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Can you correct someone openly?

Part 01

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What is discernment?

What is judgement?

Let us see how we ought to behave in the light of the scriptures.

1 Thessalonians 5:21, *But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good;* (NASB)

Paul by inspiration of our Lord gives the basic things for the Christian living namely, Prayer, contentment, being joyful and thanking God always. He also says that we ought to discern in the same manner as one the basic virtues of effective Christian life.

Immediately the church thinks it's the Pastors or the leader's responsibility. It is certainly the responsibility of the leaders but also for the entire church. The leaders do

have this as a greater responsibility but at the same time it's for everyone in the church as well.

Most of the calls were issued to the leaders in the New Testament.

1 Timothy 4:6-7, ⁶*If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.* ⁷*But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness.*

Timothy need to know the difference between the truth of God and the nonsense of the world. If Timothy couldn't tell the difference between sound doctrine and dangerous philosophy, he would not be able to protect the church and the believers.

After saying to the young Timothy apostle Paul also gives clear instructions to Timothy not to give up reading the scriptures publicly.

1 Timothy 4:13-14, ¹³*Until I come, **give attention to the public reading of Scripture**, to exhortation and teaching.* ¹⁴*Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.*

After giving the instructions of reading the scriptures he also gives another important thing

1 Timothy 4:16, Pay *close attention to yourself and to your teaching*; persevere in these things, for *as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you*.

So how we ought to discern or to judge?

Discernment:

‘DOKIMAZO’ means - to test, to examine; to interpret, to discover; to approve; to prove, to demonstrate.

‘ANAKRINO’ means - to ask questions, to examine; to evaluate, to scrutinize, to investigate; to search out.

‘DIAKRINO’ means - to make a distinction (between people); to weigh thoroughly each part.

Judgement:

‘KRINO’ means - to pass judgment on, to sentence; to mentally or judicially condemn; to conclude, to decide, to determine.

Discernment vs Judgement

Dictionary has two almost opposing definitions of the word discernment.

The first describes it as 'The ability to judge well', so we'll start by looking at this definition.

Matthew 7:1, *"Judge not, that you be not judged.*

Matthew 7:1 seems to tell us not to judge, there are many other places in Scripture that tell us we must judge.

1 Corinthians 2 15-16, ¹⁵ *But he **who is spiritual judges all things**, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. ¹⁶For "who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.*

James 5 19-20, ¹⁹ *Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, ²⁰let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.*

Hebrews 5:14, *but solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have **their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.***

John 7:24, *Do not judge according to appearance, but **judge with righteous judgment.**"*

1 Corinthians 6:5, *I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren?*

Proverbs 3:21, *My son, let them not depart from your eyes— Keep sound wisdom and discretion;*

Proverbs 10:13, *Wisdom is found on the lips of him who has understanding, But a rod is for the back of him who is devoid of understanding.*

So, what we can see in Matthew 7 is commanding us not to judge unloving, hypocritical and not vested motives.

Matthew 7:1-3, *“Judge not, that you be not judged. ²For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. ³And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?*

Because none of us are perfect so simply cannot judge harshly. The same attitude that we show to others who fall or fail, will be the attitude by which we will one day be judged.

So how can you judge someone making something which affects the body of Christ?

How do you judge someone on a personal level?

First, we will look at how we ought to judge someone who does something which affects the church?

1. Apostle Paul and Peter

This happened at the church in Antioch.

Acts 11:26, *And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.*

This church had the large population of Gentile Christians and minor population of Jewish Christians.

A Jew eating with a Gentile is not acceptable as per the Jewish law. **Acts 10:28**, *Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.*

But God did show Peter that he should not call anyone unclean because it's God who created them all. Peter had a vision from the Lord.

When the Jerusalem council met to discuss with the Apostles to discuss what should the Gentile Christians should do? Should they need to follow the Jewish custom

or what they should do. Then it was decided that there is no need to keep any of those laws and they nullified it. (Acts 15)

But when some Jews from Jerusalem came to Antioch, Peter slowly began to associate with only Jewish Christians and started eating with them only.

Galatians 2:12, *for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.*

He was fearful of the Jews from Jerusalem, maybe he may have thought the word might go to Jerusalem about him. Paul had preached to the church in Galatia that there is no divide between Jews and the Gentiles. Also, there is no difference between Male and Female.

Galatians 3:28, *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

If you look at the letter to the church in Ephesus Paul says that the traditions of circumcision or uncircumcision means nothing because Jesus removed the wall of separation.

