

Discernment

Introduction

“Discernment”

The act of discerning; also, the power or faculty of the mind, by which it distinguishes one thing from another, as truth from falsehood, virtue from vice; acuteness of judgment; power of perceiving differences of things or ideas, and their relations and tendencies.

- 1. The Christians to which the Epistle of Hebrews was written were in danger of leaving the Lord and returning to their former life of practicing Judaism.**
 - A. Hebrews is a book that exhorts discouraged Christians to continue on strong!**

Hebrews 6:1 Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

- 1) This instruction was given to those that had become “dull of hearing” (5:11).**
- 2) They were in danger of drifting away from the Lord.**

Hebrews 2:1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

B. The writer exposes their dullness of hearing and failure to mature in the ways of God.

Hebrews 5:12-14 For though **by this time you ought to be teachers**, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. (13) **For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.** (14) But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

- 1) They are called “babes in Christ”
 - a) According to the time they had been followers of Jesus, they should have been much more mature than they were.
- 2) Their diet of “milk” should have been a diet of “meat”
- 3) There is nothing more delightful than a true babe in Jesus. But there is nothing more irritating and depressing than someone who should be mature but who has become a babe!

C. These Christians demonstrated immaturity by both their lack of discernment between good and evil and in their contemplation of giving up with Jesus.

2. Therefore, it can be said that all five human senses have their spiritual counterparts.

A. Let us consider how discernment and exercise relate to our senses:

Our Senses

1. Spiritual sense of taste:

1 Peter 2:1-3 Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, (2) as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, (3) if indeed **you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.**

Psalms 34:8 Oh, **taste and see that the LORD is good;** Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!

2. Spiritual sense of hearing:

Isaiah 55:3 Incline your ear, and come to Me. **Hear, and your soul shall live;** And I will make an everlasting covenant with you— The sure mercies of David.

Revelation 2:7 "He who has an ear, **let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.** To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." '

3. Spiritual sense of sight:

Psalms 119:18 Open my eyes, **that I may see Wondrous things** from Your law.

Ephesians 1:18 **the eyes of your understanding** being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

4. Spiritual sense of smell:

Philippians 4:18 Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, **a sweet-smelling aroma**, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.

2 Corinthians 2:12-17 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord, (13) I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I departed for Macedonia. (14) Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses **the fragrance of His knowledge** in every place. (15) For we are to God **the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved** and among those who are perishing. (16) To the one we are **the aroma of death leading to death**, and to the other **the aroma of life leading to life**. And who is sufficient for these things? (17) For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

5. Spiritual sense of feeling:

2 Kings 22:19 **because your heart was tender**, and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants, that they would become a desolation and a curse, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard you," says the LORD.

Ephesians 4:18-19 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; (19) **who, being past feeling**, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

Conclusion

- 1. The mature Christian is marked by their discernment and by their unshakable commitment.**
- 2. The ability to discern is a critical measure of spiritual maturity.**
- 3. Babes are weak in discernment, and will accept any kind of spiritual food.**
- 4. Through the exercise of spiritual senses (trained by practice and habit) our discernment between good and evil will produce maturity!**

