

UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES - Part 10: Applying What You've Interpreted

Now these were the numbers of the divisions that were equipped for war, and came to David at Hebron to turn over the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the LORD...of the sons of Issachar who had **understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do**, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command. (1 Chr 12:23, 32 NKJV)

Spiritual Maturity...Knowing who you are, what you're here for, and how life in the kingdom of God works!

Ten-Week Study on UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES

- Week 1: Seeing "The Big Picture" **DONE**
- Week 2: God's Kingdom vs. The Culture **DONE**
- Week 3: The Fear of the Lord Is The Beginning of Wisdom **DONE**
- Week 4: God's Word Is the Plumb Line For Everything **DONE**
- Week 5: God's Heart For Seers **DONE**
- Week 6: Desiring the Greater Gifts **DONE**
- Week 7: Old Testament vs. New Testament Prophets **DONE**
- Week 8: Interpreting What You See **DONE**
- Week 9: Applying What You've Interpreted **DONE**
- Week 10: Walking In Discernment **TODAY**

Walking In Discernment

- **Review: First, let's go back and finish what we started last week.** What are we to do with revelation that is given to us, either from the Lord himself, or from another believer?
- **James Goll** (*The Seer: The Prophetic Power of Visions, Dreams and Open Heavens*) says that, according to the scriptures, there are **three sources of revelation**:
 - **The Holy Spirit**...is the only true source of revelation. It was the Holy Spirit who "moved on" the prophets of the Old Testament and it is the Holy Spirit who speaks to and through the witnesses of the New Testament.
 - ²⁰ ...you must realize that **no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding**, ²¹ or from human initiative. No, those prophets were **moved** by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God. (2 Pet 1:20-21 NLT-SE)
 - **The human soul**...is capable of speaking out of the unsanctified portion of our emotions. These imaginations, inspirations, thoughts and ideas may not originate from God.
 - **The realm of evil spirits**...These voices follow the lead of their master.
 - **Evil spirits tend to really pick on believers** who are ignorant of God's Word or inexperienced. Often times, we get duped into embracing a word simply because the the revelation contains enough "truth" or factual statements to appear legit. Acts 16:16-18 tells the story of a slave girl with a spirit of divination who spoke the truth about the disciples, but was tapping into a satanic source. When the apostle Paul eventually had heard enough and was irritated with what was happening, he commanded the spirit of divination to leave her.
 - **The "church" is not a perfect world.** We are all learning and growing together. In the same room on any Sunday morning there is always a mix of people coming from different perspectives, having had different past experiences, and with a myriad of levels of maturity. If we are going to "grow up into Him" together (Eph 4:15) we will need to make room for one another's faults.
- **Applying Revelation: What are our options?**
 - **Process** it...Look at it, let it touch your heart, let it stir your imagination, and let the "What if's..." begin to bubble up to the surface.
 - **Believe** it...Some words are waiting to be activated by faith; they need to be received, believed and breathed!

- **Meditate** on it...Sometimes a simple phrase, in a less-than-simple revelatory word, stands out. It's often good to "stew" on a word from the Lord, to allow the flavors to blend become complete.
- **Shelve** it...Revelations are not always for today. Don't be afraid to sit them on the shelf and see what comes in the future. You may find confirmation after confirmation of the same word.
- **Pray** it...There are some words that are meant to be lifted back up to the Lord in the form of a prayer. Many times these revelations will stir us to pray specifically as intercessors for breakthrough.
- **Act** on it...Some revelations require immediate and intentional action (Tel Aviv). If this is true, the Lord will give you the grace and faith to act decisively.
- **How then shall we pray?**
 - **Reflection and Repentance**...Don't hurry. This is not a sprint, but a marathon. Take time to listen, respond, and listen some more to what the Lord is revealing.
 - **Intercession**...If you are filled with God's Spirit, you have a mandate to pray and intercede for others. This is not an option for those who are called, but for those who are filled!
 - **"Crafted" or "Framed" Prayers**...Not all prayer is spontaneous. Some prayers become most effective by asking yourself, What is the Lord is saying and how can I pray in a way that my prayer is significantly aligned with His heart for this situation."
 - **Petitions and Decrees**...We have much more authority than we realize. Our words count, because they are His words. When our words truly reflect His words, things move and change!
 - The **Courts of Heaven**...For those who have a hunger and thirst for intimacy with God, bringing the most important issues in life and setting them before Him only makes sense. Robert Henderson's four-part series on "The Courts of Heaven" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8Qqu7s6Wwc>) is very helpful in understanding the power of this avenue of prayer.
- **Walking In Discernment**

