

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

AUGUST 22 - 26, 2022



MONDAY

Read **Psalms 119:125; Proverbs 2:3-5**

Why do we need discernment?

As Christians, we believe that our ultimate source of wisdom and truth comes from God. When we are looking for answers or leading, we need to go to that Source and ask Him for understanding. King David had the right posture: *“I am your servant; give me discernment that I may understand your statutes”* (Psalm 119:125). David wasn’t all-knowing; he humbled himself and called himself a servant who needed God’s discernment to be given to him that he might understand God’s commands. We believe in the same God as David did, and we also need God’s discernment like David did. I would venture to say that we need it more now because of all the distractions that pull us away from the voice of God, His wisdom, and His truth.

The summer after my sophomore year in college, I went to a Navigator training program. We had to come up with a verse for our assigned team. I had found these funny silver sunglasses in town and thought we could find a verse to go along with them—not very biblically astute of me, but I was young. We picked Proverbs 2:3-5:

*“For if you cry for discernment,
Lift your voice for understanding;
If you seek her as silver
And search for her as for hidden treasures,
Then you will discern the fear of the LORD
And discover the
knowledge of God.”*

We called ourselves the “Silver Seekers.” (Go ahead and laugh.) How often do we get caught up seeking silver and the treasures of this world rather than crying out for discernment and understanding? If we did cry out for discernment, we would know the fear of the Lord, the proverb says, and discover the knowledge of God!

Are you living your life asking for God’s guidance first, or do you reach out to friends and family first? And if they understand that God is our ultimate source of wisdom and truth, they will ask you if you have prayed and sought God first. If you fear Him, then He will give you the knowledge you seek. Don’t be a Silver Seeker. Lift your voice to the heavens and ask God.

QUESTIONS

Who are you seeking first for the discernment you need? Pray that the Father would make it your heart’s desire to cry out to Him first and seek after Him for understanding to life’s dilemmas.

PRAYERS

For Sam Naylor and Peter’s Work

Upwards of a quarter of Ukrainians have fled their homes and cities due to the war. Primarily women and children are moving alone as men gather into defense forces. Pray for them and those extending hospitality and assistance. Pray for the three primary hubs where Peter’s Work supports refugee needs in Lviv, Kyiv, and Krakow.

TUESDAY

Read **Philippians 1:9-10**

Discernment helps us grow in our grace and knowledge of Christ.

Paul wants us to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. His prayer is that we would abound more and more in the knowledge and depth of insight of Jesus. The closer that we grow to Jesus, the better able we will be to discern what is best in life; we also will be pure and blameless upon His return. This doesn't happen overnight. We are *being* (progressive verb) sanctified day by day and *becoming* more and more like Jesus.

A discerning spirit turns away from what is evil so that the work of Christ can be manifested. Jesus wants our love to “*abound more and more*” (v. 9). There's that idea again of an ongoing, *progressive* process. As we grow in love and in the knowledge of Christ, we will want to do the things that please and glorify Him. Paul is saying that as we grow in this knowledge of Jesus, we will be able to discern the better and purer things in life.

Scottish theologian Sinclair Ferguson said, “True discernment means not only distinguishing the right from the wrong; it means distinguishing the primary from the secondary, the essential from the indifferent, and the permanent from the transient. And, yes, it means distinguishing between the good and the better, and even between the better and the best.” There will be times when you will have to choose between two

good things, but one will be the best choice. This is where seeking God and asking for His discernment will be the only way to make that right choice.

Discernment is always from God, but He gifted some of us a little more than others. I'm sure you know someone in your life who can read people or situations better than you can. I tend to sit next to those people because I want their input. But Paul is telling us in these verses that his prayer for the Philippians—and for us—is to “*abound more and more*” in love, in knowledge, and in depth of insight.

As we grow in our grace and knowledge of Christ, we will grow in our discernment. Mature Christians want to discern well and to grow in their walk with the Lord Jesus.

QUESTIONS

How are you “abounding more and more”? May your prayer be like Paul's: “Help me, Lord, to abound more and more in Your love and knowledge and insight. Give me more discernment.”

PRAYERS

For Sam Naylor and Peter's Work

Economic sanctions and the priorities of a Russian government at war have left the vulnerable more exposed. Peter's Work serves 12 orphanages and shelters in Russia. We are seeing more medical emergencies exacerbated by a lack of resources or access to medicine. Pray for relief and the lives of orphans.

WEDNESDAY

Read [Jeremiah 17:5-10](#)

We need discernment because we cannot trust ourselves.

With so many things in the world vying for our attention and telling us where they think wisdom comes from, we need to be all the more careful not to fall for the world's lies. Media tells us that all we need is already inside of us, but they certainly don't mean God. Jeremiah is saying we have a choice. Will we rely on our own understanding and be like "*stunted shrubs in the desert*" (v. 6), or will we rely on God's understanding and be like "*trees planted along the riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the [lifegiving] water*" (v. 8)?

Our own deceitful heart keeps us from believing that our heart is deceitful—desperately wicked even! We don't know how bad it really is. We cannot rely on it in times of desperation or temptation to make the right choices or responses. But God knows our hearts. We cannot hide from Him. The Lord intimates, "I am perfectly acquainted with [the heart], and with all the wickedness that lodges in it: all its thoughts, counsels, and designs, however secret; all its intentions, affections, and determinations lie open to my inspection; and my piercing eye penetrates into its inmost recesses." (Joseph Benson) Yet, God still wants relationship with us! He still wants us! Oh, if we would only keep our eyes on Him instead of our circumstances or how our heart feels or where we think it is leading us.

