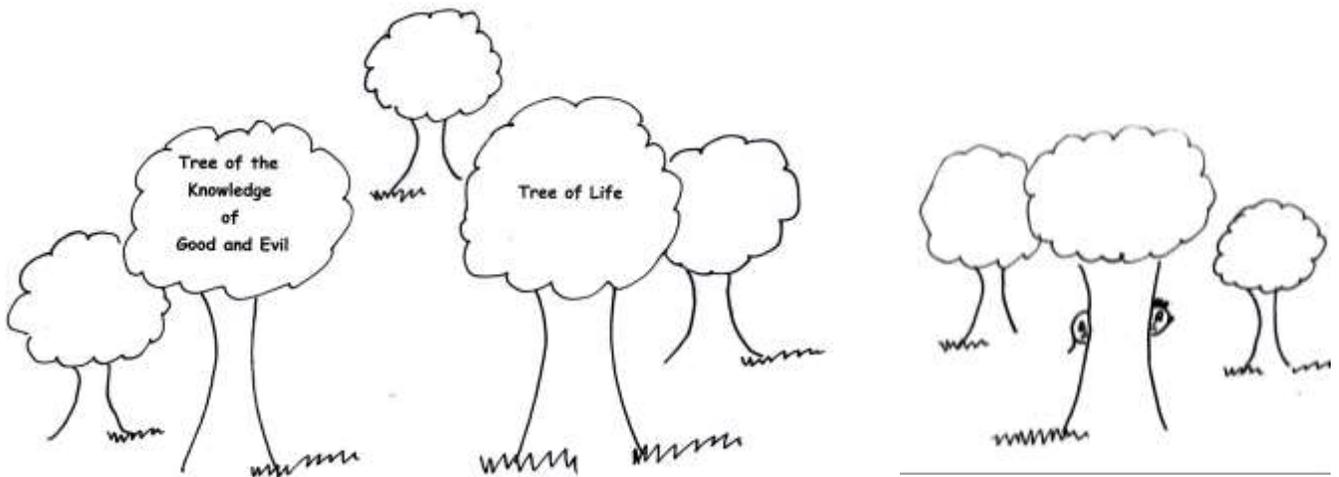


**GOOD NEWS FOR UNBELIEVERS!** Jesus Christ died spiritually on the Cross for everyone's sins. Then He died physically, was buried and rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father! If you are an unbeliever, you have the opportunity right now to believe! Simply tell God the Father that you are believing in His Son Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. If you make the decision to believe in Him in simple faith based on His work on the Cross, you are now a believer! You will spend eternity in heaven with Jesus Christ, your Savior!

*John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."*



In the Garden of Eden, along with many other trees, were the tree of life - God's life - and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve needed the tree of life. They didn't need to worry about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; in fact, God told them not to eat from it. The garden had perfect environment! Evil wasn't in the picture! They didn't need to know about it! However, they chose to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thinking they would then be as wise as God! HELP! The opposite thing happened! When they disobeyed God and chose to eat from that tree, they were not able to recognize good and evil; they couldn't discern!



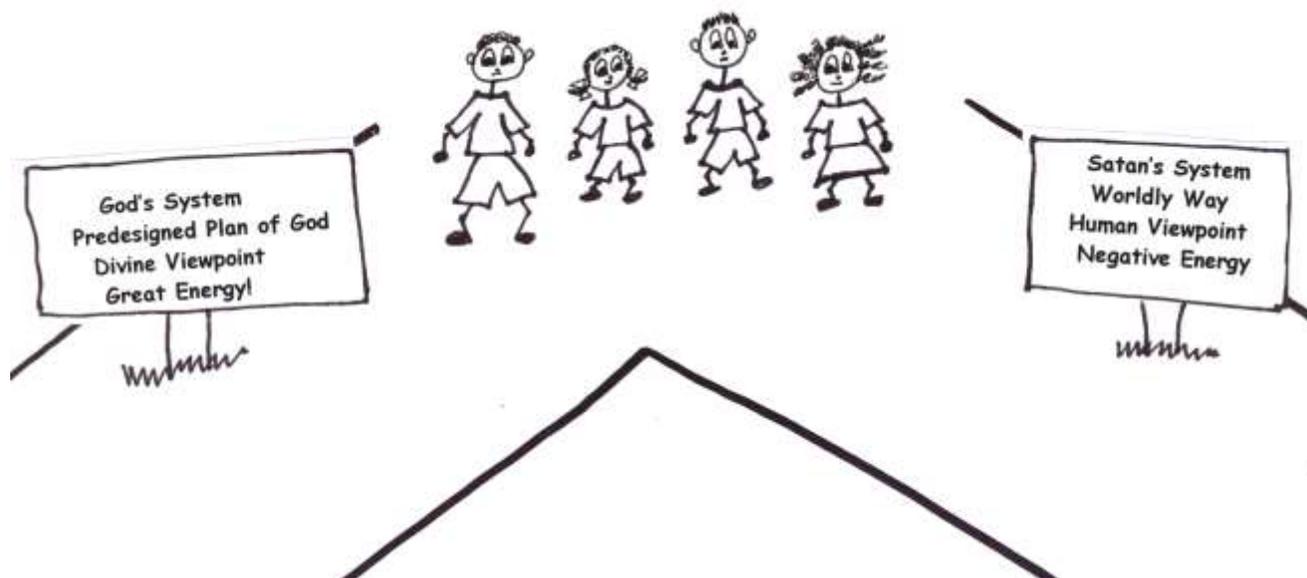
Gen 2:9 Out of the ground the Lord God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to sight [true soul stimulation] and good for food [true nourishment for the body]; the tree of life [true food for the human spirit] also in the midst of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:16-17 The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."

