

DISCERNING GOOD and EVIL

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INTRODUCTION

In previous lessons we have seen that it is the Word of God, the Bible, that gives direction and meaning to the life of the believer. We have seen that if we are to build upon the foundation of Jesus Christ, then we must know what the Word of God is saying and apply it to our lives.

As learners of the Word we see from the Word that there are three ways to approach the Word; each way having a specific purpose or outcome.

The first, and I might add, the most important is seen in John 5:39:

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which speak of Me."

We are to search the Scriptures; to search in every "nook and cranny", that is, the obscure, hidden places, as well as, the clear and obvious places, in order that we might find Jesus. If you do, you will find Him as your Savior/Deliver; your Healer; your Provider; and the Holy Spirit Baptizer.

Secondly, according to 2 Timothy 2:15 we are to STUDY the Word.

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a work-man that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Here is the process of studying what the Word is saying, so that, you may get at it's literal and correct meaning. Through the study of God's Word you learn to divide the Word of truth.

Thirdly, we are to become SKILLED in the Word of righteousness, in order that, we might discern both good and evil. Hebrews 5:13,14:

"For every one that useth milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

This, third approach, becoming skilled in the "Word of righteousness" is the purpose and goal for this unit of study (lessons 28 - 36) which we begin with this lesson.

The basis of this unit of study will be the "Ten Commandments". These commandments are found in Exodus, chapter 20 and in Deuteronomy, chapter 5. We will for the purpose of this study, list the commandments according to the old tradition, instead of the newer/later evangelical tradition.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

I. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Exodus 20:3

II. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain. Exodus 20:7

III. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Exodus 20:8

IV. Honour thy father and thy mother: Ex 20:12

V. Thou shalt not kill. Exodus 20:13

VI. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Ex 20:14

VII. Thou shalt not steal. Exodus 20:15

VIII. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Exodus 20:16

IX. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house... Exodus 20:17a

X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his livestock, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's. Exodus 20:17b

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT GOOD AND EVIL

James 1:17

Matthew 13:25,39

John 13:2

Acts 5:3

Amos 5:15

Isaiah 7:15

Romans 12:9

Proverbs 6:16-19

Conclusions: We would note from the Above Scriptures that (1) every thing that is good comes from God and that the devil is the author of evil, (2) if something is not good, that is to say, does not come from God, then it is evil, (3) God hates evil, and (4) we are, therefore to hate evil and love God.

DISCERNING GOOD AND EVIL

In this lesson, we would see what is good and what is evil according to the First Commandment, in order that, we might accordingly order the course of our lives.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

"Thou shalt have no other Gods before me." Exodus 20:3.

...DISCERNING GOOD

According to the First Commandment, what GOOD (godly behavior) are we to discern?

Matthew 10:28

Matthew 10:37

Proverbs 3:5

Conclusions: We are, according to this commandment, to FEAR, LOVE, and TRUST God above all things.

When are we FEARING God above all things?

Psalms 33:8

Genesis 17:1

Genesis 39:9

Proverbs 8:13

Bible example: The three men in the fiery furnace feared God more than the king. Daniel 3.

Conclusions: We fear God above all things when with our whole heart we revere (reverence) Him as the highest Being, honor Him with our lives, and avoid what displeases Him.

When are we LOVING God above all things?

Matthew 22:37

Psalms 73:25,26

Bible example: Abraham loved God more than his son. Genesis 22.

Conclusions: We love God above all things when with our whole heart we cling to Him as our God and gladly devote our lives to His service.

When are we TRUSTING in God above all things?

Psalms 118:8

Proverbs 3:5

Bible example: David trusted in the Lord when He fought against Goliath. 1 Samuel 17:37,46,47.

Conclusions: We trust in God above all things when with our whole heart we commit our lives to His keeping and rely upon Him for help in every need.

...DISCERNING EVIL

According to the First commandment what EVIL (ungodly behavior) are we to discern.

Matthew 4:10

Isaiah 42:8

Conclusions: It is EVIL to have other gods instead of God. This is know as Idolatry.

When do men have other gods?

Isaiah 42:8

Psalms 115:3,4

Exodus 20:4,5

John 5:23

Matthew 10:28

Matthew 10:37

Proverbs 3:5

Ephesians 5:5

Mark 10:24

Philippians 3:19

Psalms 14:1

Bible examples: Israel worship the golden calf. Exodus 32. - The people worship Baal. 1 Kings 18:18-24. - The Philistines made Dagon their god. Judges 16:23,24. The rich man thought more of costly clothes and good eating than of God. Luke 16:19. - The rich young man loved his possessions more than Christ. Matthew 19:22.

Conclusions: Men have other gods when they regard and worship any creature as God; believe in a god who is not the Triune God; fear, love, or trust in any person or thing as they should fear, love, and trust in God alone.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

What are some of the ways in which God's children, in this day and time, are doing what is EVIL, and thus are not fearing, loving and trusting in God above all things?

RESPONSE TO THE TRUTH

Do you fear, love and trust in God above all things?