

Articles and Sermons :: Discerning Good and Evil by Anton Bosch

Discerning Good and Evil by Anton Bosch - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2018/7/10 19:23

in order to know who and what to trust we need a number of important spiritual tools. First we need to look at the fruit of someone's life. For this we simply need a pair of eyes and some basic good judgment. Sadly, unbelievers are able to look at many of the false prophets of today and recognize them for what they are, while Christians are being deceived.

Secondly we need the Bible against which to measure the doctrine. We live in times of relativism where truth has become relative to culture, political expediency and profitability. But truth is not relative and changeable. It cannot be manipulated. Truth is absolute, just as a wall is either vertical or not and its trueness can be measured by a plumbline or a spirit level, so a man's doctrine is either true or false and the measure is the Plumbline of God's Word (Amos 7:7,8).

But then we need a third tool called "discernment". Unfortunately in the last thirty years Christianity has become very sensual and subjective and much error has crept in because it "felt" right. This kind of subjectivity is very dangerous in the hands of those who are unskilled or immature and yet godly discernment remains an important tool to the true child of God. Sadly, many who have been burnt by the subjectivity and emotionalism of modern Christianity have overcorrected resulting in a cold, heartless and intellectual form of Christianity.

If you watch a skilled craftsman you will notice that he has developed a "feel" for his craft. He can often "sense" that something is not straight or square and will then apply the straightedge or square to confirm or refute his "feeling". BUT he cannot go by his "gut feel" alone. There are a few amusement places in California where gravity does not seem to operate and where water seemingly flows "uphill". This is an illusion to fool one's senses into believing something runs uphill when, in fact, it is running downhill.

One of the realities about being a Christian is that we are led by the Holy Spirit. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." (Romans 8:14). The problem is that most of us are so fleshly that we often think we are being led by the Spirit when we are actually being led by the flesh. Thus, discernment becomes an unreliable tool in the hands of the carnal or fleshly believer.

However, Hebrews speaks of "those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Hebrews 5:14). The writer is speaking about spiritual senses that need to be exercised or practiced to discern what is good and evil. Just as one has to exercise one's mind or body to develop, so our spiritual senses need to be exercised to be useful. In order to develop our muscles or mind we have to use them. If we don't they become weak and ineffectual, so it is with spiritual senses. In the same way as most of us are very good at hearing the flesh because we are attuned to it, we need to "learn" to listen to the Spirit, tune out the flesh, and hear that still small voice warning us and directing us.

I am not advocating a mystical, airy fairy, dazed eye, mumbo-jumbo, feelings-based religion. But each of us has, at some stage, felt uneasy about someone or something. This uneasy feeling often turned out to be a warning we should have heeded.

This sense or witness does not stand on its own and is not sufficient to accept or reject something but it is an early warning that we need to be alert. Whenever you have that sense, it is an indication that more questions need to be asked. This is when the Plumbline and the microscope needs to be dusted off and applied. If you do this every time you will soon learn to recognize the warnings that come from the Holy Spirit or from other "static".

Those who are mature and have their "spiritual senses" exercised, are not only able to discern evil but also good. If all we can do is recognize the toxic, we may not die of poison, but we may well die of starvation. We need to sharpen and hone our abilities at recognizing good spiritual food and messengers when they come our way. Again, we cannot just trust our discernment and accept a teaching because it "feels" right. We need to subject everything to the test of the fruit and the Plumbline of the Word.

The ability to be discerning is a spiritual one. This means that it cannot be learnt in a school and it cannot operate in a carnal believer and definitely not in an unbeliever. "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God,

for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things" (1Corinthians 2:14-15).

Discernment is a direct result of spiritual maturity and a close walk with the Master. The closer we get to Him; the more we will see things the way He does "the further we walk away from Him; the less we will understand and perceive. Solomon asked for "understanding to discern justice" (1Kings 3:11) which the Lord gave him. Nevertheless, as time went on, he began to obey the flesh rather than the Spirit until his judgment became so clouded that he started worshipping idols and plunged Israel into war and spiritual ruin. Samuel, on the other hand, began by confusing God's voice and that of Eli but as he grew; he became very adept at understanding exactly what the Lord was saying.

"The Lord is my shepherd" He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. (Psalm 23:1,3).

Re: Discerning Good and Evil by Anton Bosch - posted by HeartSong, on: 2018/7/11 1:44

"The problem is that most of us are so fleshly that we often think we are being led by the Spirit when we are actually being led by the flesh."

And oh how the flesh loves to lead!