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Biblical concepts of Approving, Discerning and Judging

In this time of "Tolerance", "Political Correctness" and "Relativism" many Christians do not know what their responsibilities are according to what God has revealed in His word. There are those who are in the Church today that have convinced many that we are not to judge or discern anything. There are also many outside of the church who cry for "Tolerance" telling us that by judging and discerning we are violating the very Bible we say we believe. The media and the liberals force political correctness and tolerance on us daily. This has left many confused and has silenced them in the church and kept them from being what God intended them to be in the world.

To begin, the subject of discerning, judging, knowing and proving are interwoven together in the scriptures. There are issues and matters we are not to judge and others we are. Some matters are the job of God alone, some matters fall squarely on the shoulders of the believer. How can we tell which is which? To begin with, best thing to do when you want information on what God expects is to look at what God has said to us about the subject in His Word.

In this section we will look at some word definitions, and scriptures throughout the Bible that deal with these subjects. Like a jigsaw puzzle, there are many pieces. When you first look at the puzzle in the box, it looks confusing. When you take the pieces and arrange them, the picture starts becoming clear. Just as a piece of a puzzle by itself can not tell the story of the whole picture, one scripture sometimes can't tell everything about a doctrine or concept in the Bible. These concepts build on one another.

Before we get too far along in this I would like to illustrate what we are talking about and why it is so necessary to consult the whole counsel of God in a matter instead of just picking one or two "PET" verses on a subject. Two of the favorite verses Liberals use when it comes to putting down Evangelical Christians who stand for Biblical principles and morals are:

"Matthew 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged."

and

"John 8: 7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

This would seem to say that Christians should just shut up and keep their opinions to themselves. This kind of intimidation has silenced many Christians and has taught the world that the Bible says keep you opinions to your self and you have no right to judge or evaluate anything. Is this true? These are the words of Jesus. We must obey them. What exactly are we to do then?

Let's muddy the water a little more...

- **The Bible says** "Matthew 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged",
- **but the Bible also says** "1Corinthians 2:15 But he that is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged of no man,
- **then it also says** "Luke 6:37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned:"
- **but then again it also says** "Philippians 1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; 10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;
- **but it also says** "Romans 14:4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth."
- **but then again it also goes on to say** "1 Corinthians 14:29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge."

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- **then Jesus also said** “ John 8:15 Ye **judge** after the flesh; I **judge** no man.
- **but then again it also says we are given a gift to judge** “ 1Corinthians 12:10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another **discerning of spirits**; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:”

How do we respond to this? Does the Bible contradict itself on this subject? Many people are confused on this point and simply ignore the subject. They have fallen prey to the enemy in this area of their Christian Life. They have been neutralized. They have become handicapped in their service to God.

So what is the answer? The answer lives in the pages of the Word of God. As always, when you are looking to find out the truth of what God has said on a particular subject you must look at all of the instances that He speaks about it. If God has spoken on a subject ten times in His Word, it would be prudent that we examine all that He has said about it. Let's begin by defining some terms. We will look at the definition of some of these words in the original Greek.

Here are some terms that are translated as discern, judge and approve followed by some verses in the Bible where they are used. The English word will be highlighted in blue that corresponds with the Greek word being discussed.

Anakrino – distinguish, separate, sort out, scrutinize, and investigate, to hold a preliminary judicial exam before a proper trial. To question or interrogate.

1Corinthians 2:15 But he that is spiritual **judges** all things, yet he himself is **judged** of no man

Diakrino – judge, separate discriminate, to learn by discriminating to determine or decide. Judging the evidence. Decide differentiate prove test discriminate. To dissect to get to the basic parts or elements.

Hebrews 5: 14 But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to **discern** both good and evil

Kriticos – judge in a critical matter. Criticize. Fit or skilled in judging. The Bible, God's Word is given authority to judge.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a **discerner** of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Dokimazo - To prove by testing, experience first hand ... “approve after distinguishing and testing” Used originally of the process of melting down metal to see if it is good and pure.

Philippians 1:9-10(NIV) And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight that you may be able to **discern** what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ.”

1 Thessalonians 5:21 Prove all things; hold to the things found to be good.

Krino – separate, choose, select, the act of condemning and decreeing.

1Peter 1:17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons **judgeth** according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

Matthew 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not **judged**

Luke 6:37 Judge not, and ye shall not be **judged**: condemn_not, and ye shall not be

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condemned...

