

Questions

1. Read Matthew 10:16. What does it look like in practice to be both "shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves" when engaging someone spiritually?
2. Read Proverbs 20:5 and Luke 6:45. What kinds of words or repeated statements might help reveal what a person loves, fears, wants, trusts, or believes?
3. Read Matthew 7:6 and 10:14. How can we distinguish between patiently continuing to engage someone and recognizing that further conversation is no longer fruitful? What dangers are there in either giving up too quickly or refusing to disengage when we should?
4. Think about the kinds of things people around you regularly talk about: anxiety, success, injustice, relationships, death, guilt, meaning, current events. Pick a few, and discuss what question(s) could naturally move that conversation toward God, His truth, and the gospel without it feeling forced?
5. Who is one person God has regularly placed in your life right now? Which of these four areas do you most need wisdom in as you engage them: understanding the person, seeing the issue beneath the issue, discerning the right response, or recognizing a spiritual opportunity? How can your Home Group pray for you?

Need prayer? Our Prayer Team will be up front by the piano to pray with you after the 1st & 2nd services.

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ENGAGE THE WORLD

— Like Jesus —

Engaging with Discernment Various Scriptures

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Across the Gospels, Jesus demonstrates four marks of discerning engagement so that we would rely on God's wisdom rather than our own instincts as we engage the people around us.

Discernment is the ability to recognize what wisdom requires in a specific situation.

Wisdom is a gift from God and a skill that can be cultivated. (Prov. 2:6; 9:9; James 1:5)

Biblical wisdom is skill in the art of godly living.

Discern the Person

Before Jesus decides how to respond, he pays attention to the person in front of him. This is about: Who am I talking to, and how are they approaching this engagement?

A Sincere Questioner – Mark 12:28-34

A Hostile Questioner – Matthew 22:15-22

"The one who gives an answer before he listens—
this is foolishness and disgrace for him." — Proverbs 18:13

Discern the Issue Beneath the Issue

Jesus looks beyond the presenting issue to what a person's words and actions reveal about their heart. This is about: What is really going on beneath the surface?

Self-Righteousness – Luke 10:25-37

Greed – Luke 12:13-21

"Counsel in a person's heart is deep water;
but a person of understanding draws it out." — Proverbs 20:5

"...[the] mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart." — Luke 6:45

Discern the Right Response

Jesus doesn't respond to every person in the same way. This is about: What does this person and this moment require of me?

Ask a Question, Instead of Giving an Answer – Matthew 21:23-27

Direct Confrontation – Luke 11:37-54

Give a Clear Answer – Mark 12:28-31

Disengage and Move On – Matthew 10:14

4 Don't answer a fool according to his foolishness
or you'll be like him yourself.

5 Answer a fool according to his foolishness
or he'll become wise in his own eyes.

— Proverbs 26:4-5

Discern the Spiritual Opportunity

Jesus discerns open doors to move people toward God, his truth, and ultimately himself. This is about: Where is the open door to take this conversation toward God and the gospel?

Luke 13:1-5

As we engage people, we need to learn to listen for the spiritual opening already present in the conversation. Asking ourselves: Where could this conversation naturally connect to God, His truth, and the gospel?