**DISCERNMENT 81** (1-3-17) DISCERNMENT, pg. 125

God is the ultimate Authority and He delegates authority to individuals. He delegates authority to certain men to be pastor-teachers and to all men who become husbands. He delegates authority to wives over their children.

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The ability to function well in a position of authority does not come naturally, it is something that must be learned. Unfortunately, most fathers are not training their sons how to be good husbands, fathers, and leaders, and most wives are not training their daughters how to be good wives, mothers, and followers. Also, unfortunately, most pastors are not teaching husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, the biblical principles concerning marriage, rearing children, or how to manage a business.

Should employers have the discretion to pay employees whatever they agree to or should they pay them based on a standardized pay scale?

READ: ***Matthew 20:1-16***

*“This is a tremendous parable which illustrates an important truth: It is not the amount of time which you serve nor the prominence or importance of your position which determines your reward. Rather, you will be rewarded for your faithfulness to the task that God has given you to perform, regardless of how small or how short or how insignificant it appears.*

*I have always felt that the Lord will someday reward a dear little lady who may have been a member of my church. I will turn to a member of my staff and say, “Do you know her?” He will say, “I have never heard of her. She did not sing in the choir, she was never president of any of our societies, and she never taught a Sunday school class. That woman didn’t do anything, and look at the way the Lord is rewarding her!” We will probably find out that this dear lady was a widow with a young son. She never spoke to thousands of people like some evangelists and preachers, but she faithfully raised her one little boy, and he became a missionary who served God on a foreign field.*

*The widow had been faithful in the task God had given her to do. Somebody might protest, “Well, she sure didn’t work as hard as I did!” That might well be true, but God is not going to reward you for the amount of work you have done. He will reward you according to your faithfulness to the job that He called you to do. My friend, perhaps God has not called you to do something great for Him, but are you faithful in what He has assigned to you?”*

*J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible Commentary, el*

**DISCERNMENT 82** (1-5-17)

Before we leave the subject of receiving wages, it is important to know the following principle:

**The Pay You Receive Should Reflect the Type of Work You Do.**

Sometimes employers will offer a job to someone and tell them that they will be hired but will start out receiving a lower pay rate until he or she can prove that they can do the job.

Don’t fall for this trick! If you do the work, you deserve the pay, and if you can’t do the work, they will get rid of you. This scheme is usually pulled on young people who haven’t learned the principle stated above. The best thing one should say when offered a job in this way is to say, *“I appreciate the offer. I can certainly do the job and will be an excellent employee, but I am not interested in doing a job that pays less than its worth.”*

If an employer is smart, he will hire you immediately and pay you what the job is worth. If he doesn’t, you wouldn’t want to work for him anyhow.

One more thing before we dissect the verses below, the discretion our Lord used in paying employees in the *Matt. 20:1-16* parable reveals a basic flaw inherent in unions. Unions require employers to pay union employees a set amount. The problem is that some union employees are not worth the set amount and some are worth more than the set amount. Employers should have the freedom to pay each individual worker what they are worth.

DISCERNMENT, pg. 126

Now, back to analyzing Matthew 20. ***Matt. 19:30*** is restated in:

***Matthew 20:16*** (NASV)  ***"Thus the last shall be first, and the first last."***

***Matthew 19:30*** (NASV) ***"But many who are first will be last; and the last, first***.

In addition, the KJV and the NKJV add the phrase, ***“many are called and few are chosen”*.**

Notice, the KJV and the NKJV add the phrase, ***“many are called and few are chosen”*.**

*It seems probable; therefore, that we have here one of the many verbal allusions in the Petrine epistles to the teaching Peter had heard from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The sequence call—choose brings to mind the famous statement by our Lord that “many are called, but few are chosen (eklektoi, italics added). These words, however, occur only twice in the Gospels, both instances being in Matthew (20:16; 22:14). But there is little reason to doubt that Peter must have heard them many times. In the Gospels, we only have a fragment of our Lord’s spoken words (see John 21:25).*

*In any case, this statement by Jesus occurs in eschatological contexts both times it is used in Matthew. In one of these places, it concludes the parable of the workers in the vineyard (20:1–16) and follows the vineyard owner’s decisive pronouncement about the wages of the workers (vv 13–15). In the other place, it follows the parable of the wedding supper (22:1–14) and follows the host’s decisive command to expel the improperly dressed man (vv 12–13). It is beyond the scope of this article to expound these parables here. Suffice it to say this, clearly the parable about the vineyard workers refers to Christian service up to our Lord’s return, while the man in the parable of the wedding feast has not prepared himself for the host’s review and represents a believer unprepared for the Judgment Seat of Christ.*

*From both parables it is plain that the “choice” is made after the “call”! The vineyard workers are all “called” to labor (i.e., “invited;” the Greek verb is of the same root as “calling” in 2 Pet 1:10), but the “choice” about their wages is made when the vineyard owner appears in the evening. Some are “chosen” to receive pay equal to those who have worked longer. In the wedding feast*

*situation, many are “invited” and many turn down the invitation. But even one who came poorly dressed is not “chosen” to participate, although he had been “called” (invited).*

*Zane C. Hodges, “Making Your Calling and Election Sure: An Exposition of 2 Peter 1:5–11,” Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society Volume 11 11, no. 20 (1998): 31–32.*

**DISCERNMENT 83** (1-10-17)

All Christians work for the same Boss.

***Colossians 3:22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service*** [eye-service]***, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.***

We have another verse from Paul from the Epistle to the Ephesians that help explain this phrase.

***Ephesians 6:5-8 Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; 6) not by way of eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. 7) With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8) knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.***

Paul used the same Greek word that is translated “external service” and “eye-service”. The Gr. word is *OPHTHALMODOULIA*, (ὀφθαλμοδουλία), n. dsf; service that is performed only to make an impression in the owner’s presence, eye-service. This is a compound word taken from *OPHTHALMOS*, eye + *DOULOS*,slave or slavery.

It is used only twice in the Bible for those who work hard only when being watched by the boss. Sometimes these type of people are called brown-nosers.

