**DISCERNMENT**

DISCERNMENT 1, (2-9-16)

Our phenomenal God has given every one of us volition, the power to make decisions for our self, the ability to choose. We spend our entire life making decisions, dozens or even hundreds of them every day.

The Word of God helps us to make the right decisions by making very clear pronouncements such as, ***“Thou shall not commit adultery”, Ex. 20:14***. But sometimes, the circumstances of life can become complicated and we are unable to find a scripture that is pertinent to our specific situation. This is when discernment is needed.

Definition:

**DIS•CERN•MENT** noun

1. :the quality of being able to grasp and comprehend what is obscure : skill in discerning

2. :an act of discerning

*Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*

***SYNONYMY:***[a list of synonyms with explanatory matter]***ACUMEN, DISCERNMENT, DISCRIMINATION, PERCEPTION, PENETRATION, INSIGHT***

***ACUMEN*** means a power to see what is not evident to the average mind.

***DISCERNMENT*** stresses accuracy (as in reading character or motives or appreciating art) 〈the discernment to know true friends〉

***DISCRIMINATION*** stresses the power to distinguish and select what is true or appropriate or excellent; the discrimination that develops through listening to a lot of great music.〉

***PERCEPTION*** implies quick and often sympathetic discernment (as of shades of feeling) 〈a novelist of keen perception into human motives〉

***PENETRATION*** implies a searching mind that goes beyond what is obvious or superficial〈lacks the penetration to see the scorn beneath their friendly smiles〉.

***INSIGHT*** suggests depth of discernment coupled with understanding sympathy 〈a documentary providing insight into the plight of the homeless〉.

Inc Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1996).

**DIS•CERN**verb

[Middle English, from Middle French discerner, from Latin discernere to separate, distinguish between, from dis- apart + cernere to sift; more at DIS-, CERTAIN]

Transitive verb

1:a: to detect with the eyes

b: to detect with senses other than vision

2: to recognize or identify as separate and distinct: DISCRIMINATE

3: to come to know or recognize mentally

Intransitive verb: to see or understand the difference

dis•cern•er- noun

dis•cern•ible also dis•cern•able - adjective

dis•cern•ibly- adverb

dis•cern•ing–adjective

Merriam-Webster, Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (: Merriam-Webster, 1996).

Hebrew: בִּיןBIYN; to make clear, to distinguish, to learn;

Ludwig Koehler et al., The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 122.

Greek: **διάκρισις,** DIAKRISIS, the ability to distinguish and evaluate, distinguishing, differentiation of good and evil(Heb. 5:14).

William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 231

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From **διακρίνω**, DIAKRINO, DIA = through or by, KRINO = to judge, judgment. The root word is **κρίνω,***krino*to judge, *krísis*- judgment, *kritḗrion*–by means of judgment, kritikósable to judge.

Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985), 469.

Making judgments and judging another person for their faults are not the same. One is commanded and the other is condemned.

**Areas where DISCERNMENT is required:**

**Religion Health**

**Politics Business/Employment**

**Government Education**

**Marriage Entertainment**

**Family Money**

**Friends Clothes**

Every one of these areas requires discernment, deciding what is right and what is wrong, what is mediocre and what is best, what is good and what is evil.

***Hebrews 5:11-14 Concerning him*** [Melchizedek]***we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12) For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles*** [basic doctrines] ***of the oracles***[divine sayings] ***of God, and you have come***(v. rai) ***to need milk and not solid food. 13) For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is*** [spiritually] ***an infant. 14) But solid food*** [deeper doctrine] ***is for the*** [spiritually] ***mature, who because of practice have their senses trained*** (part. rp)***to discern good and evil.***

The Greek word “diakrisis”, used in this verse is a noun, which is also used in *1 Cor. 12:10* as one of the temporary spiritual gifts.

***1 Corinthians 12:10 and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.***

It is used again as a noun in the sense of passing judgment in:

***Romans 14:1 Now accept*** [v. pmm] ***the one who is weak in faith***[BD]***, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.***

We will get much deeper into this verse and the ones that follow it when we get to discernment among family members and friends. However, we can see from this verse alone that the Greek word “diakrisis” is used not only positive sense, believers using good judgment, but can be used in a negative sense where believers pass judgment on other believers.

The word “discernment” is used in:

***Philippians 1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment…***

The Greek word used here is AISTHESIS,(**αἴσθησις**) n. dsf; capacity to understand, discernment

We can see from this verse that knowledge and discernment are not the same. One can have knowledge without discernment but one cannot have discernment without knowledge.

*Example*: A person may have a great deal of know- ledge about archeology but bores his friends to death by constantly talking about it. He lacks discernment in socializing and maintaining friend- ships.

It could be said that knowledge is the assimilation of information or facts, discernment is understanding what to do with that information and how to handle those facts properly.

DISCERNMENT 2, (2-11-16)

A believer can know an abundance of Bible doctrine but can lack discernment. Why?

Because mental attitude sins (MAS) can short-circuit discernment.

DISCERNMENT, pg. 3

When emotions take over, there is an emotional revolt of the soul and that is when discernment and application go out the window.

Jesus reprimand the Pharisees and Sadducees for their inability to discern the signs of the time. The word “*discern*” is in italics because it is not found in the original Greek manuscripts but it is inserted in order to make the meaning clear in English..