Read Genesis 3:1-7

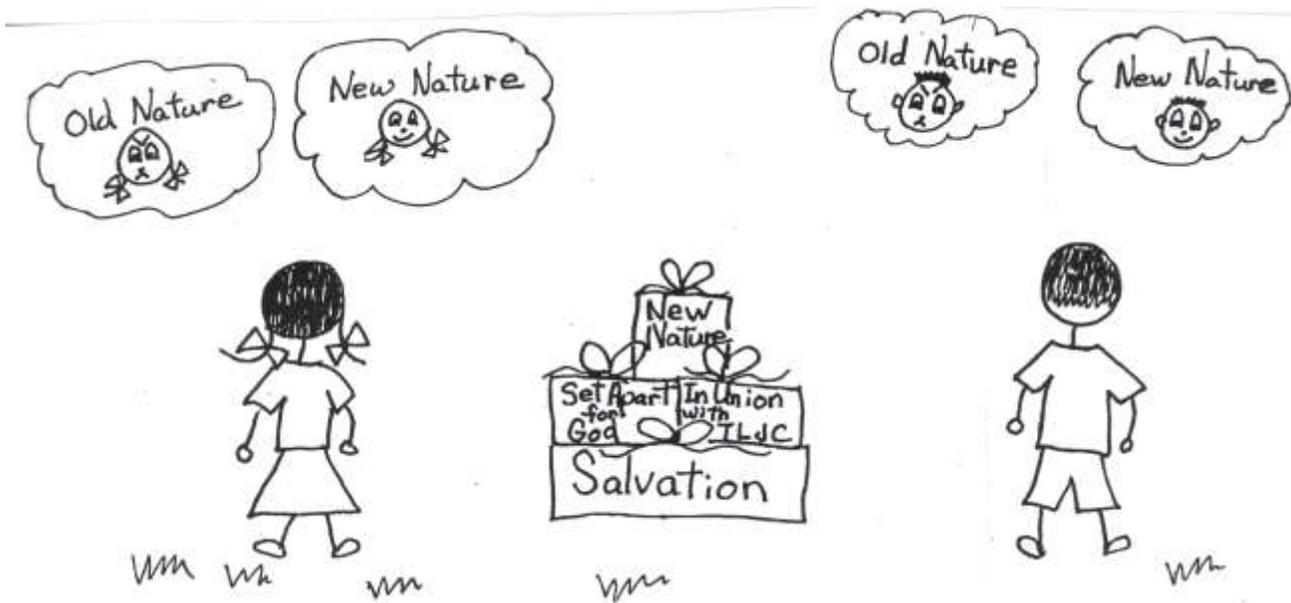
Before salvation, we are like Adam and Eve after they sinned; they didn't have spiritual **discernment** and we don't have spiritual **discernment**. In this human condition, we have no truth in our souls to tell us what is good and evil, to **discern** what's from God and what isn't from God. We tend to think what is good is evil and what is evil is good! Help! We are naturally minded which means we don't have the use of the filling of the Holy Spirit and the word of God. In this human condition, we don't have the source for truth. This is not good!

I don't know what to do!



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 [man needs the filling of the Holy Spirit to understand the meaning of the word of God].

At salvation, the Holy Spirit puts us in union with the Lord Jesus Christ! We have a new nature, a new condition; we are indwelt with the Holy Spirit. We have the supernatural power of the Spirit available to us. We can learn Bible doctrine and have truth in our souls. We can be living in our new nature! We can be using **DISCERNMENT!**



1 Corinthians 2:15-16 But he who is spiritual [filled with the Holy Spirit] appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ.