DISCERNMENT, pg. 127

As soon as the boss leaves, they quit working. They are dishonorable people who lack character and integrity. They dishonor themselves before their fellow employees and their boss, but most importantly, they dishonor God.

As those who merely please men… work only to promote themselves, often at the expense of their fellow employees. It is more important to them to be promoted than to do what is right and honorable.

A Christian should not connive and scheme to advance himself! God will promote us at the proper time. Self-promoters who scheme to get ahead, sometimes are promoted to a position beyond their ability and they wind up hating their job. That never happens to Christians who wait on the Lord to be promoted.

We must all decide who we are working for. It shouldn’t be just for the person in charge. Everything we do should be done as unto the Lord, to please Him. Believers should have better working habits than anyone else because we are part of the Royal Family in service to the King of kings and Lord of lords.

But with sincerity of heart***, APLOTES, (ἁπλότης),*** n. dsf; simplicity, sincerity, uprightness or frankness. It describes one who is genuine, free from pretense and hypocrisy. This is someone who can be trusted who is not trying to con or fool anyone.

Fearing the Lord is the most important part of the verse because it gives the proper motivation for doing what is right even when no one is watching.

***PHOBEO, )*** part. pm; to have a profound measure of respect and reverence with special reference to the fear of offending someone…in this case, it refers to fear of offending the Lord here.

Notice that this participle is in the middle voice which signifies that the subject is affected by its own action. Fearing the Lord is not the default nature of man. It is not natural. The profound respect, translated fearing here, comes from a consistent intake of the Word of God. It is more than fearing punishment from the Lord; it is dreading to displease Him more than anything.

How you do your job indicates your respect for the Lord. The real test comes when you have an overbearing, condescending ogre for a boss. Will you still work hard, doing the best job you can, even when he or she isn’t around?

Have you ever been tempted to slack off from doing your best because your boss or the company let you down in some way? Have you ever asked for a raise and was declined so you decided to cut back on your effort because you were not appreciated?

That may seem fair and reasonable to some but Christians are not allowed to do such things. Why? Because we do everything as unto the Lord. We don’t slack off, back off, give up, leave early, or become careless, mediocre, or lazy. We don’t nag, drag, or brag even if our boss is a scallywag. We don’t goof-off, gab, gossip, or google on company time. We don’t pout, pilfer, or plunder, and we don’t conspire, we inspire.

***Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.***

**Mental Attitude Sins**, toward the boss, towards other workers, or just in a general disgruntled frame of mind, will ruin a believer's ability to perform good work as unto Christ. No one likes to be around someone with a bad attitude.

God doesn’t care what kind of job you have. He cares about how well you do your job and WHY. God is more impressed with a garbage collector who works hard and does a great job because he is doing it as unto the Lord than He is with a CEO of a large corporation who also works hard but is motivated by pride to have his company on the Fortune 500 list of best companies. It has to do with the motivation of their heart. One was working to please the Lord and the other the other was motivated by the mental attitude sin of pride.

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***Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is alive, 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.***

***1 Chronicles 28:9 As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts.***

***2 Chronicles 6:30 You alone know the hearts of the sons of men…***

***Revelation 2:23 I am He who searches the minds and hearts…***

**DISCERNMENT 84** (1-12-17)

Our next area of discernment is **EDUCATION.** Let’s start with the Definition:

***ed•u•ca•tion*** *noun:*

*1 a : the action or process of educating or of being educated; also : a stage of such a process*

*b : the knowledge and development resulting from an educational process*

*2 : the field of study that deals mainly with methods of teaching and learning in schools*

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

***ed•u•cate*** *verb:*

*1 a : to provide schooling for*

*b : to train by formal instruction and supervised practice especially in a skill, trade, or profession*

*2 a : to develop mentally, morally, or aesthetically especially by instruction*

*b : to provide with information : INFORM3 : to persuade or condition to feel, believe, or act in a desired way*

*Greek words for “education”:*

*PAIDEUO (****παιδεύω****),*

*1. to provide instruction for informed and responsible living, educate*

*2. to assist in the development of a person’s ability to make appropriate*

*choices, practice discipline.*

*BDAG, 741*

*MANTHANO (****μανθάνω****),*

*1. to gain knowledge or skill by instruction, learn*

*2. make the acquaintance of something, learn about*

*3. to come to a realization, with implication of taking place less through instruction than through*

*experience or practice, learn, appropriate to oneself:*

*Ibid 615*

**EDUCATION**

*The imparting of spiritual, intellectual, moral and social instruction, the basis for which is the fear of the LORD. People continue learning throughout the whole of life. The education of children in the OT was centered on the home and synagogue and was largely of a religious and ethical nature. In the NT, children were included in the community of the church, but the home was still the main sphere of their education.*

***Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies*** *(Martin Manser, 2009).*

**EDUCATION:** *the transfer of knowledge, morals, and attitudes from one person to another, and usually from one generation to the next.*

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*Ronald F. Youngblood, F. F. Bruce, and R. K. Harrison, Thomas Nelson Publishers, eds.,* ***Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*** *(Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1995).*

The quote below comes from the Introduction of the book, *“30 Days to Understanding What Christians Believe”*

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*“We live in an age of feelings. Increasingly great value is being placed on whether something makes us feel good. At the same time, there is a decreasing value on knowledge, information, and truth, with many people believing that truth is relative: “What may be true for you may not be true for me.” This is devastating, however, because if there is no absolute truth, there can be no confidence that God exists. If there is no God, there is no hope. Therefore, Christians must be concerned about preserving knowledge, information, and truth.*

*“Cold, dead orthodoxy” has no appeal to anyone. There is no virtue in believing something that is barren and meaningless. But the Bible makes claims that, if true, are rich and profoundly meaningful. It makes it clear that if you truly believe the right things, you will experience love, joy, and peace—but only if you believe the right things. The quality of a person’s life depends on what he or she believes, and the destiny of that person’s life depends equally on what he or she believes.*

*All this is to say that it matters what Christians believe. It matters that Christians be well educated in the Scriptures. It matters that Christians be grounded solidly in the truth. It matters that truth is upheld, preserved, and honored. Otherwise we are vulnerable to lies that deceive and destroy.*

*Yet, at the same time, we live in a post-Christian era, in which much of the information about Christianity that used to be common knowledge in American culture is no longer common knowledge. Therefore, for upcoming generations, we must make the basic truths of Christianity more accessible.”*

*Max E. Anders and Max E. Anders, 30 Days to Understanding the Christian Life in 15 Minutes a Day (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1998), viii–ix.*

Where can you go for truthful answers? If not to the Bible, then it must not be inerrant or full of error, so why has the Bible been THE # 1 BESTSELLER if that were true for over 2000 years?