**Matthew 16:1-3 The Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Jesus, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. 2) But He replied to them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' 3) "And in the morning, 'There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Do you know how *to discern* the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times?**

This same idea is relevant to most believers today. They have no sense as to the signs of the time due to their ignorance of BD. The religious leaders should have recognized that Jesus was their Messiah and that the Kingdom of heaven was at hand. We as church age believers don’t know the day or the hour of Christ’s return but we should recognize that it could be soon.

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

**Discerner;** KRITIKOS, **κριτικός,** to be able to discern or judge. The Eng. word “*critical*” comes from this Greek word. As an adjective, it has ten meanings in the Noah Webster’s Dictionary of 1828. It can be used in a negative way to criticize severely and unfavorably by finding fault, or it can be used in a favorable and objective sense by exercising careful judgment or judicious evaluation. This is the way it is used in *Heb. 4:12*. Inc Merriam-Webster, Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1996).

**RELIGION**

Definition:

1. Belief in, worship of, or obedience to a super- natural power or powers considered to be divine or to have control of human destiny

2. Any formal or institutionalized expression of such belief: the christian religion

3. The attitude and feeling of one who believes in a transcendent controlling power or powers

None of the definitions above accurately describe Christianity; we trust in and worship a Person, not a power. Christianity is normally classified as a religion but it is different than any other religion, which of course it must be, since it is the only one that is correct and can be relied upon to be true.

Every other religion requires work or effort from man in order to be saved or to be accepted by God, or to reach some perceived goal. Only Christianity relies in faith alone in Christ alone to be saved, to be accepted by God.

***John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.***

The way of eternal salvation is through the cross of Christ. This is the grace way, apart from any works, which is rejected by all other religions.

*In any client nation there are both believers and unbelievers, as well as many other religions besides Christianity…* R. B. Thieme Jr., *Client Nation notes*

**How many religions are there in the world today?**

The “big five” religions are perhaps the most commonly mentioned: **Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity**, and **Islam**. These five highly prominent and influential global faiths are probably what most people think of first, when they set out to enumerate the major living religions of the world.

There is also **Confucianism** and **Taoism** from China, **Shintoism** from Japan, **Jainism** and **Sikhism** from India, and **Zoroastrianism** from Persia.

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There are also far younger (and generally much smaller) religions, these numerous newer “alternative” or “emergent” faiths run the gamut from **Baha’i** (founded in the mid-1800s, with perhaps 7 million) to **Rastafarianism** (founded in the 1930s, with about 1 million) to **Scientology** (founded 1954 claiming 8 million, although critics suggest the actual number to be as low as 100,000 or less) to **Wicca** (a 20th century revival or reconstruction of ancient European paganism, with perhaps 1 million followers today), to name just a few of the biggest and best-known.

Such often-marginalized “new religions” may number in the hundreds or even thousands worldwide. So the total global number of adherents of such young “minority” faiths still remains quite small, compared to the much older and far larger major faiths. (One source estimates the total combined population of all such “new religions” as these at only about 100 million people, or so.) (PP – world religions)

**How many religions are there in the U.S.?**

According to a 2014 study by the Pew Research Center, 70.6% of the American population identified themselves as Christians, with 46.5% professing attendance at a variety of churches that could be considered *Protestant*, and 20.8% professing *Roman Catholic* beliefs.

The same study says that other religions (including *Judaism, Buddhism, Islam*, and *Hinduism*) collectively make up about 6% of the population.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_the_United_States>

The Southern Baptist Convention, with over 16 million adherents, is the largest of **more than 200 distinctly named Protestant denominations**. In 2007, members of evangelical churches comprised 26% of the American population, while another 18% belonged to mainline Protestant churches, and 7% belonged to historically black churches .(**PP** US religions)

**So With Such aMultitude Differing Beliefs and Faiths, How is a Person to Determine Which One is the Right One?**

Which one is right? Which one is true?

The great majority of people grow up adopting the religion of their parents. Unfortunately, most of them have unquestioning allegiance to their parent’s religion because they see it as a matter of loyalty. But what if their parents adopted the wrong religion? Misplaced loyalty can be very costly:

Example:

***1 Samuel 23:16-18 Then Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David in the woods and strengthened his hand in God. 17) And he said to him, "Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Even my father Saul knows that." 18) So the two of them made a covenant before the LORD. And David stayed in the woods, and Jonathan went to his own house.***

Jonathan should have stayed with David but his misplaced loyalty to his father, King Saul, cost him his life not long after this meeting with David when he was killed with his father in battle on Mt. Gilboa.

Is loyalty to parents worth going to hell for all eternity? Isn’t it worth the time and effort to ask them why they believe what they do and seek answers to your questions about God for yourself?

God can be found for those who diligently seek Him.

***Jeremiah 29:13 And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.***

***Deuteronomy 4:29 But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.***

***Amos 5:4 For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel: "Seek Me and live;***

The truth of the Word of God gives hope to the weary and makes their heart rejoice.

***Jeremiah 15:16 Your words were found, and I ate them***(believed them)***, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart…***

DISCERNMENT, pg. 5

Even as a Christian, discernment is needed in choosing what church to attend. Will it be a Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Church of Christ, Pentecostal, Anglican, Plymouth Brethren, Quaker, Mennonite, or an independent Bible Church?

