

General Topics :: Biblical Discernment Ministries

Biblical Discernment Ministries - posted by Nile (), on: 2007/4/30 13:32

(<http://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/notebook.html>) Biblical Discernment Ministries

I want to throw this out there as an all-around awesome resource site. I discovered it a couple weeks ago and it has been of tremendous help to me. (As with anything, I do not 100% endorse this site.)

Here are some of the articles I have found most useful/enlightening:

(<http://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/exposes/bonhoeffer/general.htm>) Dietrich Bonhoeffer

-He's quoted often - turns out he's a heretic!

(<http://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/exposes/luther/>) Martin Luther

-I learned some things about the famous reformer.

(<http://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/exposes/mcdowell/general.htm>) Josh McDowell

-I used to love him...but he's gone bad.

(<http://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/exposes/lewis/>) C. S. Lewis

-After reading about Lewis, I have a hard time seeing how any respectable Christian can endorse him at all!!! (save by ignorance)

(<http://www.searchingtogether.org/secret.htm>) Hell's Best Kept Secret

-An excellent critique that highlights some of the issues I have with HBKS and WotM.

(<http://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/Psychology/pk/>) Promise Keepers

-I have heard a lot about them - glad I never got involved.

(<http://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/Psychology/fantasy.htm>) Fantasy

-A wonderful article on the "Christian" Fantasy. I do think they take it a little far though...

(<http://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/Psychology/rockm/>) Christian Rock Music?

-I had already turned from rock music when I read this, but this reinforced my views on the, er, um, well, bad music.

(<http://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/Psychology/ccf/>) Campus Crusade for Christ

-They have this on my campus. I don't plan to attend.

(<http://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/BookReviews/movies/passion.htm>) The Passion of Christ

-Some good reasons why I don't support it.

I hope this site is as helpful to some people as it was to me.

In Christ,

Nile

Re: Biblical Discernment Ministries - posted by iansmith (), on: 2007/4/30 13:42

It's easy to attack the faith of dead people... they can't fight back. We'll more or less all be surprised at who is in heaven when we get there (who is and who isn't) although I'm certainly not going to get on a soap box against CS Lewis, Martin Luther or Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

These men, in their lives and writings displayed an intimate love for Jesus, although this is not certain proof of their salvations their lives did display the fruits of the spirit.

I have personally read Bonhoeffer's Cost of Discipleship (a great book on Grace) and Life Together (a great book on dev

otional life and communal Christian life).

I've also been blessed by the writings of CS Lewis.

Certainly Western Christianity owes a great deal to the work, theological and practical of Martin Luther.

Discernment ministries, whatever their name seems to be just a bunch of disgruntled denominationalists who like to take potshots at people generally regarded to have sound faith.

Re: Biblical Discernment Ministries - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2007/4/30 13:54

I read a couple pages from this site. Rather interesting. It would be nice if so many theologians and historians were much more balanced and open in their presentation of so many "men of faith."

(edit)

Though I'm typically not a big fan of so many so-called "discernment ministries" because of they tend to be overall unedifying in regard to building up the saints of God, they do show a scrutiny of various "saints" that we should do well to embrace before we recommend the writings of some "brothers" so whole-heartedly to others. For example, in the typical evangelical seminary very seldom is Luther looked at critically, and the major faults that dominated his thinking and life are looked at very minimally, and pretty much swept aside by some simple: "oh, well, nobody's perfect!" or "well, can you really fault Luther, he had such limited light compared to today!"

Re: Biblical Discernment Ministries - posted by livingfire (), on: 2007/4/30 13:56

Respectfully, I would have to say that we can find "something" wrong with everyone if we look hard enough. No matter how much Christians denigrate or criticize C.S. Lewis, I can say for myself, personally, that I doubt I can ever be half the Christian he was. A pastor, Bob Jones (I think he was of the "Bob Jones University") once visited C.S. Lewis and after being with Lewis for a while Bob Jones stated about Lewis that "the man drinks, he smokes, he cusses, but he IS a by God true Christian". I don't think I could survive in a Christian world where C.S. Lewis was considered a heretic.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, whose "theology" I don't particularly like, was executed by the Nazis (by hanging) for his supposed involvement in removing Hitler from power. I would consider this man, Bonhoeffer, to have given his life so others may live.