**The Condition of Education In the United States**

*Unfortunately, in the midst of the world’s wealthiest and most high-tech society, there is mounting evidence that something may be wrong with the educational process. As we discussed in an earlier chapter, most of the high-paying jobs in the U.S. economy in future years will be in the science, engineering, and technology sectors. However, in 1986, in a comparison of 17 modernized nations using standardized tests for science achievement, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) found that a nationally representative sample of U.S. fifth graders ranked in the middle of the nations tested in terms of science achievement. Even more worrisome, it was also discovered that by ninth grade, U.S. students ranked next to last overall. In fact, they were last in biology and far behind many other nations in the areas of chemistry and physics. The National Assessment of Educational Progress report concluded that:*

*More than half of the nation’s 17-year-olds appear to be inadequately prepared to perform competently jobs that require technical skills. The thinking skills and scientific school students also seem to be inadequate for informed participation in the nation’s civic affairs. Only 7 percent of the nation’s 17-year-olds have the prerequisite knowledge and skills thought to be needed to perform well in college-level science courses.*

*https://www.coursehero.com/file/p5cofjr/The-Condition-of-Education-In-the-United-States-Unfortunately-in-the-midst-of/*

*“Despite higher than average per-pupil expenditures, American 8th graders ranked 19th out of 38 countries on the most recent international mathematics comparison. On the TIMSS 1995 study, which tested 12th graders, American students were ranked 19th out of 21 countries in both math and science general knowledge.”*

*Ibid*

DISCERNMENT, pg. 130 Why does the US spend more on education than any other country and yet do such a poor job of educating? The answer in two words: “government interference”.

There is nothing in the US Constitution about the federal government having anything to do with education as that is a State issue. However, our federal government unconstitutionally, grants billions of dollars to schools under the guise of helping them to be better educated.

*Education is decentralized in the United States, meaning that the task of providing and running schools is left in the hands of state and local officials. The federal government’s role has largely been to provide federal monies to bolster programs that teach children how to read, promote science or help students attend college, among other things.*

*http://www.allgov.com/departments/department-of-education?detailsDepartmentID=584*

In reality, the federal government uses the funds that the schools voluntarily receive to control them. If the schools do not comply with the federal government’s academic and social guidelines/

mandates, their funds are cut off.

All of this is bad enough, but we now have the Department of Education which is a humongous bureaucratic machine that sucks billions out of the pockets of taxpayers. It provides funding for liberal programs that come with a variety of federal rules and requirements.

*The* ***U.S. Department of Education*** *promotes student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access to educational opportunity. To support this mission, the Budget provides $70.7 billion in discretionary funding for the Department of Education in 2016, an increase of $3.6 billion, or 5.4 percent, over the 2015 level. The Budget also proposes $145 billion in new mandatory spending and reforms over the next decade to fund early learning, support teachers, and reform postsecondary education.*

*https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget16/budget-factsheet.pdf*

The U.S. Department of Education, like most of the other Departments formed under the Executive Branch of our government, are unconstitutional. In 1977, Jimmy Carter promised the school teachers union that he would create a Department of Education if they would support him in his bid for the presidency. He became president and in 1979, he kept his promise and the Department of Education became a cabinet level department of the Executive Branch of our government.

*Reagan promised during the 1980 presidential election to eliminate the department as a cabinet post, but Democrats in the House refused to go along. Two years later, Reagan tried again to dismantle the ED by severing all funding, and again, Democrats thwarted the president’s effort.*

*Ibid*

*In the mid-1990s, after Republicans took control of Congress, the GOP targeted the ED, calling it an intrusion into local, state, and family affairs. During the 1996 presidential campaign, Republican nominee Bob Dole promised to “cut out” the department if elected.*

*ibid*

The fiscal control our government has had over public schools has been very effective in shaping the minds of students away from independence, self-reliance, and Christian values and toward dependency, secularism, and liberal progressive ideologies. Many no longer refer to our public schools as “public schools”, but as “government schools”.

**EDUCATION QUOTES:**

“*He who opens a school, closes a prison*.” ~ Victor Hugo

“*School seeks to get you ready for examination; Life gives the finals.” ~* SAY

“*You should have education enough so that you won’t have to look up to people; and then more education so that you will be wise enough not to look down on people*.” ~ M. L. Boren

DISCERNMENT, pg. 131

*“One might say education is not to make anything of anybody, but simply to open the minds of everyone, to go from cocksure ignorance to thoughtful uncertainty.”*

*~* Pennsylvania School Journal

The following quote was made by Billy Sunday the famous evangelist of the nineteenth century. Until Billy Graham, no American evangelist preached to so many millions, or saw as many conversions, an estimated 300,000.

*“Nowadays we think we are too smart to believe in the Virgin birth of Jesus and too well educated to believe in the Resurrection. That’s why people are going to the devil in multitudes.*

*“Sunday’s preaching style was as unorthodox as the day allowed. His vocabulary was so rough (e.g., “I don’t believe your own bastard theory of evolution, either; I believe it’s pure jackass nonsense”), Christian leaders cringed, and they often publicly criticized him. But Sunday didn’t care: “I want to preach the gospel so plainly,” he said, “that men can come from the factories and not have to bring a dictionary.”*

*Mark Galli and* *Ted Olsen, “Introduction,” 131 Christians Everyone Should Know (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 73-74*

*“A knowledge of the Bible without a college course is more valuable than a college course without the Bible*.” ~ William Lyon Phelps

*Paul Lee Tan, Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times (Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc., 1996), 371.*

**DISCERNMENT 85** (1-17-17)

College education has become extremely expensive in our country while at the same time its quality, in most cases, has declined. When the government started subsidizing college tuition, the cost of college skyrocketed. However, this has not diminished the number of students entering colleges. Most Americans now believe the lie that every high-school student should go to college and that no one can be financially successful unless he or she graduates from college.