John 15:15 Ye **judge** after the flesh; I **judge** no man. 16 And yet if I **judge**, my **judgment** is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.

Ralph Walter in his book, *Tortured Texts*, notes the following about Matthew 7: 1-23: "Consider first the Greek word *Krino*, translated *judge* in the text. If you look at a concordance of the King James Version, you will find the word has been translated: *conclude, condemn, damn, decree, determine, esteem, ordain, think* and then *judge* 87 times. Other Greek scholars say that *Krino* means *to call in question, conclude, decree, esteem, determine, think and sentence*. From all of this I think it would be safe to say that the word our Lord used means to condemn or to pass judgment upon someone maliciously; while the context shows that we have the responsibility to properly evaluate a thing or an act" (pp. 28-30).

Krisis – to judge, to decide evidence relating to or appropriate for courts of law. Most often used in the NT for Divine judgment.

John 16: 7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of **judgment**: 9 Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 Of **judgment**, because the prince of this world is **judged**. (This word is *Krino* as cited above)

We are not a to be a Judge...

It becomes clear that from looking at the usage of usage of the Greek words KRINO and KRISIS, it is God who does this when it comes to judging the individual. It is not man's place to KRINO another person. We may KRINO fruit, works, holidays, festivals or foods for ourselves but not others. The Bible makes it very clear that the job of judging man does not belong to mortals but to an infinite, eternal, righteous and just God.

Luke 6:37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned:

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Romans 14:1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. ²For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. ³Let not him that eateth **despise** (**EXOUTHENEO** – this word means to hate or loathe, treat with contempt, to regard as nothing or useless) him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not **judge** (**KRINO**) him that eateth: for God hath received him. ⁴Who art thou that **judgest** (**KRINO**) another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. ⁵One man **esteemeth** (**KRINO**) one day above another: another **esteemeth** (**KRINO**) every day alike. Let every man be fully **persuaded** (**plerophoreo** – this means to be confident and settled on a thing according to your findings after researching the matter, to be at peace with a well thought out decision) in his own mind. ⁶He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that

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regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. ⁷For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. ⁸For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. ⁹For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. ¹⁰But why dost thou **judge (KRINO)** thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before **the judgment (BEMA – the Tribunal or Official Judges seat)** seat of Christ. ¹¹For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. ¹²So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

What we don't need to Judge...

These verses give us insight into many things that some make into a point of argument, division and even hate. We are not to do this. So many denominations and Christians seem to miss this chapter in the Bible. Remember that this letter is written to Christians on how to treat other Christians. Look at the same passage in the New Living Translation

Romans 14 ¹Accept **Christians** who are weak in faith, and don't argue with them about what they think is right or wrong. ²For instance, one person believes it is all right to eat anything. But another **believer** who has a sensitive conscience will eat only vegetables. ³Those who think it is all right to eat anything must not look down on those who won't. And those who won't eat certain foods must not condemn those who do, for God has accepted them. ⁴Who are you to condemn **God's servants**? They are responsible to the Lord, so let him tell them whether they are right or wrong. The Lord's power will help them do as they should.

⁵In the same way, some think one day is more holy than another day, while others think every day is alike. Each person should have a personal conviction about this matter. ⁶Those who have a special day for worshiping the Lord are trying to honor him. Those who eat all kinds of food do so to honor the Lord, since they give thanks to God before eating. And those who won't eat everything also want to please the Lord and give thanks to God. ⁷For we are not our own masters when we live or when we die. ⁸While we live, we live to please the Lord. And when we die, we go to be with the Lord. So in life and in death, we belong to the Lord. ⁹Christ died and rose again for this very purpose, so that he might be Lord of those who are alive and of those who have died.

¹⁰ So why do you condemn another **Christian**? Why do you look down on another **Christian**? Remember, each of us will stand personally before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹For the Scriptures say 'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow to me and every tongue will confess allegiance to God.'

¹²Yes, each of us will have to give a personal account to God. ¹³ So don't condemn **each other** anymore. Decide instead to live in such a way that you will not put an obstacle in another **Christian's** path. (New Living Translation)

The need to Judge and Discern...

What then is a Christian supposed to do? We discern, examine, prove things, and not by choice but by command! We are to be watchful, wise, cautious and intelligent about things.

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Why? God tells us to be so. These are the things that we are to discern. Discernment is not an option. It is Biblically mandated and necessary.