Christian fantasy is good if it is good in a fictional sense and if it truly portrays the values and ideals of the JudeoChristian tradition. "Lord of the Rings" is a perfect example of a Christian fantasy that, written by a Catholic writer who truly did love God, is an expression of the JudeoChristian tradition and worldview, although it is not explicitly Christian. The world may not see "Lord of the Rings" as a Christian fantasy, but Tolkien certainly did, and thousands, if not millions of discerning Christians see it that way too.

We have to realize that Christians such as C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, G.K. Chesterton, Sigrid Undset and others, were men and women of intellect. Some of them may have suffered from "pride of intellect," which is a sin, but I am pretty sure that most of them recognized that sin and tried to correct it. It is easy to bear false witness against creative Christians, artists, writers, movie-makers, etc. The important thing to remember is that they are dealing with story, with fiction, and that fiction is not fact. We also have to remember that these artistic people were and are "images of God," and thereby they are involved, as Tolkien says, in acts of "sub-creation" and by these acts of "sub-creation" they perform a function that God talented them with.

Please do not take any of these words as ad hominem attacks or any kind of attacks at all. God bless you!

Re: - posted by iansmith (), on: 2007/4/30 14:10

Well it really comes down to the parable that Jesus used of the two sons that the father asked to go work in the vinyard..
. this discernment ministry uses a lot of things that Dietrich Bonhoeffer said in a few limited writings to make the case that his entire theology was groundless... when someone who has read a larger portion of his writings would know that those were just ideas or considerations that he made to flush out the topic, not absolute statements.

One son's spoken theology was perfect, but his actions were non existent. The other son's spoken theology was wrong, but he went out and did the will of his father.

We take a snap shot of a man's words, one or two sentences out of context and project them onto someone's lives as if they tell the whole story when hundreds and thousands of people that they have personally touched would say otherwise

This is slanderous and not edifying.

Re: - posted by iansmith (), on: 2007/4/30 14:12

I forgot to mention my other favorite discernment ministry:
<http://www.atruechurch.info/falseteachershome.html>

Re: Biblical Discernment Ministries - posted by John173 (), on: 2007/4/30 14:20

I was taken back a bit when I saw Chuck Smith and Calvary Chapel in their list of exposes. I briefly scanned the article and discovered that the problem they have with Calvary doctrine is they teach the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and believe that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are active today.

If I were to do a biblical discernment ministry such as this, I would consider adding those who teach that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are *not* for today.

Other than this doctrinal disagreement, I saw many that certainly need to be exposed.

In Christ,

Doug

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2007/4/30 14:38

Quote:

I was taken back a bit when I saw Chuck Smith and Calvary Chapel in their list of exposes. I briefly scanned the article and discovered that the problem they have with Calvary doctrine is they teach the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and believe that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are active today.

Most "Biblical discernment ministries" out there that I have come across tend to come from a Calvinistic/cessationist point of view.

Re: Biblical Discernment Ministries - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2007/4/30 16:11

Hi everyone.

Wanted to pass along a few passages of scripture to take along in the consideration of *discernment*, whatever that may mean to us, or to those who claim to operate a *discernment ministry*.

One passage that came to mind was from the letter to the Corinthians, where among the gifts of the Holy Spirit is mentioned the gift of **discerning of spirits**.

Not too long ago as I got on the train one night to come home, I distinctly felt as though I sensed or perceived a perverse spirit nearby. As the train went along I noticed that two men that were sitting nearby in the car that I was in were several times looking over at me and at one point I heard one of them comment on how I was *reading a Bible*.

The scripture also says elsewhere, if I may quote a somewhat lengthy passage:

" Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man." - 1 Corinthians 2:12-15

A few things that I notice from this passage...

The things of God are taught by the Spirit of God and not by man's wisdom. And the things of the Spirit of God are *spiritually discerned*.

We must have the Spirit in order to judge or discern, in the Spirit.

...he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

Perhaps an example of this in the scriptures is where the Pharisees said that the disciples were breaking the sabbath

At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn and to eat.

And to this accusation the Lord Jesus said, among other things,

But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

They knew the scriptures well enough didn't they? Yet He says they *condemned the guiltless*. Why? Why did they miss it? I believe that judgment according to the letter **only**, can cause us to err. The Lord Jesus said

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

and also He said

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

The Word is Truth. But it is also Spirit. We must have both, the Word and the Spirit, Truth, and the Spirit of Truth.