- **What is Biblical Discernment?**

Discernment is defined as "the quality of being able to grasp and comprehend what is obscure; an act of perceiving something; a power to see what is not evident to the average mind." The definition also stresses accuracy, as in "the ability to see the truth." Spiritual discernment is the ability to tell the difference between truth and error. It is basic to having wisdom.



- **Joseph...**

- **"Now therefore let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt.** (Gen 41:33 ESV) The word discern in the Hebrew is **nabon** and means understanding, considering, observing. Joseph ties both discerning and wisdom together. The word wise here is the Hebrew word **hakam** and means wise, skillful, learned. It speaks of an ethical and religious wisdom and learning. It seemed that Joseph understood that discernment and wisdom went hand in hand. Pharaoh responds, "Can we find anyone else like this man so obviously filled with the spirit of God?" (Gen 41:38 ESV) Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command." (Genesis 41:37–39, ESV) **Pharaoh understood, that wisdom and discernment was fueled by the Spirit of God in a person.**

- **Solomon...**

- **When Solomon prayed, he asked for wisdom and discernment.** "Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?" (1 Kings 3:9 ESV) The word understanding is the Hebrew word **shama** and means to hear, to obey. It means to pay attention to the voice of God. The word discern is the Hebrew word **habin** and means to have

understanding and knowledge and insight. It speaks of an understanding that empowers one to teach. It seems Solomon desired to be able to hear God clearly, obey God fully and then teach the people God's ways.

- **The Psalmist...**

- **The psalmist prayed for discernment.** "I am your servant; give me discernment that I may understand your statutes." (Psalm 119:125, NIV) The word here again is **habin** and means to have understanding and knowledge and insight. It speaks of an understanding that empowers you to teach. **The purpose of asking for discernment was to learn and know the Word of God and the commands of God.**

- **Discernment in the New Testament...**

- **"The spiritual man makes judgments about all things,** but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment." (1 Corinthians 2:15, NIV) Here the word **judge** speaks of "make a judgment on the basis of careful and detailed information—"to judge carefully, to evaluate carefully." And it is tied to discern. "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment." (1 Corinthians 2:14–15, NIV) It seems that discernment is closely tied to being able to understand the Word of God and the willingness to **take a question or a teaching to the Word of God and to search the heart of God.**
- "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind** (*"let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think."* NLT) Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." (Romans 12:2, NIV) The word **test** means learning the genuineness of something often by actual experience. As we grow in our obedience to God we are transformed and become more fully able to discern and experience His will. Note that **the focus here is on a personal testing and not on the examination of others.**
- **The subject of discernment is also referenced in 1 John.** ¹ "Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world. ² This is how we know if they have the Spirit of God: If a person claiming to be a prophet acknowledges that Jesus Christ came in a real body, that person has the Spirit of God. ³ But if someone claims to be a prophet and does not acknowledge the truth about Jesus, that person is not from God. Such a person has the spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard is coming into the world and indeed is already here." (1 John 4:1–3 NLT-SE) It is the same testing as in Romans 12. The word **test** means to learn the genuineness of something often by actual experience. It speaks of testing in battle or being battle-tested.