DISCERNMENT 3, (2-16-16)

**So How Does a Believer Go About Choosing a Church?**

Most people attend a church of the same denomination of their parents. The distance of a church from home seems to be an important factor. The size of the church is important to many. Does it have a choir? Does it have programs for the kids? Did the pastor graduate from seminary?

None of these should have anything to do with choosing a church to attend. On what should you base that decision?

1. Is emphasis put on teaching the Word of God?

Most churches have something in particular that is most important to them in which they emphasize.

It may be programs, Sunday school, music with an outstanding choir director and choir, outreach to the community, missionary support including mission trips, a church school, and activities includinga church baseball or basketball team, bingo, bazars, excursions on church busses, Christian camps, or cantatas.

There is nothing inherently wrong with these as long as the teaching of the Word remains the number one priority. The problem is that over time, people come to church to socialize and be involved in other things rather than to learn the Word of God.

The local church primarily is a classroom where believers learn the Bible from a prepared pastor under strict academic discipline.

2. Does the pastor exegete the Scriptures from the original languages?

3. Does he use the **ICE** method of teaching?

**I Isagogics** is teaching that reflects the historical context of the text

**C Categories** is comparing scripture with scripture insures an accurate interpretation

**E Exegesis** is interpretation based on the grammar, syntax, and entomology of the words used in the text

4. Does the pastor have a literal, grammatical, and historical interpretation of the Bible?

5. Can you accept the authority of the pastor-teacher and grow spiritually under him?

There is a right pastor-teacher for each believer.

***1 Peter 5:2-4 Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 3) nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. 4) And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.***

Believers who are looking for a church should be open minded and if they hear something from the pulpit that is different from what they believe, they should go to the Scriptures to verify or reject the teaching of the pastor.

***Acts 17:10-11 The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11) Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.***

Many pastors encourage people to meet with them if a congregant needs to discuss or get clarification on an issue or doctrine that appear to be problematic.

If a meeting of the minds is not possible, then one has to use discernment as to whether the issue or doctrine is a non-essential or if it’s time to move on.

The most common mistake that people make is to leave the church over a non-essential. It’s easy for someone to get emotionally worked up over something minor or inconsequential, and if he or she won’t let it go, they wind up leaving with bad feelings.

DISCERNMENT, pg. 6

If you are growing spiritually in a local church and are maintaining spiritual momentum, it should take something very significant for you to consider leaving.

Discernment must be used when interacting with people of a different faith or with those who are of the same faith but who hold beliefs that are different than yours. Here are a few points that may be helpful:

1. Remain calm and don’t be belligerentor get angry.

***Proverbs 15:18 A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, But the slow to anger calms a dispute.***

2. Be humble, but don’t compromise doctrine in order to gain or maintain a friendship.

***Proverbs 28:25 An arrogant man stirs up strife, But he who trusts in the LORD will prosper.***

3. Be open minded, objective, and non-combative.

***Proverbs 26:21 Likecharcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, So is a contentious man to kindle strife.***

4. Ask questions about what they belief and listen to their answers so that you can understand their position.

5. Don’t tell them that they are wrong. That will more than likely put them on their defensive and hinder communication with them. It is much better to ask them something along the lines of, “Where did you get that idea?” or “Who told you that?”

***Proverbs 15:1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.***

Discernment is needed even between believers that go to the same church, learn from the same pastor, and are taught the same doctrines when there is disagreement on non-essentials.

The thing to remember is to **LIVE AND LET LIVE**. That means that every person has a right to his own opinion and when it doesn’t agree with ours, so what! It is not our job to compel anyone to come around to our way of thinking.

We have the right to express our opinion but not to coerce, pressure, or bully anyone into agreeing with it. We may gently try to persuade someone but we must not allow persuasion to turn into an argument.

Part of growing up spiritually is to give people their space and to allow them to be different from you. Everything is not always black and white and it’s not always a case of someone being right and some- one being wrong. Sometimes a person can be right about something but is still wrong because it was more important to him to be right than to be gracious.

We must be very discerning as to when it’s time to drop it and change the subject when someone dis- agrees with us, even when we know we are right. It is more important to be thoughtful and considerate than to prove you are right.

Sometimes it’s the other person who thinks they are right (but they aren’t) and will not drop it. They try to bully you into agreeing with them. Often, the best thing do is to tell them that they are welcome to their opinion and then change the subject. If they continue to try to convince you that they are right, don’t respond to them.

DISCERNMENT 4 (2-18-16)

**POLITICS**

Isn’t it interesting that **Religion** and **Politics**, quite possibly the two most interesting subjects to talk about, are the two subjects we should avoid? They say that it is impolite to discuss them in mixed com- pany. I suspect that the one who came up with that tidbit of wisdom probably didn’t know much about either subject.

DEFINITION:

**Politics**: noun, (used with a singular or plural verb)

1. The science or art of political government.

2. The practice or profession of conducting political affairs.

3. Political affairs: The advocated reforms have become embroiled in politics.

4. Political methods or maneuvers: We could not approve of his politics in winning passage of the bill.

DISCERNMENT, pg. 7

5. Political principles or opinions: We avoided discussion of religion and politics. His politics are his own affair.

6. Use of intrigue or strategy in obtaining any position of power or control, as in business.

7. Idioms: Play politics,

a. to engage in political intrigue, take advantage of a political situation or issue, resort to partisan politics, etc.; exploit a political system or political relationships.

b. to deal with people in an opportunistic, manipulative, or devious way, as for job advancement.