I don't mean to suggest here that we should cast aside the scriptures for judgement of right and wrong, truth and falsehood

od, God forbid! Still,

...he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

This supposes then, that those who judge must have the Spirit, or thier judgement will not be right and according to right eousness.

We should try to be carefull then, to not judge after the letter only, but judge righteous judgement, according to the Spirit, not truth only, but by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth.

Chris

Re: - posted by Isaiah64, on: 2007/4/30 16:18

iansmith wrote:

I forgot to mention my other favorite discernment ministry:

<http://www.atriuechurch.info/falseteachershome.html>

You're being sarcastic, right?

This is the website of the Darwin Fish cult.

See (<http://www.atriuecult.info/>) A True Cult

Re: - posted by iansmith (), on: 2007/4/30 16:25

Isaiah, I meant to put and but forgot.

Re: - posted by Isaiah64, on: 2007/4/30 17:06

;-)

Re: Biblical Discernment Ministries - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2007/5/2 9:25

As I briefly scanned this site, I sensed a weariness in my spirit....perhaps it just goes to show that at the very least one n eeds to be grounded on the WORD and not let man divert your beliefs/convictions and its clear teachings away from it. There are too many smooth-talking people who will do such a thing.

ginnyrose

Re: Biblical Discernment Ministries - posted by CJaKfOrEsT (), on: 2007/5/2 10:43

Quote:

Nile wrote:

(<http://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/notebook.html>) Biblical Discernment Ministries

I want to throw this out there as an all-around awesome resource site. I discovered it a couple weeks ago and it has been of tremendous help to me. (As with anything, I do not 100% endorse this site.)

Here are some of the articles I have found most useful/enlightening:

Stumbled across this last week:

Authors

Norman P. Grubb

You see I take, and have done so for years, a contrary attitude toward authors. I look for the positive and greedily feed on what feeds me. I do not attempt to assess them on what might be regarded by me or others as negative aspects of them—indeed that is how I seek to see and align myself with all brethren in Christ. I cannot bear to see you digging out all you can find to prove what is error to you, with hardly a word on the glory. To me all of us have areas about us which can look like clay feet, but God has taught me to jump clear into the solid gold about them. The evangelical world threw CT Studd and Rees Howells right out, but God held me to that pure pure gold in them, and by passing what I could have pointed out as “clay feet” kind of thing in either, just as any can easily find in me. And how glad I am that I did. The same with great authors such as Kierkegaard, Karl Barth, the Catholic Mystics etc. And now my Lanyon is being stretched on the rack of criticism. Yet if I was to waste my time in defense couldn’t I shew passage after passage confirming him. Doesn’t he write of the Virgin Birth in his “Conception” chapter, and a few pages later quotes us as “hid with Christ in God” and always used the capital of Jesus.

Re: - posted by Nile (), on: 2007/5/2 11:10

Quote:
-----You see I take, and have done so for years, a contrary attitude toward authors. I look for the positive and greedily feed on what feeds me. I do not attempt to assess them on what might be regarded by me or others as negative aspects of them—indeed that is how I seek to see and align myself with all brethren in Christ.

I think this is a very unwise and unbiblical principle.

If for instance, a man does not believe in the Deity of Christ, I will not pay heed to this man - why should I, he is a non-believer? He does not have the Holy Spirit, therefore none of his teaching is Spirit inspired. I would never recommend such a teacher nor any of his writings. Any teaching that man has to give is of no value to me, except to see what the false-brethren are teaching and believing. Might he have some truth in his teaching? He might. But why would I bother to look for it? Do we search the writings of the Muslims looking for pieces of truth? No. That is ludicrous. We should not go to the wolves and expect to be fed good food - all we will likely get is poison.

Quote:
-----I cannot bear to see you digging out all you can find to prove what is error to you, with hardly a word on the glory.

It is not a matter of "proving error", it is a matter of seeking to know the truth and who teaches it. I want to know about an author before I read his writings. This is wise. It makes a vast difference to me when I am reading a book if I KNOW, by the author's own words, that he believes in evolution, he believes "Christianity is the fulfillment of paganism", he believes some of the Psalms to be "devilish" "petty" "vulgar" "diabolical" "terrible" "contemptible" and "hard to endure", he cussed, told old lewd jokes, committed adultery (and never repented), frequently got drunk, never had a conversion experience, denied Christ is the only way to heaven, believed people of all religions go to heaven, denied a literal hell, and had an ungodly fascination with the occult and pagan mythology.