If a person is smart, ambitious, hard-working, and willing to take a risk, he or she can start their own company and someday become independently wealthy with or without a college degree. None of the people below graduated from college and most of them didn’t graduate from high-school.

**Andrew Carnegie**, industrialist and philanthropist  
**Benjamin Franklin**, inventor, scientist, author, entrepreneur

**Charles Culpeper**, owner and CEO of Coca Cola

**Colonel Harlan Sanders**, founder of Kentucky Fried Chicken

**David Neeleman**, founder of JetBlue airlines

**Frank Lloyd Wright**, most influential architect of the 20th century

**George Eastman**, multimillionaire inventor, Kodak founder

**Henry Ford**, billionaire founder of Ford Motor Company

**Henry J. Kaiser**, multimillionaire & founder of Kaiser Aluminum.

**Jay Van Andel**, billionaire co-founder of Amway

**Jimmy Dean**, multimillionaire founder of Jimmy Dean Foods

**Joyce C. Hall**, founder of Hallmark. Started selling greeting cards at the age of 18.

**Kemmons Wilson**, multimillionaire, founder of Holiday Inn

**Mary Kay Ash**, founder of Mary Kay, Inc.

**Milton** **Hershey**, founder of Hershey’s Milk Chocolate

**Ray Kroc**, founder of McDonald's

**Ron Popeil,** multimillionaire founder of Ronco, inventor, producer

**Rush Limbaugh**, multi-millionaire media mogul, radio talk show host. Dropped out of college

**Steve Wozniak**, co-founder of Apple, billionaire

**Thomas Edison**, inventor of the lightbulb, phonograph, & more

**Walt Disney**, founder of the Walt Disney Company DISCERNMENT, pg. 132

**W.T. Grant,** founder of W.T. Grant department stores

College is necessary for those who pursue a professional career such as doctors, lawyers, engineers, etc. But it will take someone who is teachable, dedicated, and tenacious to make the sacrifices it takes to get their degree.

People who learn a trade like carpenters, plumbers, electricians, mechanics, etc. are called “blue-collar” workers and believed to be less intelligent or less valuable by some because they didn’t go to college. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Many are unaware of the years of rigorous training and sacrifice it takes to learn a trade. Many have college degrees in areas that are not in demand but there will always be a demand for carpenters, plumbers, electricians, and mechanics. Further-more, it is not uncommon for them to make more money than those who have college degrees. You wouldn’t doubt this if you had a plumbing problem lately and had to call a plumber.

This is not to suggest, however, that how much money one makes can be used to measure his value or of their success. No, those are measured by the integrity he has which has nothing to do with whether he has been formally educated or not.

We all expect our institutions of higher learning to educate students to be prepared academically and psychologically to be successful in facing every exigencies of life. However, it is unfortunate that most university professors and faculty are progressive and are more interested in making sure that students are PC that they are with preparing them for life. So many universities have become hotbeds of social experimentation and exploitation and have become hostile to Christianity and the Bible.

So far, we have covered general education & focused on schools, education for careers, & occupations.

**Now we will focus on the most important education which is being biblically educated**.

The word “education” is not found in the NASV of the Bible while “educated” is only found four times. But words like train, training, teach, teaching, instruction, learn, and knowledge convey a similar meaning and they are used often.

train, trains, trained, 18 times

teach, teaching, 215 times

instruct, instruction, 93

learn, learned, learning, 69 times

knowledge, 155 times

So, the Bible uses words that have to do with education 504 times.

One may be intelligent, have a PHD, and be financially independent and yet be miserable because he is biblically ignorant. He lacks wisdom and knowledge about life that can only be found in the Word of God.

Does the Bible really have the answers and solutions to man’s issues and problems? What does the Bible have to say about it?

***2 Peter 1:2-3 Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. 3) His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.***

These verses put a wet blanket on worry.

Grace always comes first, then peace, through the **knowledge** of God and Jesus, our Lord. By His Divine power, He has given to us **EVERYTHING we need for life** [all our physical needs] **and godliness** [our spiritual needs]!

The answers are there but one must have a desire to learn them that is strong enough to stick with it over the long haul. CONSISTENCY IS THE KEY TO LEARNING !

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***Hebrews 5:13-14*** (ESV) ***For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14) But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained*** [Gr, GUMNAZO part. rp, gymnasium] ***to discern*** [Gr. DIACRISIS,ability to distinguish and evaluate] ***good and evil.***

***Because of practice,*** HEXIS (**ἕξις**), *n. asf*; 1a habit whether of body or mind. 2 a power acquired by custom, practice, use.

***Trained,*** GUMNAZO (**γυμνάζω**) *part. rp,* to exercise vigorously, either the body or the mind.

***1 Timothy 4:6 In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.***

***Constantly nourished,*** ENTREPHO (**ἐντρέφω**) *part. pp*, to train, educate, or form the mind.

***Have been following,*** PARAKOLOUTHEO (**παρακολουθέω***) v. rai*, to conform to someone’s belief or practice by paying special attention; following faithfully; to follow as a rule. There is great benefit and eternal rewards for becoming knowledgeable and skillful in living the super spiritual and royal life Christ bequeathed to us.

**DISCERNMENT 86** (1-19-17) To ***constantly nourish*** your soul takes CONSISTENCY ! ! !

Keep at it, feeding your desire, and that desire, focus, consistency, and love for spiritual food will increase. Your craving for spiritual truth can become insatiable. THAT is the place to be.

***Proverbs 8:33-35 "Heed instruction and be wise, and do not neglect it. 34) Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at my doorposts. 35) "For he who finds me*** [wisdom/doctrine] ***finds life, and obtains favor from the LORD***.

***Acts 17:11 Now these*** [Bereans] ***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.***

***1 Peter 2:2 Like newborn babes, long for***[v. aam] ***the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow*** [v. aps] ***in respect to salvation…***

Can you explain why this verse has nothing to do with our initial or first moment of irrevocable, positional salvation? Is this speaking about when we were born again, made new creatures in Christ, became children of God, were sanctified, and irrevocably baptized by the Holy Spirit into position/union with Jesus Christ?

