

Learn to Discern

(Hebrews 5:14)

- Introduction:
1. Ills. of Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The New Adam and Eve."
 2. There are many voices today that call is in many directions.
 3. The challenge of life is to discern which voices we are going to listen to and follow.

I. Discerning Between a Number of Matters

- A. Discerning between Good and Evil.
1. This is probably the easiest, though the times in which we live have made it more difficult (Isaiah 5:20).
 2. Discerning between good and evil is a matter of opening your Bible and seeing what it says.
- B. Discerning between what is good and what is better.
1. This is probably where we most frequently find ourselves.
 2. The Bible is not a flat book. Some matters are weightier than others.
 3. Tithing was good, but justice, mercy, and faith are better (Matthew 23:23).
 - a. Thus, helping a person in a car wreck is better than getting to church on time.
 - b. Ills. of Christmas Story and the Flagpole.
 - c. What would also help is to do a search of the use of the word "better" in Scripture.

II. Discerning Between Sin.

- A. While I don't believe in the false doctrine of "once-saved-always-saved," neither do I believe in the false doctrine of once saved, barely saved.
- B. However, there are many children of God who live each day of their lives with no security at all.
1. Ills. Of woman in Texas.
 2. Ills. Of 96-year-old woman in Oklahoma City.
 3. Ills. Of preacher's wife and being unable to read her Bible.
 4. Been with people who have faced death with fear.
- C. (Psalm 19:12-13).
- D. However, Does God want his children to live in fear of death (Hebrew 2:15)?
- E. John offers Certainty (1 John 5:13).
- F. Paul showed no doubt (2 Timothy 1:12; 4:6-8).
- G. The reason Christians have doubts today is that they have failed to discern between sin.
1. Not all sins are equal.

2. Some have failed to realize there is a difference in sins committed while walking in the light and those committed while walking in darkness.

III. Scriptural Proof that All Sins are Not the Same

- A. We have probably all heard, "A sin is a sin," but is this true?
- B. (John 19:11) – Greater Sin.
- C. (Matthew 12:31-32) – Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.
- D. (1 John 5:16-17) – Sin unto death.

IV. A Scriptural Case Study

- A. Kings were complimented by saying, "They walked in the way of David" (2 Chronicles 11:17; 2 Kings 22:2).
- B. He was a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14).
- C. But of course, he was also known as an adulterous murderer (2 Samuel 11:1-27).
- D. (1 Kings 15:5).
- E. God made a distinction between David's sins that he committed while trying to obey God and the sin he committed when he deliberately turned aside from obeying God.
- F. Ills. Of Three-year-old boy.
- G. Ills. Of Snow in our yard.
- H. (1 John 1:7) – there is a difference between sins committed while walking in the light and walking in darkness.

- Conclusion:
1. The distinction I have tried to make tonight gives no solace to the rebellious Christian or the person outside of Christ.
 2. However, these passages give hope and security to one who is walking in the light and refuses to allow sin to have dominion in his life (Romans 7:14).
 3. Friends, learn to discern! There is a difference in a sin in which we turn aside from the Lord, and one that we commit while walking in the light. The former will condemn us and the latter will be forgiven.