Now tell me, would you endorse such a man?
Would you not be leery of reading anything written by such a man?

For those who don't know, I was referring to C. S. Lewis.

Nile

Re: - posted by CJaKfOrEsT (), on: 2007/5/4 22:50

Quote:

Nile wrote:

Now tell me, would you endorse such a man?

Would you not be leery of reading anything written by such a man?

3 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

4 God forbid: yea, **let God be true, but every man a liar**; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

Rom 3:3-4

I object to the whole issue of endorsement per se. It seems to imply that there are some who have a handle on truth. In sorry, but no mortal does. I'm not going to speak about Lewis, because quite frankly I know not enough about him to comment. However, I can for Grubb, that he maintained a awareness of the faults in errors of the authors that he read. To isolate yourself from all but have the "pure doctrine" *sic*, is to open yourself up to being blindsided by subtle errors. However, to maintain a healthy suspicion to all statements that are **not raw Scripture**, is to protect oneself.

I cannot say that I agree wholeheartedly with any man of God (closest would be Paris Reidhead;-)). Some are to be avoided in the interest of avoiding getting caught up in blatant error. To be honest, I avoid dogmatism more than anything. It is one thing to say that you **know** something. It is quite another to claim to have established **every point of doctrine** not being undecided on anything. There are those of God's servants who are capable of giving equal time to differing views, that are not **unbiblical per se**, but are simply dubious, in nature. These are wise enough to consider that they may be wrong, in spite of having a contrary opinion.

Regarding what you put as Lewis' view of the Psalms, being "devilish" "petty" "vulgar" "diabolical" "terrible" "contemptible" and "hard to endure", there is nothing wrong with feeling this way, as long as you realise that you are wrong and God is right. In fact it is refreshingly honest to admit feeling such. God wasn't afraid of making His Scripture look ugly. It is rough, uncensored, and even "hard to endure". Have you ever considered that submission isn't truly possible unless you agree with the one who is over you? The question is, what will you do with this disagreement?

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2007/5/5 1:13

Brethren, we all know very well that doctrine is important. Indeed, it can be a strong bond between us. But... something is terribly missing in our hearts if doctrine is our only bond with one another.

For me, the chief difficulty I have with discernment ministries (so-called) is that they treat doctrine as the only bond that matters. To make matters worse, they are too quick to not only paint, but also frame, other brothers with thin anecdotal evidence. As Ian has said in this thread, discernment ministries often risk bearing false witness as they build their case upon one or two quotations from a brother to bring not merely cautious indictments, but heated condemnations overstated in hyperbole. Even the most sensible discernment ministries "findings" seem to be a mixed bag of the bona fide and the ballyhoo.

I believe these discernment ministries need a more balanced scorecard in appraising others. Perhaps they do not realize that demons, being quite expert theologians, would be all too happy to assist them in their doctrinal tribunal. James has warned us of this pitfall. His scorecard included actions that we would devalue as a "social gospel." So perhaps, instead of applying the perfect bond of love, (which is not quick to denounce,) a discernment ministry may actually be applying the solvent of mistrust that corrodes. If so, I wonder if these professional discerners could discern the spirits that will applaud them and throw roses at their feet, for their theological virtuosity?

Where we are called to feed each other spiritual nourishment, I think discernment ministries offer only vacuumous hunger pangs to the church. If we would try them in like fashion in our own kangaroo courts, they too would fall short of pleasing the judge. As a result they invariably receive mistrust from the larger body, perhaps at the expense of the actual good they might be able to accomplish if they didn't isolate themselves. They have only themselves to blame when people keep their distance from them.

Afterall, those who live by the sword die by the sword.

MC

Re: - posted by Nile (), on: 2007/5/5 8:19

Brothers, I understand your concerns and warnings, but I believe they are off the mark.

Firstly, I personally am greatly encouraged by such ministries because they show me that there are others who believe as I do and they affirm to me that I'm not crazy thinking the things I do. They also give me hope that there are still people who are concerned with the truth and rightly dividing the word of God. I also am encouraged because I do in fact learn things and am edified, because although they tear down false ideas they usually give the correct truth in it's stead (albeit what they believe to be right).

Secondly...take for instance the article of Luther. By reading it, I learned that Luther believed in baptismal regeneration. I'm really not sure what you are suggesting...should I have not read this? Was it wrong to find out what Luther believed? Where did the site denounce everything Luther said as false? Where did I denounce everything Luther ever wrote as blasphemous? I simply said that I learned some interesting things about him and thought others might as well. I see no harm in this.