NO! This is teaching us about EXPERIENTIAL SALVATION into mature believers, of going for the gold. Peter’s point here does not only concern new believers in Chirst, but all believers as they mature in Christ. He urges believers to desire and depend on the Word of God as much as a newborn needs and thirsts for milk so that they will keep on growing up spiritually.

We are commanded to study the Word of God so that we will grow up experientially, day by day, living in the filling of the Holy Spirit, receiving guidance by Him who helps us put the Word of God into practice, be biblically literate, and be approved by God IF WE SO CHOOSE. God definitely desires for us to matriculate into eternal WINNERS who will bring glory to Christ forever and who will have the capacity to appreciate the rewards and decorations He gives to us. The choice is ours

***2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.***

***Deuteronomy 6:6-9 And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; 7) and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.***

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***8) "And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. 9) "And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.***

***Matthew 4:4 "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'"***

***Jeremiah 15:16 Thy words were found and I ate them, and Thy words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart…***

**DISCERNMENT 87** (1-24-17) To ***constantly nourish*** your soul takes CONSISTENCY ! ! !

***Proverbs 4:10-13 Hear, my son, and accept my sayings, And the years of your life will be many. 11) I have directed you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in upright paths. 12) When you walk, your steps will not be impeded*** [distracted]***; and if you run, you will not stumble*** [chose not to fit daily study of Bible doctrine into your life]***. 13) Take hold of instruction; do not let go. Guard her, for she is your life.*** [imperative mood, command to make BD your life !]

***Proverbs 16:16 How much better it is to get wisdom than gold ! And to get understanding is***

***to be chosen above silver.***

***Psalm 19:7***

***7) The law of the LORD*** [BD] ***is perfect, converting the soul;***

***The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;***

***8) The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;***

***The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;***

***9) The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;***

***The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.***

***10) More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold;***

***Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.***

***Proverbs 3:13–15 How blessed is the man who finds wisdom And the man who gains understanding. 14) For her profit is better than the profit of silver and her gain better than fine gold. 15) She is more precious than jewels; And nothing you desire compares with her.***

***Romans 15:4 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that***

***through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.***

No one can be educated, learn, or be trained apart from having humility or teachability which is referred to as “fear”, meaning total respect, when related to God:

a) HUMILITY: An arrogant know-it-all cannot be taught anything

because he thinks he knows it all already. He will have to go through

life learning things the hard way which includes large amounts of

unnecessary pain.

b) RESPECT: For the instructor; An academic discipline must be

maintained where foolishness and interruptions are not allowed.

c) DEFERENCE: A willingness to defer to the instructor rather than

arguing with him.

d) FEAR: A fear of being disciplined or embarrassed. There is also a

fear of loss. Losing out on the benefits that an education or training can

provide is a motivating force to stick with the program.

All the above are included in the term, “the fear of the Lord” in the passage below:

***Psalm 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments; his praise endures forever***.

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***Fear,*** YIRAH (יִרְאָה) fear, respect, reverence, awe; opposite of a cavalier attitude towards God & His Word which is very foolish, going through life learning the hard way, if anything is learned at all.

***Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.***

***Proverbs 9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.***

***Job 28:28 "And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.'"***

***Psalm 25:12-13 Who is the man that fears the LORD? Him shall He teach in the way He chooses. 13) He himself shall dwell in prosperity, and his descendants shall inherit the earth.***

***Proverbs 12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel.***

READ: ***Proverbs 2:1-8***

***James 1:5-7***

***I Kings 3:7-14*** Solomon was searching and asks for wisdom out of humility.

***Proverbs 6:16-19*** The list of sins God hates the most.

**DISCERNMENT 88** (1-26-17)

**Education of Children:**

*“Family Research Council (FRC) affirms that the children of this nation belong first to their parents and families, not to their communities or governments. The primary responsibility and authority over a child's education lies with the child's parent or guardian. Respect for parents comes, in part, from an understanding that families are the basic unit of society. For society to be healthy, families must be strong, and for families to be strong, other units of society, including government and its schools, must re­spect their independence. In light of these commitments, FRC favors the rights of parents to educate their children at home. We also discourage further Federal intervention in education but prefer policies that restore responsibility and flexibility to the local school districts and individual teachers and parents-those who are already closest to and most invested in caring for our children.”*

[**http://www.frc.org/issues/education**](http://www.frc.org/issues/education)

Parents have the right and the responsibility to educate their children, not only academically, but socially and spiritually also. Parents should teach their children proper manners and etiquette. That includes not only table manners, but appropriate etiquette between males and females.

They should be taught the art of communicating with others, using a robust vocabulary, saying what they mean, shunning political correctness and avoiding trite sayings. They should learn when to speak and when to keep their mouth shut and that interrupting others is rude.

The following excerpts are taken form an article in the “*New American Magazine”* entitled *“INFANTILE NATION, How Breeding Overgrown Children Begets the Nanny State”.*

*“A United States naval midshipman, David Farragut, commanded a captured a British vessel during the War of 1812, at age 12. Now major universities provide ‘healing spaces’ with Legos, coloring books, Play-Doh, and puppies for students who ‘can’t handle’ Donald Trump’s election victory.*

*It’s really distressing that many ‘adults’ today aren’t half the boys our ancestors were. It was common years ago for young children to assume adult responsibilities. Apprenticeships at age eight weren’t unusual. Now, millions of grown Americans while away hours playing video games, with the average age of ‘gamers’ as they’re known, being 31–35.*

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*It doesn’t take great maturity to realize that, somehow, modern society is stunting people’s moral, spiritual, intellectual, and emotional development. While most American colleges were founded as Christian institutions, they now reflect an ‘Animal House’ mentality. Where they once sought to encourage virtue, they are now dens of iniquity where drunkenness and debauchery reign. This is frightfully alarming for a simple reason: Overgrown children cannot maintain their liberty. Of course, an analysis of what’s breeding modern immaturity first requires defining what true maturity is… at issue is the development of something called* ***VIRTUE*** *that set of good moral habits.*