Here is a more accurate definition:

**Politics**, n: [Poly "many" + tics "blood-sucking parasites"] ~Larry Hardiman

**QUOTES ABOUT POLITICS** “**The Seven Social Sins:**

Wealth without work.

Pleasure without conscience.

Knowledge without character.

Commerce without morality.

Science without humanity.

Worship without sacrifice.

Politics without principle.

*From a sermon given by Frederick Lewis Donaldson*

*in Westminster Abbey, London, on March 20, 1925.”*

*“Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly and applying the wrong remedies.” ~Groucho Marx~*

*“Reader, suppose you were an idiot. And suppose you were a member of Congress. But I repeat myself.” ~Mark Twain~*

*“You're not to be so blind with patriotism that you can't face reality. Wrong is wrong, no matter who does it or says it.” ~Malcolm X~*

*“I sincerely believe that banking establishments are more dangerous than standing armies, and that the principle of spending money to be paid by posterity, under the name of funding, is but swindling futurity on a large scale.” ~Thomas Jefferson~*

*“A nation of sheep will beget a government of wolves.” ~Edward R. Murrow~*

*“Absolute power does not corrupt absolutely, absolute power attracts the corruptible.” ~Frank Herbert~*

*“Politics, it seems to me, for years, or all too long, has been concerned with right or left instead of right or wrong.” ~Richard Armour~*

*“Hell, I never vote for anybody, I always vote against.” ~W.C. Fields~*

*“Politicians and diapers should be changed frequently and all for the same reason.”*

*~José Maria de Eça de Queiroz~*

*“George Washington is the only president who didn't blame the previous administration for his troubles.” ~Author Unknown~*

*“The reason there are so few female politicians is that it is too much trouble to put makeup on two faces.” ~Maureen Murphy~*

*“Politics is supposed to be the second-oldest profession. I have come to realize that it bears a very close resemblance to the first.” ~Ronald Reagan~*

*“We hang the petty thieves and appoint the great ones to public office.” ~Aesop~*

*“During a campaign the air is full of speeches — and vice versa.” ~Author Unknown~*

*“When buying and selling are controlled by legislation, the first things to be bought and sold are legislators.” ~P.J. O'Rourke~*

DISCERNMENT, pg. 8

*“Voting for the typical politician means voting for the candidate you dislike least.” ~Robert Byrne~*

*“A politician thinks of the next election; a statesman thinks of the next generation.”*

*~James Freeman Clarke, Sermon~*

***Psalms 28*** describes what happens when a nation has politicians instead of statesmen. Verse eight sums it up:

(NKJV) ***Psalm 12:8 The wicked prowl on every side, When vileness is exalted among the sons of men.***

(NIV) ***Psalm 12:8 The wicked freely strut about when what is vile is honored among men.***

Examples of politics at work in the Bible:

**Haman: Ether 3:1-15** He used deceit and treachery to annihilate the Jews because he hated Mordecai. He used his power and position not to do what was best for the people and the kingdom, but to amass more power and wealth to himself. But God used Esther to save Mordecai and the rest of the Jews and Haman was hanged.

**Governors and Satraps: Daniel 6:4-15** They plotted against Daniel because they were jealous of him so they deceived King Darius in order to get rid of Daniel by throwing him in the lion’s den. But God delivered him and guess who wound up in the lion’s den instead?

**Absalom: 2 Samuel 15:2-6** Now would rise early and stand beside the way to the gate. So it was, whenever anyone who had a lawsuit came to the king for a decision, that Absalom would call to him and say, "What city are you from?" And he would say, "Your servant is from such and such a tribe of Israel." 3) Then Absalom would say to him, "Look, your case is good and right; but there is no deputy of the king to hear you." 4) Moreover Absalom would say, "Oh, that I were made judge in the land, and everyone who has any suit or cause would come to me; then I would give him justice." 5) And so it was, whenever anyone came near to bow down to him, that he would put out his hand and take him and kiss him. 6) In this manner Absalom acted toward all Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

**Pilate:**  ***Matt. 27:23-27; Mark 15:15; Luke 23:13-25; John 18:38-39; 19:4-13*** He condemned Jesus to gain favor with a mob.

**Nathan, the prophet:**  ***1 Kings 1:11-40.*** He influenced King David to anoint Solomon to be king instead of Adonijah who claimed himself to be king.

**The wise woman of Abel:** ***2 Sam. 20:16-22.*** She saved the city through diplomacy,

DISCERNMENT 5, (2-23-16)

**PULPITS AND POLITICS**

Pastors are often criticized for being too political when they speak out about political issues and especially if they censure policies or people involved in government. Shouldn’t pastors, or anyone else for that matter, be free to condemn evil wherever it exists? When did pastors who denounce the corrupt practices of oppressive leaders fall into disrepute?

*“Often governments may think they have a right to that which should belong to God. That would be an intolerable usurpation and it is the job of the clergy to be on the side of the people on God's behalf.”*

Gregory Williams*, “Romans 13 & Christ’s Clergy Response Teams”,* NewsWithViews.com, 1-21-09.

Why is it OK for pastors to condemn immorality, abuse, and wrongdoing in business, society, entertainment, education, churches, and the media, but not politicians or government? Why should that be off limits? What chapter and verse in the Bible prohibits pastors from speaking out about the atrocious and deplorable behavior of evil politicians who stealthily strip away our rights? Pastors must not be afraid to be politically incorrect, however they must be totally objective in doing so. There can be no favoritism towards any particular party or person, they must all be judged according to the same standard which is of course the Word of God.

