



EXERCISE



SPIRITUAL

DISCERNMENT

Exercise Spiritual Discernment

Jude 22–23 (NKJV)

22 And on some have compassion, making a distinction;

23 but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.



EXERCISE SPIRITUAL DISERNMENT



Exercise Spiritual Discernment

- When God speaks to us to reveal His will and His good judgment, we must be quick to obey.
- Many people who have had spiritual discernment have not heeded God's directives.
- When we fail to obey, we lose our keen ability to discern.



Exercise Spiritual Discernment

- Our consciences become seared, and our discernment becomes cloudy.
- Spiritual discernment works fully only when we desire to obey and actually do obey God's directives.



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1 Timothy 4:2 (NKJV)

speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,

1 Timothy 4:2 (NLT)

These people are hypocrites and liars, and their consciences are dead.

1 Timothy 4:2 (MSG)

These liars have lied so well and for so long that they've lost their capacity for truth.



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- An unbeliever can't have spiritual discernment because he isn't living in relationship with the Holy Spirit who gives discernment.
- A believer won't have spiritual discernment if he chooses to sin when he knows God's will and ignores it.
- No one can fully obey without the help of the Holy Spirit. Invite the Holy Spirit to help you walk in obedience after He reveals God's will and God's judgments.



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Pray,

Lord, I trust in You to give me a discerning spirit today. I trust You to guide me. I want to be spiritually sensitive in every situation I encounter.

Holy Spirit, prompt me when people ask me a question or speak to me so I might respond with what You desire for me to say. Help me to see with Your eyes and hear with Your ears. Speak to my heart.

The Holy Spirit delights in answering that prayer.

Charles F. Stanley, *When the Enemy Strikes: The Keys to Winning Your Spiritual Battles*
(Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2004), 62–63.



EXERCISE SPIRITUAL DISERNMENT



Exercise Spiritual Discernment (Jude 22–23)

- What should be the attitude of the growing Christian toward those who are being influenced by the apostates, traitors, and denouncers of the faith?
- Jude instructed his readers to exercise discernment and to act on the basis of that discernment.



Exercise Spiritual Discernment (Jude 22–23)

- He described three different kinds of people who need spiritual help. The New American Standard Bible makes this clear.



EXERCISE SPIRITUAL DISERNMENT



He Described Three Different Kinds Of People Who Need Spiritual Help

And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.



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- The doubting (v. 22). These are the people who are wavering.

2 Peter 2:13–14 (MSG)

13 Their evil will boomerang on them. They're so despicable and addicted to pleasure that they indulge in wild parties, carousing in broad daylight.

14 They're obsessed with adultery, compulsive in sin, seducing every vulnerable soul they come upon. Their specialty is greed, and they're experts at it. Dead souls!



- These people are converted, but they are not grounded in the faith.
- Our responsibility is to have mercy on them, or show compassion toward them, by seeking to lead them away from the influences of the apostates.



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- This kind of ministry demands a great deal of love and patience, and we must keep in mind that immature believers are like little children who think they know right from wrong.
- If you say no to them, they will only rebel and become more stubborn!



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- One of the best ways to draw them away from the false teachers is to magnify all that they have in Christ and to share His love for them in practical ways.

John 12:32 (KJV 1900)

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

- Make their salvation so wonderful and the Word so exciting that they will lose interest in the teachings of the apostates.



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- It is not enough merely to refute the false doctrines.
- There must also be a warmth of love that assures the young believer, “We care for you.”
- It is an open secret that false teachers prey especially on disgruntled church members.
(note Jude 16—“murmurers” and “complainers.”)
- It is important that the pastor and the people show special love and concern to new Christians and that they also minister to the mature members of the church, lest somebody stray because of neglect.



Colossians 2:18–19 (NKJV)

18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.



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Ephesians 4:11–16 (NKJV)

11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,



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15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—**16** from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

- Paul sent Timothy to the young believers in Thessalonica so that he might establish them in their faith.



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1 Thessalonians 3:1–3 (NKJV)

1 Therefore, when we could no longer endure it,
we thought it good to be left in Athens alone,
2 and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of
God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of
Christ, to establish you and encourage you
concerning your faith,
3 that no one should be shaken by these
afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are
appointed to this.

- Every young Christian needs a more mature believer to teach him how to stand and walk.



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Titus 2:1–8 (NKJV)

1 But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine:

2 that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience;

3 the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—

4 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,

5 to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.



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6 Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded,

7 in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility,

8 sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.



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- The burning (*v. 23a*). Apparently these are the people who have left the fellowship and are now a part of the apostate group.

Jude 23 (NKJV)

but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

- They need to be snatched out of the fire!



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- The angels took Lot by the hand and pulled him out of Sodom (*Gen. 19:16*), and sometimes that must be done in order to rescue ignorant and unstable believers from the clutches of false teachers.

Genesis 19:16 (NKJV)

And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city.



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Snatched Out Of The Fire

- In the Zechariah passage, they were the “*brand*” nation Israel brought back from the Babylonian Captivity and resettled in their land.
- God saw the people as a brand saved from the fire.



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Snatched Out Of The Fire

Zechariah 3:1–2 (NKJV)

1 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him.

2 And the LORD said to Satan, “The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?”



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The Dangerous

(v. 23b)

- The phrase with fear means “*with caution.*”
- In trying to help those who have erred, we must be careful not to be trapped ourselves!
- Many a would-be rescuer has been drowned himself.



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The Dangerous

(v. 23b)

- When an unstable believer has been captured by false doctrine, we must be very careful as we try to help him, for Satan can use him to defile us.
- In trying to save him, we may be stained or burned ourselves!



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Galatians 6:1–3 (NKJV)

1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.



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- The principle Jude was laying down was that stronger believers must never think they are beyond satanic influence.
- Even while serving the Lord and seeking to rescue one of His children, we can become defiled by those we want to help.
- The Old Testament Jews had to be very careful to avoid ceremonial defilement, and this included even their clothing (*Lev. 13:47ff; 14:47; 15:17*).
- If a “clean” person touched an “unclean” garment, then he was defiled.



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- We certainly must love God's people, but we must also hate sin.
- Wherever there is sin, Satan has a foothold and can go to work.



EXERCISE SPIRITUAL DISERNMENT



Defilement Spreads Rapidly And Secretly, And It Must Be Dealt With Drastically

Galatians 5:7–9 (NKJV)

7 You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?

8 This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you.

9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

- If the Jewish priest thought that a garment was infected with leprosy, he had the garment burned.



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- Not every Christian is equipped to deal with false teachers or with those they have influenced and captured.
- It takes a good knowledge of the Word, a faithful walk with God, an understanding of Satan's devices, and certainly the fullness of the Spirit of God.
- It also demands spiritual discernment.
- It is much easier to instruct new Christians and keep them away from the false teachers than it is to snatch them out of the fire.



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