*Ah, virtue. While many moderns can’t define the term, the Founding Fathers often stressed its importance. Ben Franklin noted, for example, ‘Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom. As nations become corrupt and vicious, they have more need of masters.’ And Samuel Adams wrote that men ‘will be free no longer than while they remain virtuous.’*

*There’s also no doubt that everything we complain about regarding uber-sensitive young people infused with a spirit of entitlement, those now dubbed ‘social justice warriors’, is a function of lacking virtue.*

*Consider the all-too-common playing the victim card, the blaming of outside forces (other people, the ‘patriarchy,’ ‘racism,’ etc.) for one’s own failings, real or imagined.*

*In ‘The Coddling of the American Mind,’ a 2015 piece appropriately accompanied by a picture of a four-year-old in a college lecture-hall chair, the ‘Atlantic’ lamented a current movement on campuses that ‘is largely about emotional well-being and ‘presumes an extraordinary fragility of the college psyche.’ Excessive focus on one’s own emotions is narcissistic, indicating pride, vanity, self-absorption; it isn’t a fault plaguing a humble, loving individual.*

*Thomas Paine noted, ‘Whenever we are planning for posterity, we ought to remember that virtue is not hereditary,’ and President Ronald Reagan warned, ‘Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction.’*

*It’s no surprise moderns fail to instill virtue in their children; not only is the word poorly understood, it’s rarely used… Parents today generally don’t know the ‘fundamentals’ of virtue. And you can’t teach what you don’t know, or model what you don’t embody. No matter, though, the children certainly will adopt ‘values’ whether they derive them from television, the Internet, school, friends, a combination thereof, or the Devil himself.*

*Yet as with tennis and math, children won’t become virtuous by accident. People once understood this and also recognized this and also recognized that instilling virtue in a child was a prerequisite for everything else; it’s fertile soil in which good things can develop and flourish. Virtue-oriented teaching was a staple of American education, until it went by the wayside in the first decade of Great American Vice, the 1960s. Worse still, today’s teaching often casts vice as virtues… Lust is called ‘sexual liberation’ and incredulity (lack of faith) sophistication. Vindictiveness, wrath, and injustice are called ‘social justice.’ Dishonesty is spun as ‘spin’ or a ‘narrative’ while imprudence can be a ‘lifestyle choice.’ Cowardice in action may be called compromise, and indifference is branded tolerance.*

*In today’s politics, it is primarily a plural noun, denoting beliefs or attitudes. And Friedrich Nietzsche’s nihilistic intention, the de-moralization of society, is advanced when the word ‘values’ supplants ‘virtues’ in political and ethical discourse… Hitler had scads of values.*

*George Washington had virtues. Who among those who knew him would have spoken of Washington’s ‘values’?*

*Values-talk comes naturally to a nonjudgmental age, an age judgmental primarily about the cardinal sin of being judgmental. It is considered broad-minded to say, ‘One person’s values are as good as another’s.’*

*It is nonsense to say ‘One person’s virtues are as good as another’s.’*

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*The point is, virtues reflect Truth and are good by definition; ‘values’ may just reflect individual preference and can be good, bad, or neutral. No parent, anywhere, fails to raise his children with ‘values.’ Virtues? Ah, they’re a different matter.*

*Why are virtues out of vogue? First, they spoil the fun of, and render implicit judgment on, those in vice’s grip. Its man’s nature to seek justification for his sins, and you can’t eliminate the concept of vice (thus achieving complete absolution: You can’t sin if sin doesn’t exist) without eliminating its correlative reality, virtue.*

*Second, however, virtue, again, refers to moral habits, and morality’s existence presupposes a source beyond man: God’s Truth. Thus, a prerequisite for belief in virtue is belief that Truth and, therefore, morality exist. Yet today the vast majority of people are moral relativists, as 2002 Barna Group research showed, embracing the notion that what we call ‘morals’ are inventions of man and are thus just preferences. Of course, this is just another way of saying morality and hence moral habits, virtue, don’t exist. And then you’re left with those generic things, ‘values,’ whose existence requires only that someone somewhere for some reason values something.*

*Then there’s the point that growing up just isn’t in fashion nowadays, with many lamenting our ‘youth culture.’ Yet part of the reason there is a youth culture is youth congregation. For most of history in most places, children were mainly socialized within the family unit, with secondary exposure to the tribe, village, or clan. This ensured ample mature role models and a balance of interaction, with the young exposed to other children, such as siblings and cousins, but also parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles, at whose sides they’d often work. Yet modern society has a child spend a good part of each day, five days a week, in institutions composed entirely of children. Not only may these youngsters reinforce each other’s childish behavior, but there is that tendency for the bad apple to spoil the whole bunch. Moreover, today’s undisciplined school environment reduces most government schools to baby- sitting centers at best, quasi-prisons where the inmates run the asylum at worst.*

*Work was always an integral part of most children’s lives. It might have been a boy hunting or tending the fields with his father or a daughter helping her mother keep house. This is significant because as the provers tell us, ‘Work ennobles a man’ and ‘Busy hands are happy hands.’ Work builds character, it encourages virtue.*

*Yes, ‘an idle mind is the Devil’s playground,’ yet we’ve become a decadent recreation culture in which youth sometimes spend hours playing video games or viewing porn (according to psychotherapist and ‘screen addiction’ expert Dr. Nicholas Kardaras, ‘8 to 10-year-olds spend 8 hours a day with various digital media while teenagers spend 11 hours in from of screens’). College now reflects this, too, with young people having expectation the play will continue; in fact, going away to university and having the ‘party experience’ is considered a rite of passage. Even intimate human relations have been made frivolous. ‘Recreational sex’ anyone?*

*Moreover, consider the modern parents who, let’s say, during the summer vacation, struggle to deep their children entertained, only to find the kids ever dissatisfied and craving something more.*

*We’ve all heard the catchy proverb, ‘All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy,’ but, not surprisingly, the second part of it is seldom today uttered. To wit: ‘All play and no work makes Jack a mere toy.’*