DISCERNMENT, pg. 9 Many pastors are afraid to confront corrupt officials because they are cowed and intimidated by those in their own congregations. They don’t teach the whole council of God because they are afraid of offending someone who might accuse them of being too political, unpatriotic, or disloyal to government.

The Pharisees and Sadducees were not only the religious leaders of their day, they also functioned as politicians in public matters. Rome relied on them to a large extent to expedite civil rule over the Jews.

Was Jesus hesitant to confront them, was He intimidated by people who would say that He was being too political? Read: ***Matt. 23:23-33***

**Pastors, Politics And The Black-Robed Regiment**

*“Whenever issues relate to morality and justice, it is the role of pastors to address those issues from the pulpit and challenge our political leaders to do the right thing. This has been the tradition of this nation since colonial times, and if it were not for the courage and leadership of the pastors in 1775, we would still be bowing to British royalty.”*

Gregory Williams*, “Romans 13 & Christ’s Clergy Response Teams”,* NewsWithViews.com*,* 1-21-09.

The British feared no group more than they feared the Colonial pastors. They hated them because they taught their congregations the biblical principles of freedom and resistance to tyranny. Writing a little less than a century after the battle of Lexington and Concord, the Rev. William Ware of Cambridge, MA wrote:

*“When the struggle [at Lexington] actually commenced, the people were ready for it, thoroughly acquainted with the reasons on which the duty of resistance was founded, and prepared to discharge the duty at every hazard. No population within the compass of the Colonies were better prepared for the events of the 19th of April [1775], than the people of Lexington*....”

<http://www.nordskogpublishing.com/author-Jonas-Clark.shtml>

America is perishing because most pastors are not teaching their congregations the biblical perspective of freedom as it relates to personal, civil, and religious life.

We need more men like Jonas Clark, the Colonial pastor of the church in Lexington who taught the great doctrine of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ as well as the biblical right to resist tyranny.

How are Christians going to learn the biblical principles that relate to civil government if their pastors are afraid to address political issues?

Pastors should not be intimidated about praising a person or organization worthy of praise nor should they be timid about condemning politicians who betray their oath of office and ignore their responsi- bility to God and the people they represent.

*“The clergy of the American Colonies preached freedom from tyranny. The Rev. Samuel West preached that it is just as evil to avoid opposing tyranny as it is to disobey righteous leaders. Citing Romans chapter 13, Rev. West pointed out that civil magistrates are ‘ministers of God’ and therefore draw their authority from God's law. He resounded that when the civil magistrate subverts the authority given by God, it is the duty of lesser magistrates to resist them.”*

Randy Pope, [**http://lwhf.com/black\_regiment.html**](http://lwhf.com/black_regiment.html)

What do we call that? **NULLIFICATION!**

DISCERNMENT 6, (2-25-16)

There is an old saying that is very true, ***“People get the government they deserve.”*** Normally, the society degenerates first, then the government feels free to ignore the constitution and starts enacting immoral and unjust laws.

JUST A FEW WORDS ABOUT VOTING:

***Jeremiah 23:16 This is my warning to my people”, says the LORD Almighty. “Do not listen to these prophets*** [politicians]***when they prophesy*** [make promises]***to you, filling you with futile hopes. They are making up everything they say. They do not speak for the LORD!”***

Here is the biblical model for choosing leaders: DISCERNMENT, pg. 10

***Exodus 18:21 Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them, as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens.***

How many politicians running for office today fear God? How many men and women in office,and those who are seeking office, have integrity and hate dishonest gain? How many honor their word? How many honor their oath to the constitution?

We must remember that our loyalty must always be to God and His Word above all else. To many Christians make the mistake of being faithful to a political party or to a person above being faithful to their conscience and to God.

*“All of our political and military leaders pay lip service to this ‘rule of law’, and all of them solemnly swear to uphold, obey, and defend the Constitution. However, for many of them, in this area as in so many others, their oaths of office are meaningless, empty words that they regularly ignore and willingly violate.”*

George B. Wallace*, “Proper Use of the U.S. Military”, The New American Magazine,* July 5, 2010, p.12

Lying has become so common among politicians that a system has been established to measure how big the lies are. It’s called the “Pinocchio System” where the bigger the lie, the more “Pinocchios” one receives.

*“Unfortunately, Pinocchio and his new nose have spent a lot of time on the 2016 campaign trail. Our Pinocchio politicians have been made aware of the fact that noses don’t, in fact, grow when you lie. Lying is moral and ethically allowed. Goodbye truth, hello dishonesty.*

*“And our politicians have been moving toward this point for a long time and we just haven’t, to be honest, cared. Sure, we think, politicians lie, it’s the art of the game. Politics has become synonymous with deceit. Whenever a child mentions political aspirations, they are rebuked with “it’s a dirty business.” I never knew what that meant until now.*

*“Pinocchio and his new nose have been main advisors to the Hillary Clinton campaign for quite a while, encouraging her to say whatever is necessary. Eventually everyone will believe it, forget the dishonesty ever happened, or end up so confused that apathy sets in. To quote one of the most corrupt individuals of all time, Joseph Goebbels, “If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it.” Apparently, albeit horrifically, what Goebbels said is true.*

[*http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/feb/19/juliette-turner-politicians-and-lies-pinocchio-got/*](http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/feb/19/juliette-turner-politicians-and-lies-pinocchio-got/)

All this means that we must rely less on what politicians say and more on what they do and what their voting record says.