- **Walking In Discernment Individually**

- **There is NO discernment apart from relationship with Holy Spirit.** It is spiritual discernment that we're after.
 - **It take the Spirit to discern the spirit...**¹⁴ The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵ The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. ¹⁶ "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Cor 2:14–16 ESV)
- The **condition of our own heart** comes into play when it comes to discernment. When offenses, doubt, and fears are not dealt with, our ability to spiritually discern a situation can be severely compromised.
 - **Barbara Yoder** says that people often confuse their **critical or judgmental spirit** with a "Spirit of discernment." We may sense an urgency to point out the weakness of another and think that it is spiritual discernment. Have you ever been given a word that was technically correct but it defiled you because it was not given with the redemptive grace of God?
 - **Discernment is hidden from those with hearts that are impure...**¹³ And the Lord said: "Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men, ¹⁴ therefore, behold, I will again do wonderful things with this people, with wonder upon wonder; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden." (Is 29:13–14 ESV)

- **Functionally, it seems to work like this...** We (1) purify our hearts, (2) ask for wisdom, and (3) receive understanding, so we can (4) discern the things that allow us to (5) make choices that are pleasing to God.
 - **One goal of discernment is to discover and value what is pleasing to the Lord...**⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.⁷ Therefore do not become partners with them;⁸ for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light⁹ (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true),¹⁰ and **try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.** (Eph 5:6–10 ESV)
 - **Beautiful! We can learn to choose what the Lord considers beautiful...**⁸ Your mission is to live as children flooded with His revelation-light!⁹ And the supernatural fruits of His light will be seen in you— goodness, righteousness, and truth.¹⁰ **In this revelation light, you will learn to choose what is beautiful to our Lord.** (Eph 5:8–10 PASSION)
- **Discernment is an important tool to help us grow in Spiritual maturity.**
 - **Discernment is learned and practiced...**¹² For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food,¹³ for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child.¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. (Heb 5:12–14 ESV)
 - Much of “Walking in Discernment” is simply going through life fully **aware that the choices** we make along the way will either **please** or **displease** the Lord. Whether or not we accomplish this desire is NOT based upon the fluctuating emotions of a moody ruler, but upon the very character of God!
- **Walking in Discernment Corporately**
 - **What are we being prepared for?** God is preparing us individually so that He can bring us into play corporately. It is a true demonstration of the kingdom of God. (*Example: God’s preparation of single people for marriage*)
 - **Two + Two = Six!** When believers walk in discernment together, the fruit of their relationships with each other and with God become **synergistic**. The word synergy means, “working together” or “laboring together.” The word is from the Latin word **synergia** from the year 1660. The New Testament word is the Greek word, **synergos**, meaning “companions in labor, fellow laborers, or helpers with God.” Every time this word is mentioned, it is speaking, first, of our relationship with God, then with one another.
 - We sent Timothy to visit you. He is our brother and God’s co-worker in proclaiming the Good News of Christ. We sent him to strengthen you, to encourage you in your faith, (1 Th 3:2 NLT-SE)
 - As God’s partners, we beg you not to accept this marvelous gift of God’s kindness and then ignore it. (2 Cor 6:1 NLT-SE)
 - And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. (Rom 8:28 NLT-SE)
 - **A case study in spiritual discernment....**In John 1:43-51, Jesus calls Nathanael to follow him through a word of knowledge (“I could see you under the fig tree before Philip found you.”). Jesus then reveals that this simple spiritual demonstration of will pale in comparison to what was coming up for the disciples. He went on to say, “⁵⁰ You will see greater things than this.”⁵¹ Then he said, “**I tell you the truth, you will all see heaven open and the angels of God going up and down on the Son of Man, the one who is the stairway between heaven and earth.**” (John 1:50-51 NLT-SE)
 - Here is a revelation from Jesus Himself to the disciples, not just Nathanael. Did Jesus actually mean that they would see angels of God going up and down on Jesus? Why is He referring to Himself as *the* “stairway between heaven and earth?” (*Hint: This may require spiritual discernment.*)
 - If this is what Jesus said the disciples were to discern together about Him, what might He be saying to the church today about Himself that He wants us to discern together?