Thirdly, I believe the case of Lewis is far different. It is not a matter of agreeing with "every point of doctrine" it is a matter of basic Christian truths!!! This man is not a Christian any more than Gandhi was!!! If you're reading Lewis, you might as well read the Koran or the Book of Mormon. They've got truth just like Lewis does, if not more in the case of the Book of Mormon, because it quotes quote a lot of scripture. Likewise, if your going to quote Lewis the might as well quote Gandhi. I'm not trying to turn this into a Lewis debate. I'm just trying to say that this is not a matter of agreeing with someone 100%! It is a matter of learning from brethren or learning from obviously false brethren! Also, when I said endorse Lewis, I didn't mean that you agree with him 100%, but that you would give him your approval as a teacher (i.e. he is a good teacher - that doesn't mean he is perfect).

Fourthly (and this goes along with the Thirdly), love does not override truth in this case. I know that's not exactly what you said, but when applied to the topic at hand, that's what it amounts to. Introducing my friend: Elder Jones. He calls himself a Mormon. Guess what? He's a Christian! Yeah, you didn't know? Just look at the title of his church: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints! He also reads the Bible regularly and prays too! He worships Jesus and talks often about the cross and the sacrifice Jesus made. I talked to one of his friends recently and they told me how much they loved Jesus and how He was more important than anything. Doctrinal problems you say? Cult you say?!?!?! Non of that now! Don't criticize these brethren, even though they may be wrong in a few points of doctrine!! After all, love is the perfect bond of unity - just be loving and ignore the few points where you disagree! The Book of Mormon is heretical you say? Don't be so negative! Chew on the meat and spit out the bones! You recommend a website on the problems with Mormonism??? Who would make such an unloving and unedifying website!!! The authors do nothing but tear down and denounce brethren whom they don't fully agree with. How will such a ministry spiritually nourish anyone?

:-)

Re: - posted by Nile (), on: 2007/5/5 8:23

Also, if you go (<http://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/Introduction/>) -here-, they have responses to many of the objections/criticisms raised.

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2007/5/6 11:24

Nile,

I just wanted to post a quick follow up to affirm your commitment to upholding sound doctrine brother. Please do not let what I said be read as a "trade-off" between truth and getting along with people or something like that...

Much of what I said is in the interest of 'checks and balances.' For instance I have developed some severe misgivings about Dietrich Bonhoeffer...enough that I would rather see him not extolled in any church I am attending... but I feel we go too far in calling him a rank atheist. That is just one example of going too far...the one website I linked to shows the pro

blem with developing a habit or even a full-time "ministry" of critiquing others by name. Everyone from Finney to Spurgeon is on the criminal list.

Recently I was with a brother when he started sharing with a stranger about the Lord. He told the man how Jesus filled the emptiness and loneliness in his heart. Now I fear that half of the people that read this may feel tempted to wince at this modern gospel presentation. (I'll be the first to admit I did...) Yet the conversation opened up into a real landmark for this person as well as a continual open door in that person's life. And besides, my brother told the truth... though in continuing conversation there is much more to share. Yet, if one of those discernment websites ever got ahold of my brother they might very well denounce him...perhaps accusing him of 'preaching a man-centered Gospel' or for not 'starting with the Law first.' Grrrr.

I was looking through my high school yearbook, and came across an embarrassing picture of me from a basketball game. The picture was of me dribbling the ball up court, but instead of the fond memories I had of myself running point at the top of the key, the photographer flashed a picture of me in a moment when I looked off balance, my gangly arms were flailing, my tongue was hanging out, and my eyes looked like a wild man. And so, recorded forever in that awkward split-second, my 'legacy' (poor example I know) is not of a decent player, but of some crazy out of control kid.

This silly example is akin to some of the unhelpful damage that can happen when people are intent on editing a man's entire life down into a few of his worst snapshots. It is easy to judge someone by their worst...but we should also judge them by the best of their efforts. Otherwise we might as well give up on our hopes of revival, because no matter what man you put in front of me, I'll be able to find a flaw in him...either in character or conduct...even if the flaw is just my opinion.