**GOVERNMENT**

Again, we start with a definition (noun):

1. The political direction and control exercised over the actions of the members, citizens, or inhabitants of communities, societies, and states; direction of the affairs of a state, community, etc.; political administration: *Government is necessary to the existence of civilized society.*

2. The form or system of rule by which a state, community, etc., is governed:*monarchical government; episcopal government.*

3. The governing body of persons in a state, community, etc.; *administration.*

4. A branch or service of the supreme authority of a state or nation, taken as representing the whole: *a dam built by the government.*

5. Direction; control; management; rule: *the government of one's conduct.*

We have gone over the subject of government in great detail in our “Will America Survive” series. Here we will cover only the most basic tenants of government.

**Excerpts from Tolerating Tyranny:**

*“It is amazing how one person can read these seven verses and get one meaning while someone else can read them and get a totally different one. But the Scriptures have only one correct meaning,* *so they*

DISCERNMENT, pg. 11

*must be studied closely, considering all other pertinent Scriptures and taking into account the historical context and grammar of the original.”*

Pastor Mike Smith’s book. See link on [www.countrybiblechurch.us](http://www.countrybiblechurch.us)

**The view that *Romans 13:1-7* or *1 Peter 2:13-15* were written to compel believers to submit to tyranny is biblically incorrect!** Consider the following three points:

1. None of the verses in question state that we must submit unconditionally to civil government even though some people impose that idea on the text. In fact, there are no Scriptures in the entire Bible that teach that.

2. Proper hermeneutics forbids such a conclusion. There are many examples in the Bible of people who disobeyed civil government and were blessed by God for doing so.

3. There are clauses in the ***Romans 13*** and ***1 Peter*** passages that limit civil government. Only rulers who function as “ministers of God for good” have authorization from God, ***Rom. 13:4***. Good citizens have nothing to fear from God’s ministers; in fact, they may receive praise from them for their good behavior, ***Rom. 13: 3*** and ***1 Pet. 2:14***. This certainly does not apply to rulers who abuse people they have pledged to serve.

Still, many believe that ***Romans 13:1-7*** requires unconditional submission and so they feel obligated to stand idly by while their government enslaves them.

*“Romans chapter 13 has become a kind of ubiquitous opiate that causes Christians to revel in sheepish slavery and servitude... [and has] caused more Christians to surrender their God-given liberties and freedoms to all sorts of tyrants, both secular and religious.”*

Timothy Baldwin and Chuck Baldwin, *Romans 13, The True Meaning of Submission*, p. 11

One of the main reasons people misunderstand these seven verses is because they fail to recognize that they do not refer to all governing rulers. They refer only to those who submit to God’s authority and function as His ministers for good. All other rulers are under His condemnation, not His blessing.

These verses define the ideal government from God’s divine perspective as one that operates properly as His minister for good, possessing legitimate authority to punish evildoers.

**To apply the submission that *Romans 13:1-7* requires to a tyrannical government that has become a minister of Satan for evil is a gross misapplication!**

DISCERNMENT 7, (3-8-16)

*“Nothing in the entire passage has any reference to wicked rulers. It says not one word about rebellious magistrates; or those who oppose God; or those who become despotic and tyrannical in their abuse of power. None of these sorts of governments are addressed or described here at all. Rather, the whole point of the passage is simply to clarify that there is indeed a God-ordained purpose for civil government.”Runyan, Gordan (2012-08-24).”*

*Resistance to Tyrants: Romans 13 and the Christian Duty to Oppose Wicked Rulers* (p. 38). Happy Siege. Kindle Edition.

***Romans 13:1 (b)… for there is no*** [legitimate] ***authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.***

J. B. PHILLIPS N. T. TRANSLATION:

***Romans 13:1 (b)…every Christian ought to obey the civil authorities, for all legitimate authority is derived from God's authority…***

It should be understood that all legitimate or lawful authority comes from God, so no one can ascribe absolute authority to himself. When one assumes authority that is not from God, then it is counterfeit, illegitimate, unlawful, and therefore requires neither respect nor submission.

Dictators, tyrants, despots, warlords, mafia heads, leaders of street gangs, etc. certainly have authority that they assert, but it is illegitimate because it has not been delegated to them from God. They do not submit to Him or His laws, but instead, act contrary to His Just and Righteous standards.

A man may become king or be elected president, but if he is an autocrat, he has no appointment from God.

God rebuked Israel when He said: DISCERNMENT, pg. 12

**Hosea 8:4 They have set up kings, but not by Me.**

Anyone who uses his authority to abuse others did not receive it from God. God never condones abusive authority.

***Habakkuk 1:7 They [the Chaldeans] are dreaded and feared. Their justice and authority originate with themselves.***

1. God has tasked national governments with the responsibility to protect the people and preserve the freedom He has endowed to them.

2. Those in government are to act as His ministers for the good of the people. They are responsible to Him and in our country, they are responsible to the people as well.

3. This includes praising those who do good and punishing those who are guilty of crime.

4. Government’s job is to protect and preserve the freedom, privacy, and property of the individuals under its authority.