1 Thessalonians 5:21 Prove all things; hold to the things found to be good. – Check the definition of Dokimazo above. We are commanded to examine things and to hold to what has passed the test.

Philippians 1:9-10(NIV) And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight that you may be able to **discern** what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ.”- This gives a reason here that is very important and that is to keep our selves pure and blameless.

Hebrews 5: 14 But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to **discern** both good and evil. We are to develop our mental faculties and spiritual gifts to attain this status.

1 Corinthians 2 ¹³Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. ¹⁴But the natural man received not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually **discerned**. **ANAKRINO** But he that is spiritual **judges** all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. This is **ANAKRINO** and it means *distinguish, separate, sort out, scrutinize, and investigate*. Notice here that the Bible clearly states that a person who is spiritual is a discerning person.

Question: If a person is not discerning, are they spiritual?

Jude 4-6 ⁴For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. ⁶And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. We are to discern teachings, doctrine and be defenders of the truth. According to the Bible there are those who take the Cross and turn it into an excuse to be immoral.

1 Timothy 4 ¹Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; ²Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; ³Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. We are to be on guard against the ones who spread doctrines of the Devil who attack the flock.

Galatians 1 ⁸But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. ⁹As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. Those who present any other Gospel according to the Bible are **ANATHEMA**. It means an abominable, detestable, accursed thing liable to the severest Divine judgment. We are to

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watch for this.

Matthew 7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. It sounds like God expects Christians to be on the alert. There is no more potent position for an enemy than within the walls of those whom they are fighting. An individual or church who falls into this category can do far greater damage to a Church and other Christians than a hundred Bars or Casinos.

1 Timothy 1 ³As I asked you to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that you might charge some that they teach no other doctrine, ⁴Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which only cause endless questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. *If we do detect doctrinal error we responsible to tell the person to NOT DO IT!*

1 Timothy 4 ⁶If you put the brothers in remembrance of these things, you shall be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto you hast attained. ⁷But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. ¹³Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. ¹⁶Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this you shall both save thyself, and them that hear thee. *Notice what Paul says we are to shun and what we are to give our attention to. This is an area we are to be on guard about in our lives.*

1 John 2 ⁴If someone says, "I belong to God," but doesn't obey God's commandments, that person is a liar and does not live in the truth. ⁵But those who obey God's word really do love him. That is the way to know whether or not we live in him. ⁶Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Christ did. *Sound judgment? Yes it is. This is what the Holy Spirit inspired John the Apostle to record for our benefit. We may evaluate in the light of this scripture but not condemn. Rather strong language from the author of the gospel that some have called the "Gospel of Love"*

1 John 2 ²²And who is the great liar? The one who says that Jesus is not the Christ. Such people are antichrists, for they have denied the Father and the Son. ²³Anyone who denies the Son doesn't have the Father either. But anyone who confesses the Son has the Father also. *Again for our benefit this meek and mild Apostle has left no doubt in anyone's mind who we are to be on the lookout for and who is a LIAR. This is one of the areas where many Christians show little discernment because they do not know what the churches they attend teach or the Ministries that they support preach on this cornerstone doctrine of Christianity.*

Deuteronomy 18 ²¹And if you say in your heart, How will we know the words which the LORD has not spoken? ²²When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing doesn't materialize, or the event doesn't come to pass, then these things were not spoken by GOD, but the prophet has spoken it presumptuously on his own: there is no need to be afraid of him. *With the amount of people who claim to be prophets and the large following that many of them have, it is amazing that so many have totally ignored this passage. The Bible plainly states that if someone claims to be a prophet and makes a prophecy and it doesn't happen...the person is a fake, a fraud, a charlatan. God doesn't make mistakes, he doesn't speak to prophets in such an obscure way*

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that they must apologize for God's lack of clarity and re-prophecy to help God and them save face. There are many Televangelists who many defend, follow and support that have a long history of this very thing and yet the Televangelists and their followers willingly ignore this. They are wrong. Is this judgmental? Yes it is! It is OK! Why? Because this is what God said on the matter. This isn't man's opinion, this is God's opinion and that settles it. By the way, what does God think about people who make false prophecies and attribute them to Him?

Deuteronomy 18:20 But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. We can deduce from this verse that God is NOT PLEASED with them.

QUESTION: Do you think it grieves God for His people to defend and support false prophets?

Discipline, Judgment and the end result...