Still, I don't want to dissuade anyone from being concerned about right thinking or reading of scripture at all. In fact I think discussing sound doctrine, including a critique of bad doctrine (seeing a truth more clearly through its 'via negative') is all a part of attending to the Word. I suppose my only difficulty is setting up an entire ministry dedicated to critiquing others. There is more to upholding sound doctrine than being critical of defects. I would rather see the borders of the church protected by legitimate church ministries and not become the jurisdiction of a few self-appointed citizen-border guards. Maybe the situation has degraded too far for that though...

As you know, sometimes you can be right and still be wrong. ;-) I certainly am familiar with that condition.

Bless you dearly brother,

MC

Re: Discerning the discernment - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/5/6 12:53

Well said MC;

Quote:
-----This silly example is akin to some of the unhelpful damage that can happen when people are intent on editing a man's entire life down into a few of his worst snapshots.

Quote:
-----It is not a matter of "proving error", it is a matter of seeking to know the truth and who teaches it. I want to know about a author before I read his writings. This is wise. It makes a vast difference to me when reading a book if I KNOW, by the author's own words, that he believes in evolution, he believes "Christianity is the fulfillment of paganism", he believes some of the Psalms to be "devilish" "petty" "vulgar" "diabolical" "terrible" "contemptible" and "hard to endure", he cussed, told lewd jokes, committed adultery (and never repented), frequently got drunk, never had a conversion experience, denied Christ is the only way to heaven, believed people of all religions go to heaven, denied a literal hell, and had an ungodly fascination with the occult and pagan mythology.

Now tell me, would you endorse such a man?
Would you not be leery of reading anything written by such a man?

For those who don't know, I was referring to C. S. Lewis.

Nile

Nile have some empathy towards your considerations as it was the discernment out of everyone from John MacArthur to the Bible Answer Man that began challenging me in the days of dwelling in WOF constructs and those of that ilk.

Being some years now removed and here, in it's stead having such a grand buffet to feed from there is enough caution to warrant a disclaimer on discerning the discernment ministries themselves. Not knowing your particulars can only throw out for consideration those that we have seen here and where of my own coming out from underneath one extreme and going to another; That which Zac Poonen characterized as "pendulumitis". It is too easy to be caught up in out takes that "prove" things by way some of these discernment ministries characterize things.

Quote:

-----I want to know about a author before I read his writings. This is wise.

Would challenge that. What you have stated about C.S. Lewis is suspect because it sounds as if you are taking someone else's word for it rather than finding out for yourself *if these things be so*

Act 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

What is problematic is the level of 'proof texting' that can go on to deride and dissuade and what is sadly back of a lot of it is not a concern for better understanding but of a bent to tear down and destroy not false doctrine as much as just pure character assassination. There is often venom and vociferating that casts a pall over true concern and ought to raise its own red flags of what the real motivation is, if it is feeding pride or is there a sense of grief, a want of reconciliation or a high mindedness that elevates rather than invigorates.

What does happen far too often is to plant poisonous thoughts into the mind before any real investigation. One is already launching out with a predisposition that looks for fodder to feed on and prove out and makes other considerations so contrary as to dismiss wholesale and a fight to defend a position. Often a trinket or two is thrown out to give a sense of 'balance' but what it boils down to is just a pragmatism that is not being completely honest of what is known and that which is speculative.

Why say all this? Because it's a trap if we are not more careful and discerning of taking things by fraction or snap shot as a MC pointed out. I have been bowled over by some of the very men that due to some raising such alarms over them had me at arms length because of others associations with them. For instance a Smith Wigglesworth who is often attributed to much of a WOF or prosperity construct, I bought what was stated by the 'discerning' and kept him at arms length until someone else brought forth a challenge by way of excerpts that made for a pause and another look. Take A.W. Tozer and see the peculiarities of practically every abomination\denomination under the sun laying claim to his expression. In some places it can be just down right befuddling to hear the nastiness behind the discernment and still hold up the virtue of Tozers exegesis, the wonder is "Have they really read this mans thoughts?"

It is just not that simple and the saints are not that simple either. Some things are along the line of progression and to excerpt parts and make them whole is dishonest and disheartening. To wrestle with what is being taught and to challenge a 'teaching' against the backdrop of scripture is what ought to be done. To discern character and integrity, motivation and heart status is not completely impossible nor without merit, it just requires even more and better discernment, often it is to leave it well enough alone, in the realm of perhaps, in abeyance.