5. To accomplish this, governments must have law enforcement and courts for protection internally and a military for protection externally.

6. Government’s job is not to solve people’s problems.Its job is to make sure that the people have freedom to solve their own problems.

7. The inherent problem of all governments is that they tend to acquire more power and authority than is necessary.

Big Gov. = less freedom, privacy and property

8. In our country, the government derives its power from the consent of the people.

**Declaration of Independence**

*“… to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.”*

This means that government has no power to act independently from the people. If the people do not give their consent to government to do something, then government has no legitimate power to do it.

9. If the government ignores this restriction and acts independently or contrary to the people, then the people have the power to alter or abolish it and forma new one.

*“That whenever any form of government becomes destructive to of these ends*[life, liberty, and property], *it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it and to institute new government,”*

10. Order of rank and authority:

GOD **FED. GOV.**

People States

The way it should be.

The way it is.

States People

Fed. Gov. God

God created the people; the people created the states, the states created the federal government.

11. *“Freedom without authority becomes anarchy, in which no one is free; but authority without freedom is tyranny, which ceases to be legitimate authority. No tyrant can remain in power without the consent and cooperation of his victims.”*

R.B. Theime Jr., *Christian Integrity,* p. 72.

The government considers your silence to be consent or approval.

DISCERNMENT 8, (3-10-16)

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ay8Niu7ndM&ebc=ANyPxKo\_8l8K9mLQ93l0lbkd8MKacqxCs\_3jyFPv0OD\_9\_BwsUZ5LXm02uqhhLkP\_OlqnpQ84-If**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ay8Niu7ndM&ebc=ANyPxKo_8l8K9mLQ93l0lbkd8MKacqxCs_3jyFPv0OD_9_BwsUZ5LXm02uqhhLkP_OlqnpQ84-If)

DISCERNMENT, pg. 13

**PART 1**

Notes from video of Constitutional expert, lawyer, philosopher and logician, Publius Huldah, speaking to Campaign for Liberty in Memphis, Tennessee on 3-17-14, using James Madison’s paper on nullification. Here is the link where you can go to find this:

**James Madison Rebukes Nullification Deniers**

Some allege that: Nullification is unlawful, literally impossible, and only the SCOTUS decides what is unconstitutional, and that James Madison was dead-set against nullification.

(This allegation is intellectually and morally indefensible.)

*“Nullification is simply the refusal to comply with the unconstitutional acts of a government.”* It can take different forms such as direct disobedience, obstructing, impeding, or thwarting such acts.

**FOUNDING PRINCIPLES FROM THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE:**

1. **All men are created equal by their Creator** and are thus equal before the law.

2. **All rights come from God:** Life, liberty, private property, self-defense, fair trials, and to live our lives free from interference so long as we don’t deprive other people of their God-given rights.

The duty of government is to protect us from those who would take away our God-given rights. Rights come first, then governments are created to secure them.

3. **People create governments**. The first three words of our constitution: *WE THE PEOPLE…* were the most radical words ever written to establish a civil government.

4. When a government we created seeks to take away our God-given rights, we have the right, we have the duty to altar, abolish, or throw off such government. This is the natural right of self-defense, or nullification; it is a founding principle.

When we ratified the Constitution, we created the federal government. We are the Creator and the government is our creature. “Creature” is the word that both Madison and Jefferson used to describe our federal government.

Our federal government is a federation of sovereign States, united for limited and enumerated purposes only with all other powers retained by the States or the People. We have the right to tell our creature, (the fed. gov.) what we are authorizing it to do and that is precisely what the Constitution does.

Our creature consists of three branches: Legislative, Executive, and Judicial. We enumerated the powers we delegated to each branch. It is only in those enumerated powers that the government has lawful authority.

**The enumerated powers are few and they fall under four categories:**

1. Military defense, international commerce and relations

2. Immigration and naturalization

3. Domestically, to create a uniform commercial system: weights and measurements, patents and copyrights, currency based on gold and silver, bankruptcy laws, mail delivery and road-building.

4. With some amendments, secure certain civil rights.

That’s it! All other powers are reserved by the States or the People. (10th Amendment)

The federal government secures our God-given rights by exercising its limited, delegated powers listed in the Constitution. It isn’t the federal government’s job to secure all our rights in every way, just those appropriate for the federal government of a federation of States. Our rights are to be secured in other ways by the States.

**RIGHT TO LIFE:** DISCERNMENT, pg. 14

Military defense, article 1, sec. 8, clauses 11-16

Piracies and other felonies on the high seas, art.1, sec. 8, cl. 10

Prosecuting traitors, art. 3, sec. 3

Protecting us from invasion, art. 4 sec. 4

Restricting immigration, art. 1, sec. 9, cl. 1

**PROPERTY RIGHTS:**

Establishing a money system based on gold and silver and by establishing a uniform standard for weights and measures, art. 1, sec. 8, cl. 5

Punishing counterfeiters, art. 1, sec. 8, cl. 6

Establishing bankruptcy courts, art. 1 sec. 8, cl. 4

Issuing patents and copyrights, art. 1, sec. 8, cl. 8

Regulating trade and commerce, art. 1 sec. 8, cl. 1

(The original intent of the Interstate Commerce clause was to prohibit States from imposing taxes and tariffs on articles of commerce transferred between the States.)

