

# ENGAGE THE WORLD

— Like Jesus —



# What is discernment?

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

**Wisdom is a gift from God.**

**“For the LORD gives wisdom.”**

**— Proverbs 2:6**

**“...if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God—who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly—and it will be given to him.**

**— James 1:5**

**Wisdom is a skill that can be cultivated.**

**“Instruct the wise, and he will be wiser still.”**

**— Proverbs 9:9**

**Biblical wisdom is skill in the art of godly living.**

## MAIN IDEA

**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.**

# **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**

**28 One of the scribes approached. When he heard them debating and saw that Jesus answered them well, he asked him, “Which command is the most important of all?”**

## **A Sincere Questioner – Mark 12:28-34**

**<sup>29</sup> Jesus answered, “The most important is Listen, Israel! The Lord our God, the Lord is one. <sup>30</sup> Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. <sup>31</sup> The second is, Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other command greater than these.”**

## **A Sincere Questioner – Mark 12:28-34**

**<sup>32</sup> Then the scribe said to him, “You are right, teacher. You have correctly said that he is one, and there is no one else except him. <sup>33</sup> And to love him with all your heart, with all your understanding, and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself, is far more important than all the burnt offerings and sacrifices.”**

## **A Sincere Questioner – Mark 12:28-34**

**<sup>34</sup> When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And no one dared to question him any longer.**

## **A Hostile Questioner – Matthew 22:15-22**

**<sup>15</sup> Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to trap him by what he said. <sup>16</sup> So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians. “Teacher,” they said, “we know that you are truthful and teach truthfully the way of God. You don’t care what anyone thinks nor do you show partiality. <sup>17</sup> Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?”**

## **A Hostile Questioner – Matthew 22:15-22**

**<sup>18</sup> Perceiving their malicious intent, Jesus said, “Why are you testing me, hypocrites? <sup>19</sup> Show me the coin used for the tax.” They brought him a denarius. <sup>20</sup> “Whose image and inscription is this?” he asked them.**

**<sup>21</sup> “Caesar’s,” they said to him. ...**

## **A Hostile Questioner – Matthew 22:15-22**

**Then he said to them, “Give, then, to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” <sup>22</sup> When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.**

# Discern the Person

**If we're going to discern the person in front of us, we first need to understand who they are and how they're approaching the conversation .**

## Discern the Person

**“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**

**<sup>25</sup> Then an expert in the law stood up to test [Jesus], saying, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”**

**<sup>26</sup> “What is written in the law?” he asked him. “How do you read it?”**

## **Self-Righteousness – Luke 10:25-37**

**27 He answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,” and “your neighbor as yourself.”**

**28 “You’ve answered correctly,” [Jesus] told him. “Do this and you will live.”**

## Self-Righteousness – Luke 10:25-37

**29 But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”**

## **Greed – Luke 12:13-21**

**<sup>13</sup> Someone from the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”**

## **Greed – Luke 12:13-21**

**<sup>15</sup>...“Watch out and be on guard against all greed, because one’s life is not in the abundance of his possessions.”**

## **Discern the Issue Beneath the Issue**

**“Counsel in a person’s heart is deep water;  
but a person of understanding draws it out.”**

**— Proverbs 20:5**

**The heart is deep. And if we’re going to wisely draw out those deep waters, we must listen and ask questions.**

# **Discern the Issue Beneath the Issue**

**“...[the] mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart.”  
— Luke 6:45**

**Our words reveal something about what’s going on in our hearts.**

# **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?**

**Discern the Right Response**  
***Ask a Question, Instead of Giving an Answer***

**Matthew 21:23-27**

**<sup>23</sup> When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, “By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority?”**

...

**Discern the Right Response**  
***Ask a Question, Instead of Giving an Answer***

**<sup>24</sup> Jesus answered them, “I will also ask you one question, and if you answer it for me, then I will tell you by what authority I do these things. <sup>25</sup> Did John’s baptism come from heaven, or was it of human origin?”**

**...**

**Discern the Right Response**  
***Ask a Question, Instead of Giving an Answer***

**They discussed it among themselves, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’” <sup>26</sup> But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we’re afraid of the crowd, because everyone considers John to be a prophet.” <sup>27</sup> So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.”**

...

**Discern the Right Response**

***Ask a Question, Instead of Giving an Answer***

**And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.**

# **Discern the Right Response**

## ***Direct Confrontation***

**Luke 11:37-54**

**<sup>37</sup> As he was speaking, a Pharisee asked him to dine with him. So he went in and reclined at the table. <sup>38</sup> When the Pharisee saw this, he was amazed that he did not first perform the ritual washing before dinner. ...**

## **Discern the Right Response**

### ***Direct Confrontation***

**<sup>39</sup> But the Lord said to him, “Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and evil. <sup>40</sup> Fools! Didn’t he who made the outside make the inside too? <sup>41</sup> But give from what is within to the poor, and then everything is clean for you.**

**Discern the Right Response**  
***Give a Clear Answer***

**Mark 12:28-31**

**The scribe who sincerely asks Jesus, “Which command is the most important of all?”**

**Jesus gave him a clear answer.**

**Discern the Right Response**  
***Disengage and Move On***

**Matthew 10:14**

**“If anyone does not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that house or town.”**

## **Discern the Right Response**

**<sup>4</sup> Don't answer a fool according to his foolishness or you'll be like him yourself.**

**<sup>5</sup> 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?**

# Discern the Spiritual Opportunity

## Luke 13:1-5

**<sup>1</sup> At that time, some people came and reported to him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.**

# Discern the Spiritual Opportunity

**Luke 13:1-5**

**<sup>2</sup>...“Do you think that these Galileans were more sinful than all the other Galileans because they suffered these things? <sup>3</sup> No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as well.**

# Discern the Spiritual Opportunity

**Luke 13:1-5**

**<sup>4</sup> Or those eighteen that the tower in Siloam fell on and killed—do you think they were more sinful than all the other people who live in Jerusalem?**

**<sup>5</sup> No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as well.”**

## **Discern the Spiritual Opportunity**

**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?**

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