Ephesians 2:14-15, ¹⁴ *For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,* ¹⁵ *having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace,*

Peter was guilty of (From Galatians 2:14)

- Not walking according to the Gospel,
- By Peter actions he was showing that Jewish traditions are valuable
- Also, this made salvation by grace alone was polluted,
- Gentile Christians also should follow Jewish custom and
- Finally, there was divide brought between Jew and Gentile.

How this kind of sin affects the people around them?

Can you believe Apostle Barnabas, the one who brought Paul back into the ministry, joined with Peter in playing this fool? (Galatians 2:13)

Because of Peter, Barnabas joined with him and then we see many Jews also joined with them.

Can you see the effect when God had given a position to someone how they should do their ministry? When they commit such a sin it affects the body of Christ.

I firmly believe this made Peter as a hypocrite in the eyes of Apostle Paul.

If you were Apostle Paul or one of the fellow leader what would you do? Or

What would you suggest doing to correct Peter?

Remember Peter is NOT an ordinary man. He is the chief of the Apostle, he was regarded as the leader of the Church. Even today Catholic churches believe that Peter is the main pillar of the church of Christ.

Go talk to Peter directly,

Take couple of leaders with you!

Keep in mind that just few years back only there were two people just told a lie to peter then they both of them drop dead one by one. You are not dealing with an ordinary person. So, I wonder how many leaders would have decided to come with you?

How did Paul handle this situation?

- Apostle Paul stood face to face with him.
- Paul rebuked Peter
- Paul did it in front of everyone!

Galatians 2:14, *But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?"*

Not only did Paul confronted Peter, he rebuked him and corrected him. But he also wrote about the same thing to the church in Galatians and to the wider body of Christ for everyone to know throughout the centuries. Today we are reading about it.

Lessons from Peter's fall and acceptance

1. So, if anyone trying to falter the faith of others then you should not keep quiet. Need to speak up according to the word of God.
2. Peter had no idea that he was denying the gospel, but he was doing so, not by his words, but by his actions. Christians need to become much more conscious of the implications of their actions. Let

us seek to understand the gospel more fully and to live it more consistently.

3. we need to be reminded the fallibility of the giants of the faith. When Peter along with others, was filled with the Holy Spirit spoke and God used them mightily in Acts 2 to 5. Let us be reminded that no matter how spiritual a man may be, he is always capable of sin.
4. We should learn from this passage that our authority comes from biblical principles, more than it does from our position.
5. Look at the way Peter accepted the correction from Paul and later when he writes a letter he appreciates Apostle Paul.

2Peter3:15-16, *and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, ¹⁶as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.*

This is the reason Paul always commands the elders to be careful in following the word of God.

1. Pay close attention to sound doctrine,
2. Preach the Word,
3. Guard the truth,
4. Avoid empty talk,
5. Shun worldly wisdom,
6. Turn away from false teachers,
7. Rebuke those who oppose the truth,
8. Needed to stay alert to the differences between the truth and lies,
9. To be discerning,
10. Rebuke the unsound doctrine

2. Paul names those who walked away

Demas

When Paul wrote a letter to Colossians we see Demas was there and was faithful in the ministry and serving the Lord there.

Colossians 4:14, ¹⁴ *Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you*

When Paul writes to his fellow worker Philemon he mentions about him.

Philemon 1:24, as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers.

But when Paul writes his last letter to Timothy, his spiritual son.

2 Timothy 4:10, for **Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world**, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia.

Demas had left the faith for the world.

There will be people like Judas always in your midst but it's our responsibility to discern and make them known.

3. Jesus rebuked the Pharisee's (so called Pastors of those days) harshly and openly.

Can you imagine the God who is love full of compassion and mercy pronounce the curse of the leaders?

- a) *For making salvation hard for other people (v. 13)*
- b) *For corrupting converts (v. 15)*
- c) *For rude religion (vv. 16-22)*
- d) *For neglecting what is actually important (vv. 23-24)*
- e) *For self-indulgence (vv. 25-26)*

f) For wickedness within (vv. 27-28)

g) For the murder of God's prophets (vv, 29-36)

He did not choose to do this privately but openly HE exposed in front of every one of them.

4. Jesus not only exposed them but HE also beat them up physically

We will find this in the very early of the life of Jesus and in the last week of Jesus ministry here on earth.

John chapter 2 we see that Jesus sat there made whip of chords and beat them up.

Read Matthew 21 and John 2

So, my dear brothers and sister please do NOT be fearful in exposing the cancer in the body of Christ.