This is a matter of discipline within the body of Christ. The ultimate goal of this type of activity is not judgment but correction and restoration. It also serves as protection for the identity of the Church to the world as well as keeping wolves out of the flock and to keep the flock healthy. Again, discipline is for the purpose correction and restoration. It must be done in love and humility. The church is like a hospital not a court room. We are to minister to those who enter our doors.

Some are opposed to this idea of the operation of discernment inside of the church. However, it is necessary because Jesus warned that there would be those in the church that we would need to be on guard against. For example, what would you think if you went to the police station to report that your car was stolen while you were shopping only to have the officer take your wallet at gun point? How would you react is you went to the doctor for a sprained ankle and in treating you for it both of your legs were broken? What about going to the dentist for a routine cleaning and having the dentist sedate you and pull all of your teeth?

Extreme examples you say? What about some one who is looking for spiritual help and guidance and goes into a church and is told that their problem is that they are taking all of those stories about "Hell and Heaven" too seriously and that all they need is to build their self-esteem. How about the person who is desperate for help and is convinced that you must buy help by giving money to a certain ministry or person. Consider the people that are in churches afflicted with the liberal teachings of the Jesus Seminar. These people are being taught that "Jesus was just an insignificant teacher and political activist whose fame came from false rumors his disciples spread after he died. He was not divine and that his body was buried in a shallow grave that the dogs later came and dug up his bones." What about a church whose leadership and members are immoral, indecent, and see new members as new conquests or new recruits for their cliques or power groups.

WWJD? (What Would Jesus Do?) What did Jesus do when He found the church infested with those who were praying upon the flock?

Matthew 21 ¹²Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out the merchants and their customers. He knocked over the tables of the money changers and the stalls of those selling doves. ¹³He said, "The Scriptures declare, 'My Temple will be called a place of prayer,' but you have turned it into a den of thieves!"

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(NLT)

John 2 ¹³It was time for the annual Passover celebration, and Jesus went to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the Temple area he saw merchants selling cattle, sheep, and doves for sacrifices; and he saw money changers behind their counters. ¹⁵Jesus made a whip from some ropes and chased them all out of the Temple. He drove out the sheep and oxen, scattered the money changers' coins over the floor, and turned over their tables. ¹⁶Then, going over to the people who sold doves, he told them, "**Get these things out of here. Don't turn my Father's house into a marketplace!**" (NLT)

Jesus Clears the Temple Again (Mark 11:12-19; Luke 19:45-48)

Question: Do you think Jesus was serious about keeping the church in line with the Word of God so as to be able to minister to people and be a light to the world?

Ephesians 5 ³But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; ⁴Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. ⁵For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. ⁶Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. ⁷Be not ye therefore partakers with them. **God expects His church to be a moral example to the world. These are strong words and are difficult for some to accept, but the church or fellowship that does not follow this is turning wolves loose on God's lambs. What does God think of this? See Matthew 18:6.**

James 5 ¹⁹Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; ²⁰Let him know, that he which converts the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. **The point of discerning and judging in matters such as this is the restoration of a brother or sister in the Lord.**

Matthew 18 ¹⁵Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. ¹⁶But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. ¹⁷And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. **Notice again a clear admonition for keeping things running smoothly. Not judge to condemn, but confront to convert. This must be done in a spirit of love and humility.**

John 7 ²¹Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel. ²²Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the Sabbath day circumcise a man. ²³If a man on the Sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day? ²⁴Judge not according to the appearance, but

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judge righteous judgment. The setting here is at a Jewish Festival in the Temple, Jesus admonishes the people in the Temple and the Leaders to think and judge righteously. When we must judge and discern a matter in the church it must be done using Biblical principles along with a mind has been submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and a heart sensitive to the moving of the Holy Spirit. This is accomplished through prayer and study.

The Gift of Discernment of Spirits

1 Corinthians 12:10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning (**DIKRINO**) of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: Believers had to be able to discriminate between the false and the true spirits, when an itinerant prophet claimed to be inspired to speak by revelation (1 Cor. 14:29 the word for Judge is (**DIKRINO**)).

Of all the Spiritual Gifts that are being touted today by so many churches, it seems that there is one that has been nearly forgotten altogether. This is the Gift of Discernment. We are in a time where there is a onslaught of doctrines, practices and ministries that do not conform to the Word of God. Today Christians seem to be almost incapable of exercising discernment when it comes to issues dealing with God's truth. The Holy Spirit will guide the believer who will listen and obey. Many truths can only be discerned spiritually according to the Bible.