**RIGHT OF LIBERTY:** Laws against slavery, 13th Amendment

Providing for fair trials in federal courts, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th, Amendments and

BY OBEYING THE CONSTITUTION!

*“The reason that our constitution so strictly limits the powers of the federal government is to secure our basic right to be left alone, to live our lives free from meddlesome and interfering do-gooders, tyrants, bullies, and thieves.”*

*“When the federal government merely secures God given rights, we are never put in conflict with each other. When the federal, state, or local governments do nothing but protect us from invaders, traitors, pirates, and thieves, the people can live together in peace because no one has his hand in anybody else’s pocket.”*

Our wonderful constitution was a five thousand year miracle. But we let the miracle become perverted because we turned away from God and our founding principles. We allowed it to be twisted in order to benefit some at the expense of others.

Example: the Tariff Act of 1828, The Southern States called it the tariff of abomination. The South was trading cotton for manufactured goods from Europe. The North was producing manufactured goods as well but they were more expensive than those from Europe. The Congress, dominated by Northern Congressmen, imposed an onerous tariff on manufactured good from Europe. The South was no longer able to trade their cotton to Europe and the Southern economy was devastated. So the North was benefited at the expense of the South.

DISCERNMENT 9, (3-15-16)

**PART 2,**  Notes from video of Publius Huldah’s paper on nullification.

How did we get to the socialist regulatory welfare state of today? It began with the change of theology; we rejected the faith of our fathers. The Unitarians took over the leadership of Harvard University by 1805. Their socialist ideology rejected the biblical teaching that man is fallen, and asserted that evil comes by the way that society is organized. They believed that man is basically good and all he needs is the right education, then man and society could be made perfect. They also believed that they could educate children better than their parents. Most children were home schooled up to this time.

By the 1840s, Horace Mann, a Unitarian, lobbied for tax supported public education and for special schools to train teachers. The people were told that these teachers were the experts in training children and that the parents were not qualified to teach their own children. They said with public education, we would achieve utopia.

With the help of John Dewy, an atheist and socialist (1859-1952), the progressives took control of the teacher’s colleges.

DISCERNMENT, pg. 15

They conditioned teachers to abandon our founder’s philosophy of reason, fixed principles, limited civil government, and Christian morality and accept the ideology of pragmatism, authoritarian government, and socialism. 18.35 The Unitarians believed that evil came from the environment and that man was basically good.

But the Unitarians did not bring about the utopia they promised through public education, so in the early 1900s, the political progressives like Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson promised to fix all the problems by putting the federal government in control of everything.

As it turned out, their plan benefits some people at the expense of others. It benefits those on welfare, in labor unions, and working as government employees. This Frankenstein-like monster regulates everyone and everything to “protect” us from the uncertainties of life and to make everything equal.

The enumerated powers set forth in the Constitution were ignored as the government’s only concern was the will of the people as expressed by their representatives in Congress. This new regulatory welfare state is immoral and destructive to the hollowed purpose for which the federal government was created.

*“God never gave us the right to have a government to give us advantage over others, to be free from the challenges of life, to be free from the consequences of our own actions, and to have others forced to pay for our living expenses and subsidize our vices.”*

In order to be the provider of benefits to some, the federal government must violate the God-given property rights of others. It must rob Peter to redistribute to Paul. This is taking place today under the heading of “income inequality”.

To protect us from global warming and lack of medical insurance, it must violate everyone’s right to their God-given liberty. Today, the federal government exercises vast powers that were not delegated to it by the Constitution and has become an instrument of immorality, injustice, and oppression. It has taken away most of our God-given rights and is conniving to take away our God-given right of self-defense, 2nd Amendment.

Does the creature dictate to the Creator? The nullification deniers say, “Yes”.

They say every law from Congress, every executive order, every word of all the massive regulations is supreme and we the people must obey. The federal government believes that it is the exclusive and final judge of the extent of its own powers. WRONG !

DISCERNMENT 10, (3-22-16)

**PART 3,** Notes from video of Publius Huldah’s paper on nullification, continued.

Thomas Jefferson said in the Kentucky Resolution:

“*Where powers are assumed where they have not been delegated, a nullification is the rightful remedy, that every state has a natural right in cases that are not in the compact, to nullify of their own authority.”*

…because We, The People have that authority.

James Madison commented on this in his notes on nullification in 1834:

“*The right of nullification meant by Mr. Jefferson Is the natural right which all admit to be a remedy against insupportable oppression.*”

Our framers told the states to resist unconstitutional acts of the federal government. The founding fathers saw nullification as a natural right, not a constitutional right. Some say that States cannot nullify anything the federal government does because nullification is not a constitutional right. Of course it is not a constitutional right because our natural rights don’t come from the Constitution. OUR RIGHTS COME FROM GOD !

Why go to the Constitution to determine our rights when we have always had them?

Jefferson, Madison, and Hamilton said that nullification is a natural right of self-defense AND our duty which predates and pre-existed the Constitution and the federal government.

DISCERNMENT, pg. 16

Furthermore, it is nowhere prohibited by the Constitution of the States, being a reserved power within the meaning of the 10th Amendment.

The federal government is supposed to look to the Constitution for the enumerated powers to act but the States don’t go to the Constitution to get permission to act because they retain all powers they did not exclusively delegate to the federal government *[only about 17 in all]* or prohibited to themselves, Article 1, section 10. (30.17)