

Understanding Spiritual Discernment

Exercise

Frank G. Cookingham, EvalFrank.com, January 2017, February 2017

This exercise is designed to facilitate deeper understanding of spiritual discernment individually and as a group.

Don't look at the other pages of this exercise until you have completed this page.

Describe your understanding of spiritual discernment without referring to any resources. Understanding begins with what is already in your mind; write whatever comes to mind; then organize that material into a definition that makes sense to you.

Your Thoughts

Your Initial Definition

| Definitions Spiritual Discernment | Your Reflections: What you agree/disagree with; What you want to explore. |
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| <p>This is the heart of spiritual discernment – being able to distinguish the voice of the world from the voice of God, to have a sense that “this is right” or “this is wrong.”ⁱ</p> | |
| <p>Discernment is the skill of understanding and applying God’s Word with the purpose of separating truth from error and right from wrong. It is a task in which we attempt to see things as God sees them. People who are discerning have a heightened ability to see and understand issues from God’s perspective. Empowered by his Spirit, they strive for and are given an understanding of what is pleasing to God and what is not. They do this by understanding God through his Word, the Bible, and by applying the wisdom of the Bible to their lives. All the while it is God who gives the motivation, the desire, the ability, and the power to both know and discern (page 71).ⁱⁱ</p> | |
| <p>Discernment involves separating what is primary from what is secondary, and seeking guidance on the primary while keeping the secondary from restricting your understanding of the primary.ⁱⁱⁱ</p> | |
| <p>Spiritual discernment is the process of opening our lives and decisions to God and being attentive to what we see with the aid of the divine Light. When we open all our decisions to the Spirit, we learn to see more clearly what is true and real (page 5).^{iv}</p> | |
| <p>Discernment is “[seeing] through the things, ideas, and noise of this world to recognize what is true.” (page 231)^v</p> | |

Your Tentative Definition; Spiritual Discernment
This may be the same as your initial definition;
Or it may be similar or somewhat different.

How will you apply your definition in your work?

ⁱ From <http://www.gotquestions.org/spiritual-discernment.html>

ⁱⁱ From Tim Challies, *The Discipline of Spiritual Discernment*, Crossway, 2008.

ⁱⁱⁱ Source unknown.

^{iv} From Nancy L. Bieber, *Decision Making & Spiritual Discernment: The Sacred Art of Finding your Way*, Skylight Paths, 2010.

^v From Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* (Revised and Expanded Edition), Orbis Books, 2011.