**DISCERNMENT 89** (1-31-17)

*It must be reiterated that things tend to start in the home, and today we’re in the grip of parenting so permissive it permits vice (misbehavior). Family psychologist and writer John Rosemond has called this a dysfunctional parenting paradigm, explaining the permissiveness thus: ‘Where we once viewed misbehavior as a moral problem, we now see it as a psychological problem.’ Before proceeding, note that this again simply reflects our atheistic, relativistic spirit of the age.*

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*As for psychology, Rosemond slams psychologists as ‘professional enablers’. Peddling a ‘mechanistic’ lie in which misbehavior is blamed on biology (genes, chemical imbalances, etc.) or environment, with free will removed from the equation. Yet this makes sense from an atheistic perspective. Without a soul, man is a mere organic robot, some pounds of chemicals and water. And then you evaluate him as a robot: Misbehavior is malfunction, caused either by faulty hardware (biology) or software (programming), with all the causative forces lying beyond the automaton’s control.*

*The traditional (correct) view is different, Rosemond explains in his 2000 book ‘raising a Nonviolent Child. It was always recognized that we’re born fallen and uncivilized, acting on impulse, and prone to selfishness, aggressiveness, and all manner and form of vice, and the sooner these impulses are tamed, the better.*

*Of course, since virtues are caught more than they’re taught, modeling proper behavior is imperative. Yet childhood obedience was also recognized as a prerequisite, for how can someone learn from you unless he first will listen to you? Listening comes before learning. So, the traditional parent established obedience, and deterred misbehavior with sufficient punishment.*

*Today, though, such tactics are deemed harsh and damaging to self-esteem. There is little accountability, and this results in what Rosemond calls the ‘o fear’ (and no respect0 generation, raised by parents who are quite fearful of many things: their children’s misbehavior, not pleasing their children, and not being loved by them. Of course, this itself, is selfish. True love means giving a person what he needs, even if it may displease him and make him displeased with you. What these parents are exhibiting is not love, but emotional dependence.*

*The consequences of not taming the beast, of not instilling virtue, are all around us. So-called ADHD is just an example of professional-enabler psychologists redefining what was formerly recognized as sin (misbehavior) as a condition of the brain; as Rosemond points out, ‘ADHD’ behavior is simply typical toddler behavior extended into later childhood by modern parenting.*

NOTE*: Though it may be true that a very small number of children have some type of biological abnormality that affects their behavior, the great majority of children misbehave because they know they can get by with it. Their parents have failed to enforce humility upon them by consistently disciplining them when they misbehave.*

*These parents fail to teach their children respect for authority so they routinely defy their parents with no consequences. Parents submit to their children’s demands and tolerate despicable behavior while issuing hollow threats that are completely ignored. Rather than giving them the tough love of discipline they need, they try to tame the beast with drugs.*

*From the WebMD website: “What Is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder?” ADHD can't be prevented or cured. But spotting it early, plus having a good treatment and education plan, can help a child or adult with ADHD manage their symptoms. Many symptoms of ADHD can be managed with medication and therapy. Medication: Medications called stimulants can help control hyperactive and impulsive behavior and increase attention span. They include:*

*Dexmethylphenidate (Focalin)*

*Dextroamphetamine (Adderall, Dexedrine)*

*Lisdexamfetamine (Vyvanse)*

*Methylphenidate (Ritalin, Concerta, Daytrana, Metadate, Methylin)*

<http://www.webmd.com/add-adhd/guide/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd#2>

*And, not surprisingly, childishness is extended beyond childhood. Do we not see this in the young people rioting because the election didn’t go their way and who demand ‘safe spaces,’*

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*‘trigger warnings,’ and other types of coddling?*

*Moreover, the schools, which Rosemond calls ‘punishment free zones’ just exacerbate this problem, with colleges offering a panderly partying, propaganda-filled atmosphere that can serve to extend childhood beyond graduation.*

*The solution? It has already been stated. As John Adams put it, ‘The only foundation of a free Constitution is pure virtue.’ Speak of virtue, of morality, of seeking Truth, and walk that talk, and liberty takes care of itself. It’s also now in fashion to speak of making America great again, but this, too, confuses the order of things. The apocryphal saying warns, ‘America is great because America is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, she will cease to be great. Take care of the goodness, and the greatness takes care of itself. Fail to do these things, and, ironically, we’ll be forging our fetters with cries of freedom.*