To help with our **discernment** we need to know there are two kinds of wisdom:

1. Wisdom from above - heaven: "But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy." (James 3:17)

2. Wisdom from below - earthly: "But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing." (James 3:14-16)

If we let Him, God the Holy Spirit through the word of God will teach us to tell the difference between these two opposite kinds of wisdom. He will renew our minds with the truth; He will equip us and train us to use the word of God. Satan's work is to create disorder. God is a God of order, not disorder! We need to know the difference! **DISCERNMENT!**



We also need to be aware of false teachers. The Bible warns us over and over again to be alert, because there will be MANY false teachers in our midst. Proverbs 16:25 There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

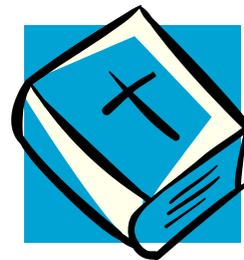
Satan tries to make something look really good even though it isn't. He did a good job with Adam and Eve! He'll try to fool us with false teachers who will try to get us away from the truth of God's word. They will make what they are teaching look good! **Discernment** is being able to see what they are teaching is not good! How do we get to that clear vision?

Hebrew 4:12 **For the word of God** is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit [that which is naturally minded and that which is truly from God], of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.



2 Corinthians 11:13-15 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

The Bible tells us that, in the last days, the believer will be bombarded with an incredible amount of evil, through various media or communications. This means in the last days of the dispensation of the Church Age and we don't know how many years this involves. Today we have lots of ways of communicating with others: internet, phone, television, movies, radio, newspaper, books and face to face. The evil that can come from these sources is human viewpoint. Human viewpoint is very self-centered. This is just another reason why we need our souls filled with divine viewpoint. Divine viewpoint is just that - God's way of seeing things!



2 Timothy 3:1-5 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless [thoughtless], conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness [superficial spirituality] although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

We are in a spiritual battle - the angelic conflict. However, the enemy doesn't fight fairly! Satan's game is deception. He'll try to get us on his side by deceiving us! It has been his game from the very beginning with Adam and Eve, and it will stay that way until he is destroyed. In our human nature, we are overmatched in trying to figure out what is from God and what is from the kingdom of darkness. We need the Holy Spirit to teach us **discernment** so we can tell what is from God and what isn't. Then we need to remember, "The battle is the Lord's!



**Romans 16:17-18** Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ, but of their own appetites [emotions]; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

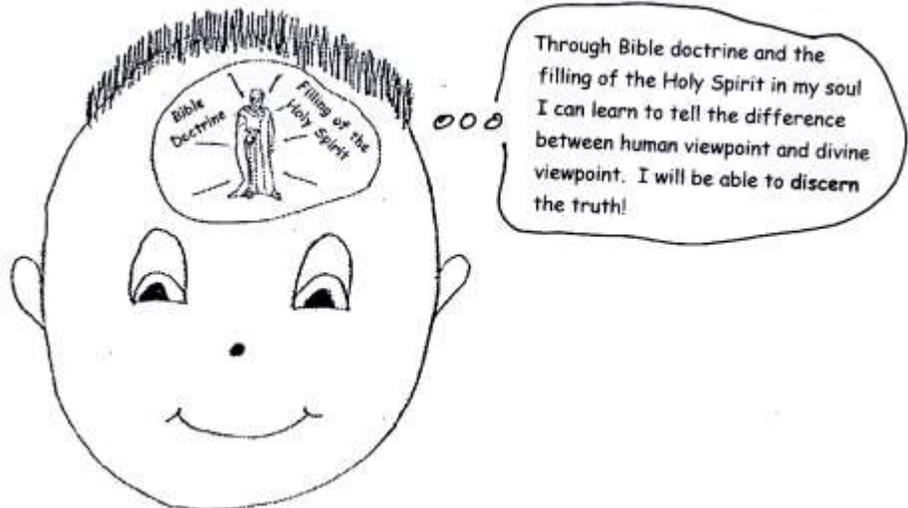
**2 Chronicles 20:15b** Do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God's.

Another reason we need **discernment** is because we face decisions every day that require it. Where does God want us to be? If it is time for Bible study, that's where He wants us to be. If it is time for school, that's where He wants us to be. I'm sure you can think of other examples. Just know God wants us to all be in the special place He has chosen for us. What does God want us to think? God wants us to think His thinking, divine viewpoint from Bible doctrine. What does God want us to do? He wants us to live in His plan for our lives. Since we are filled with the Holy Spirit we can learn, believe and use Bible doctrine. We can't do what God wants us to do if we are not in the right place and don't have the right thinking.

Where does God want me to be?