We need to give God our heart. Search it, O Lord! David knew to say this. *“Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!”* (Psalm 139:23-24). David knew that his heart needed to be examined for wickedness or misdirection. We can (and do) get in the way of discerning what God has for us. Placing our heart and its desires on the altar in surrender to the Lord is a purifying and clarifying step in seeking the Lord’s leading. He may just respond, “Hey, you’re on the right path.” But we need to let Him tell us that.

QUESTIONS

What is something that your heart is telling you to let the Lord filter first? Lord, help us to remember that our hearts are not to be trusted before trusting You.

PRAYERS

For Sam Naylor and Peter’s Work

Sam and Yulia, missionaries in Russia, are in a process of discernment for their family, their community, and the new safety concerns raised by the war. As they continue to move forward with ministry in both Russia and Ukraine, pray for them.

THURSDAY

Read **Romans 12:2**

Discernment helps us think biblically.

Discernment helps us navigate every area of our lives through scriptural lenses, so we don't conform to the world but the image of Christ. That's why we need to use Scripture as our guide to see if our thoughts or the world's advice holds up. We want to be transformed more and more into the likeness of Christ. This does not happen in and of ourselves. Our minds must be renewed. *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come"* (2 Corinthians 5:17). We already know we can't trust our hearts. Paul is telling us here that as new creations we need to test what's coming to our minds, and we test it through Scripture.

Matthew Henry says, "The work of the Holy Ghost first begins in the understanding, and is carried on to the will, affections, and conversation, till there is a change of the whole man into the likeness of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. Thus, to be godly is to give up ourselves to God." The Spirit wants to help us in our understanding and our discernment so that we will want to make right choices and continue to grow into the likeness of Christ.

But we need to be willing to give ourselves up to God and acknowledge His Sovereignty. Then when things come up that need discernment, we will be able to recall His Word and make better judgments on how

to proceed. Charles Spurgeon puts it this way: “Discernment is not a matter of telling the difference between right and wrong; rather, it is telling the difference between right and almost right.” We want to be right in our discernment, not almost right.

We need to be filling our minds with the truths from the Word of God. Paul tells us what those things should be: *“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things”* (Philippians 4:8). God gives us what we need to make good decisions with the guidance of His Word.

QUESTIONS

How much of you is still not surrendered to God for His transformation? Lord, teach me to surrender my will to You so that I might know Your will as I ask for discernment.

PRAYERS

For Sam Naylor and Peter’s Work

As war in Ukraine progresses, hundreds of thousands live under siege and occupation. They need secure housing, food, clean water, medical care, and reason for hope. Pray for the church members bringing in supplies and offering encouragement in the Donbas, Kherson, Chernivtsi, and Mariupol regions. Praise God for six new church plants.

FRIDAY

Read **Proverbs 12:15; 1 Samuel 25:32-33**

We grow in discernment by learning from others.

I need the counsel of others. I know I want the input of other godly people. God can use our friends and family; but often, if we are listening, He uses people we don't know well or at all. When David heard that a rich man named Nabal was nearby, David sent ten of his men to greet Nabal and ask for whatever Nabal was willing to give to David and his men. Nabal did not receive David's men nor acknowledge David's authority and refused to help. David then told 400 of his men to strap on their swords and come with him.

Abigail, Nabal's wife, heard of what was happening and rushed out to meet David with a ton of food. She took the blame alone for what had happened. She knew Nabal was not going to change his mind, and she did this without his knowledge. But she didn't want all of those in the household to die because of Nabal's stupidity.

"Then David said to Abigail, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me, and blessed be your discernment, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodshed and from avenging myself by my own hand'" (1 Samuel 25:32-33). David gave God the credit for sending Abigail and giving her the discernment of the situation. She acted and David listened.

David quickly saw the Lord's leading in what Abigail said and did; and because he listened to her, he kept himself from making a grave mistake. There was a better choice, and he took it. God then met out His justice upon Nabal, instead of David. God had everything in hand.

We often want to get our answers quickly, but the Lord has plans that He wants us to let Him enact. We must be patient and listen to God's voice coming to us through others. We need to know who our go-to godly people are and invite them to help us.

Discernment is the ability to judge well. Sometimes circumstances and stressors can get in the way of this ability. We need to pray and ask God for help, spend time in the Word, and/or ask for and listen to the guidance of other godly people.

QUESTIONS

How has the Lord used another godly person to discern His voice in your life? Lord, thank You for the wise and godly people You have placed in my life.

PRAYERS

For Sam Naylor and Peter's Work

The Church has a role to play in this historical moment. We have borne witness to basement baptisms and new church plants in Ukraine. We have observed Russian believers resist the dominant narrative and give to help their neighbors. Pray that God's kingdom will come, His will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Sources

- Sinclair Ferguson, “What Is Discernment?” Ligonier Ministries, 8 May 2020: <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/discernment-thinking-gods-thoughts>.
- Joseph Benson, *Benson Commentary on the Old and New Testaments* (Jeremiah 17:9-10), Biblehub.com: <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/benson/jeremiah/17.htm>.
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- Chandan Negi, “50 Best Charles Spurgeon Quotes and Sayings,” Internet Pillar, 19 December 2021: <https://www.internetpillar.com/charles-spurgeon-quotes/>.