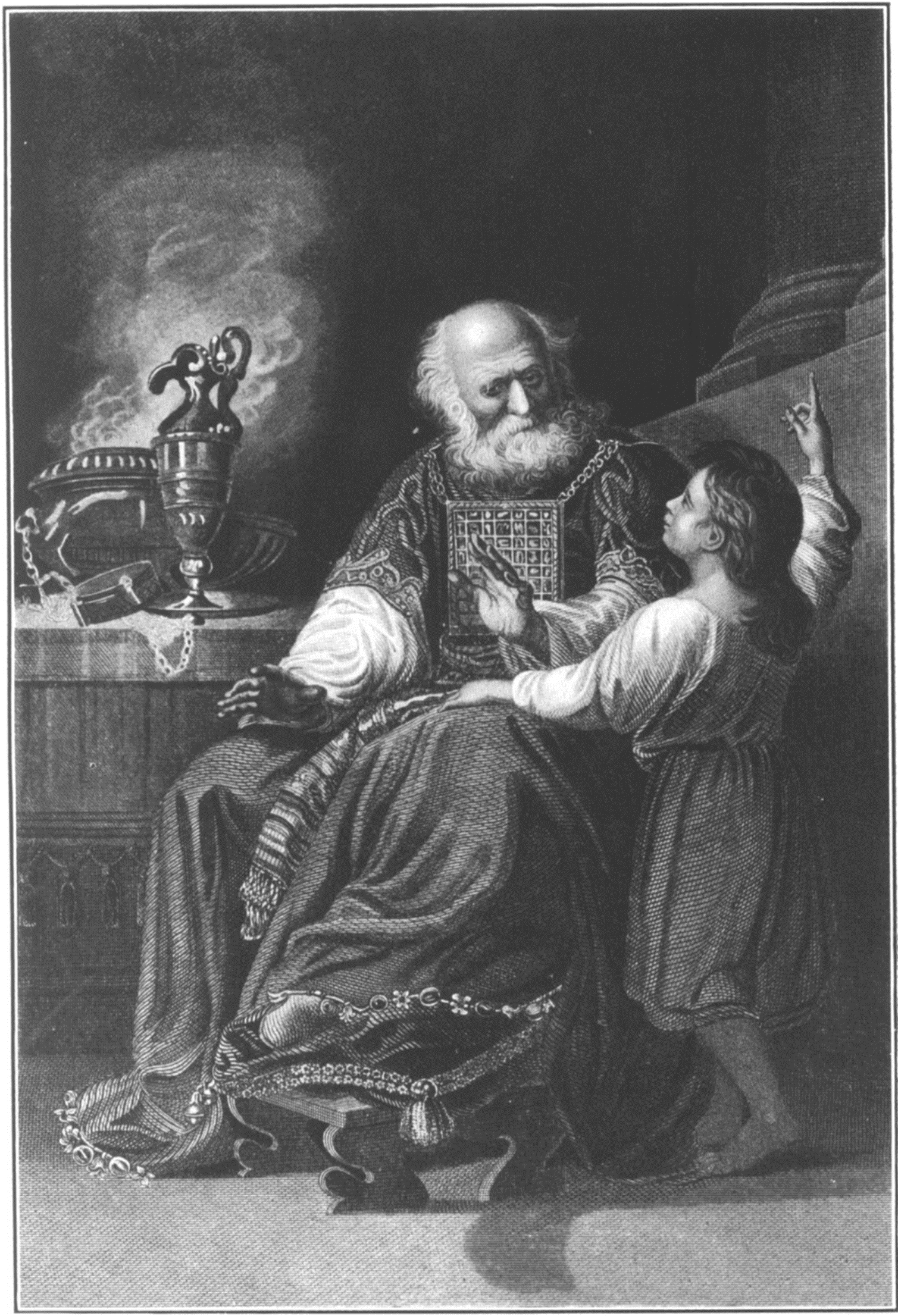
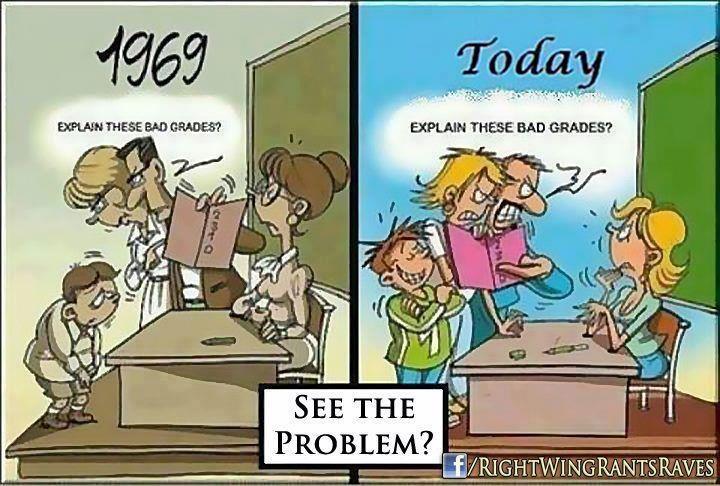
**DISCERNMENT 90** (2-2-17)

Read: ***2 Chronicles 17:1-14***

The following verse gives instructions for pastor-teachers but it is relevant to believers as well.

***Titus 1:9 …holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.***

If we can rightly divide the Word of truth, then we will be able to discern good from evil and be able to exhort [*to urge, appeal to, encourage*] in sound doctrine and refute [*to bring one to the point of recognizing wrong- doing or error, convict, convince*] those who contradict sound doctrine. This is one way for us to be the sault and light of the world that we have been called to be.



Teaching kids to count is fine, but

teaching them what counts, is far better.

~ *Bob Talbert ~*

Teachers who love teaching teach their students to love learning.

Eli teaching Samuel



Our next area of discernment is: DISCERNMENT, pg. 140

**ENTERTAINMENT**

■ **noun** the action of providing or being provided with amusement or enjoyment.

▶ an event or performance designed to entertain.

▶ the provision of hospitality.

*Concise Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004*

■ **verb**

**1** provide with amusement or enjoyment; to show hospitality to others

**2** give attention or consideration to.

Under normal conditions, entertainment has been a part of man’s life for as long as there has been man. ***Ecclesiastes 3:4*** says ***“there is a time to dance”*** and dancing is a form of entertainment whether you’re watching it or doing it. It is part of human nature to want a time to relax and enjoy some form of recreation or entertainment, something that is pleasurable, apart from the routine pressures and responsibilities of life.

After Sampson was betrayed by Delilah, his eyes were gouged out and he was taken before the people to entertain them as they made sport of him.

***Judges 16:24-25 And when the people saw him, they praised their god. For they said, "Our god has given our enemy into our hand, the ravager of our country, who has killed many of us." 25) And when their hearts were merry, they said, "Call Samson, that he may entertain*** *(amuse)* ***us." So, they called Samson out of the prison, and he entertained them. They made him stand between the pillars.***

It was normal for kings to be entertained but when King Darius was tricked into throwing his good friend Daniel into the lion’s den, he broke with the regular routine of being entertained in the evening.

***Daniel 6:18 Then the king went off to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no entertainment was brought before him; and his sleep fled from him.***

***Acts 28:7 Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the leading man of the island, named Publius, who welcomed us and entertained us courteously three days.***

***Entertained,*** EXENIZO (ξενίζω) v. aai,

1. To show hospitality, receive as a gues, or entertain.
2. To cause a strong psychological reaction through introduction of something new or strangel astonish, or surprise.

*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), 684.*

This Greek word is used 10 times in the N.T. It is translated as entertainment, staying, lodging, and received, relating to hospitality, 7 times and astonishing and surprised, 3 times.

We use the word “entertaining” for showing hospitality when we have guests visiting us. If someone calls when people are visiting, we may say, “I am entertaining guests right now, can you call back later”. Remember, one of the definitions of “entertainment” is the provision of hospitality or looking after the guests’ needs.