Here is an old excerpt to dwell on;

I was studying Finney's Memoirs recently and read that, when he was young, he had great disagreement and struggle with his theology teacher (an old-school Presbyterian.) Writing his recollections down very late in life, he recalled instance after instance of all of the man's personal shortcomings . . . he railed against his theology, training, methods, and even his "calling."

Likewise, Mr. Gale was embarrassed by Finney. After seeing his pupil's first sermon delivery, He said, "I shall be very ashamed to have it known that you studied theology with me."

So it was against page after page of this that Finney quickly added in something that shocked me. "Let not the reader from anything I have said suppose that I did not love Mr. Gale, and highly respect him. I did both." What???

He said it, but it just seems so incongruous with all that he had told us before. I was then left to wonder, in what way did Finney "love" Mr. Gale (and highly respect him?)

(https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id11723&forum35) Balancing Truth and Love

Re: - posted by Nile (), on: 2007/5/6 13:35

First off, let me apologize for my last post. I did not write it by the Spirit nor out of love.

Compton wrote:

Quote:
-----Much of what I said is in the interest of 'checks and balances.' For instance I have developed some severe misgivings about Dietrich Bonhoeffer...enough that I would rather see him not extolled in any church I am attending... but I feel we go too far in calling him a rank atheist. That is just one example of going too far...the one website I linked to shows the problem with developing a habit or even a full-time "ministry" of critiquing others by name. Everyone from Finney to Spurgeon is on the criminal list.

Yes, I totally agree. There is no need to vilify or wrongly degrade men with doctrinal problems. We should be aware of their problems, inform others of these problems when necessary, and leave it at that. Also, it is fine to use writings from men who are wrong/differ in non-central issues, but as we can all agree, there comes a point when a man has so much wrong doctrine that it is no longer wise to use such a man's writings. Such I believe is Lewis, although many obviously disagree.

Thank you for your all comments brother!

crsschk wrote:

Quote:
-----Would challenge that. What you have stated about C.S. Lewis is suspect because it sounds as if you are taking someone else's word for it rather than finding out for yourself if these things be so

When in quotes, I was quoting Lewis's own words actually. When not in quotes, I was describing what I have gathered from reading his writings and reading about him or I was relating what I assumed to be uncontested common knowledge. If anyone believes (with good reason) that any claim I have made is wrong, I welcome the correction.

Quote:
-----What is problematic is the level of 'proof texting' that can go on to deride and dissuade and what is sadly back of a lot of it is not a concern for better understanding but of a bent to tear down and destroy not false doctrine as much as just pure character assassination. There is often venom and vociferating that casts a pall over true concern and ought to raise its own red flags of what the real motivation is, if it is feeding pride or is there a sense of grief, a want of reconciliation or a high mindedness that elevates rather than invigorates.

Yes, I agree! But I do not think this site does that. The articles I have read are very sober-minded, that is why I posted it.

Quote:
-----It is just not that simple and the saints are not that simple either.

No, it is not always a simple thing - but sometimes it is.

Quote:

-----Some things are along the line of progression and to excerpt parts and make them whole is dishonest and disheartening. To wrestle with what is being taught and to challenge a 'teaching' against the backdrop of scripture is what ought to be done. To discern character and integrity, motivation and heart status is not completely impossible nor without merit, it just requires even more and better discernment, often it is to leave it well enough alone, in the realm of perhaps, in abeyance.

You are right, many people do these things, and we must be very careful when read critiques of people.

Well, I have to go eat! Thanks to both of you for your thoughtful comments!

May He live through us,
Nile

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2007/5/7 8:57

Gentlemen,

Putting the present topic of discernment ministries aside, I wanted to take a second here to say how blessed I am to have discussions with spiritual men. (The entire thread.)

Realizing we are all sharing perspectives of personal importance and meaning to our walks with God, it is understandable that we can become passionate with one another. In fact 'passion' is a virtue that has been extolled in recent times even by the church....we are told to have a 'passion for God' and our worship is expressed as 'holy passion'.

Yet lately I am finding this modern 'passion' is really an undisciplined imitation of the fruit of the Spirit. Far better than our energies of mere sincerity, is the character of Christ that does not provoke another with personal convictions, but edifies others through having no commitment except to know God's heart. Accordingly, the character of a spiritual man is singular, though 9-fold: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance.

What a blessing it is to share in this New Man with you gentlemen, as we overlook offenses in the course of discussions. How helpful it is to be ruled more by patience than with passion.

Blessings all,

MC