What does God want me to think?

What does God want me to do?

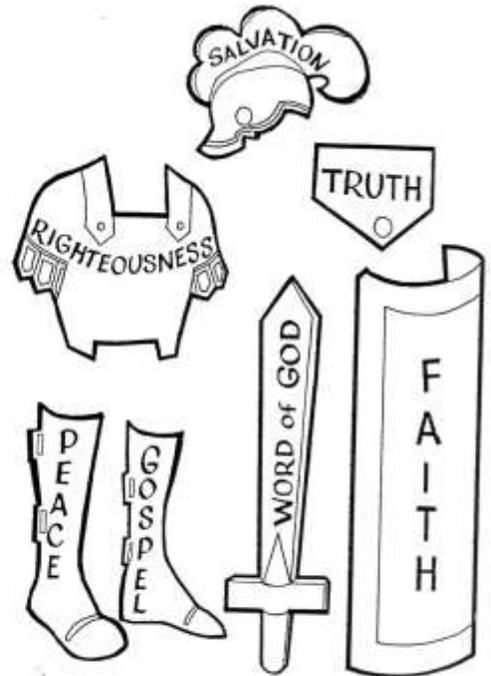


Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

In our spiritual lives, **discernment** means we are able to see and tell the difference between divine viewpoint and human viewpoint. It is the skill of separating divine truth from error and half truth. As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we get our **discernment** from the word of God which is the thinking of Jesus Christ! And, the Holy Spirit is the One giving us the power to **discern**. He uses the Bible doctrine we know as truth in our souls! This knowledge is necessary for our spiritual lives! We **can** be **discerning** because of the filling of the Holy Spirit and the word of God in our souls. We **can** use the thinking of Jesus Christ to make our decisions!

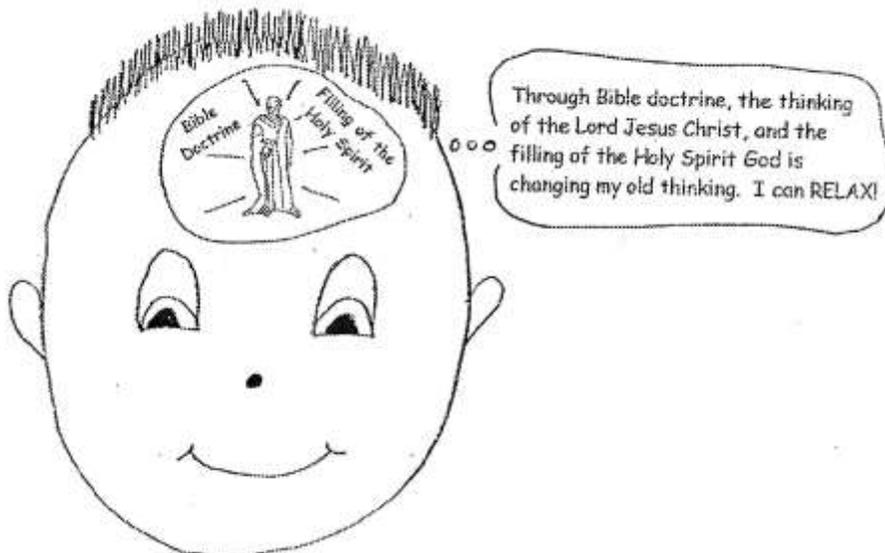
Ephesians 6:10-12

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places [the fallen angels].



## Points To Remember

1. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God and chose to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they were not able to recognize good and evil; they couldn't **discern**!
2. Before salvation, we are like Adam and Eve after they sinned; they didn't have spiritual **discernment** and we don't have spiritual **discernment**.
3. We can be living in our new nature! We can be using **DISCERNMENT!**
4. We need to know there are two kinds of wisdom.
5. We also need to be aware of false teachers.
6. The Bible tells us that, in the last days, the believer will be bombarded with an incredible amount of evil, through various media or communications.
7. Satan's game is deception.
8. Another reason we need **discernment** is because we face decisions every day that require it.
9. In our spiritual lives, **discernment** means we are able to see and tell the difference between divine viewpoint and human viewpoint.



## Questions for Discussion

1. Did Adam and Eve become wiser when they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?
2. Are we discerning before salvation?
3. How do we become discerning after salvation?
4. What are we like when we live in our old nature, our natural condition?
5. What are we like when we live in our new nature?
6. What are the two kinds of wisdom of which we are to be aware?
7. Why do we need to be aware of false teachers?
8. What are some means of communication the kingdom of darkness will use to get lies into our souls?
9. What is Satan's game? How do we get protection from it?
10. What is human viewpoint? What is divine viewpoint?