The Gift of Discernment is a gift that the Holy Spirit gives to the believer. The believer is to be obedient to the word of God and use the word of God that the Holy Spirit has inspired to be a tool of discernment. Look at 2 Timothy 2:15 (the word for approved here is **DOKIMAZO**) This is an important point. There are some who claim to be spiritually discerning and support doctrines and practices that are contrary to the Bible. This is non-sense. There are also those who claim that the gift of prophecy and discernment make it unnecessary to even read the Bible. They make claims that are contrary to the Bible. Again, this is non-sense and totally unscriptural. The Holy Spirit will not contradict what He has revealed in the Bible.

1 Peter 3:15 Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if you are asked about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it.

Matthew 22³⁷ Jesus replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind."³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment.

Summary of the Study ...

1. As Christians we are not in the position to condemn a person. We are to reach out in love to sinners. Look at the life of Jesus, He was always kind to the people He ministered to. The times that He was rough on people were the times he was dealing with those who were the religious leaders. Look at his example of how He went about His ministry. He reached out with the Good News of the Gospel, those who supposed to be representing Him (the Scribes and the Pharisees) he used sharp words and stinging retorts to silence them. This is not to say that we are to not love we dealing with those who are in the Church. See 2 Corinthians chapters 10-12 for Paul's attitude to members in the church.
2. We are to be a light in the world and to spread the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Light serves to illuminate and to protect. It keeps people from walking into harms way. It keeps people from getting lost. It helps people find their way to where they need to be.

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3. Christians have different relationships as defined in the Word of God. Matthew 28:19-20, is one of the basic verses that defines a major part of our relationship to the world.
4. The discerning part of a Christian's life focuses a great deal with what is going on in the Church and with other believers. Just as the believers in Acts 17:10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. 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. 12. Therefore many of them believed; also of honorable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few. Look at the way they are described because they judges and discerned what was being preached to them by no less than Paul. God counted them to be noble and honorable. If it was OK for believers to judge and discern the preaching of Paul, who are the one's today that maintain they are above having their preaching and prophecies examined. I firmly believe that if was acceptable to evaluate Paul, then **every ministry** is open for **evaluation by Scripture**.
5. The person and Deity of Jesus Christ and the message of the Gospel are two areas that the Bible tells us to focus on in doctrinal purity among others. God takes a very dim view of anyone who attempts to change what He has said about these. It is on these two points that you can detect all cults. They will invariably always seek to deviate from these truths in one way or another. This is probably why there is such heavy emphasis put on these. You can't learn everything that every cult believes but, you can be familiar with the truth of the Bible.
6. We are not to judge other Christians about foods or holidays. We are not to make these a test of fellowship create doctrine about them, or try to impose these on others. See Romans 14.
7. We are to call "sin" that which the Bible calls "sin" and are to help and pray for one another when we find a fellow believer entrapped in a sin. We are to represent true Biblical standards to the world. We are to stand for the inspired message that God has given us in His Word.
8. As a Christian we are supposed to discern all things. This is a quality and a habit of a spiritual person as defined by the Bible. We are to be able to be able to discern good from evil and truth from error. This requires prayer, study and a mind given to Christ. (Matthew 22:37)
9. We are to be on guard and to keep ourselves pure. We are commanded to keep the things which are found (discerned) to be good and to reject that which is not.
10. The Holy Sprit will give the Christian discernment. This is the most important part in this entire study. The Holy Spirit is at work in the world and in the life of the Believer. Only when a person is fully surrendered, (**You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.**) will they be able to experience the fullness of the Spirit in their life and be a truly discerning Christian. The world needs Christians who are discerners and who do the work that God has given the discerning believer to do.

A Closing Thought

The Prayer of Jabez is now a very popular book. Notice that the Bible says that God answered his prayer. It is a good prayer and the author of the book, The Prayer of Jabez, has done a good job of writing on this prayer. However, I want you to notice something. Take a moment and look at Solomon's Prayer. God granted this prayer, but notice that God's reaction to this prayer was recorded.

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A prayer that Pleased God...notice what was requested!

1 King 3 ⁹Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? ¹⁰And the speech **pleased the Lord**, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment;

It was not kill my enemies, make me rich, give me things, but give me understanding and judgment to be able to discern between good and evil to be a servant that is fair, a protector of your people, and just in my thoughts and deeds. **This pleased God!**

God grant that we may be more discerning in this world to be able to more effectively share the good news of your Son Jesus Christ, to be able to defend the Faith and stand strong in the Word!