

Discernment In Troubling Times

Matthew 16:5-12 NIV

1. WE ARE VULNERABLE TO FALSE TEACHING.

“The human mind has a natural inclination towards vanity and errors, when we are surrounded by wicked inventions, spurious doctrines, and other plagues of the same sort, nothing is easier than to depart from the true and simple purity of the Word of God.”

—John Calvin, Commentary, vol. XVII.

2. HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT’S TRUE? EPISTEMOLOGY.

Social epistemology: What does Everyone say?

Empiricism: What does Science say?

Existentialism: What does Your Gut say?

3. CHRISTIAN EPISTEMOLOGY: ASK, “WHERE IS IT WRITTEN?”

Acts 17:10–12 *As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. As a result, many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.*

5 Rules of Biblical Interpretation (hermeneutics)

1. Identify the genre of the text.
2. Understand the text in its context.
3. Read the text for its plain and obvious meaning.
4. Use the Bible to interpret the Bible, so that it is consistent with itself.
5. Search for how the text points to Christ.

4. PRAY FOR DISCERNMENT AND WISDOM.

1 Kings 3:7–10 *“Now, LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?”* The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this.

5. LEARN AND APPLY THE PRINCIPLES AND PROMISES OF THE BIBLE.

Josh 23:14 *You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the LORD your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed.*

Josh 1:8-9 *Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.*

Psalms 19:7 *The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul.*

Romans 15:4 *Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.*

6. BE ON YOUR GUARD AGAINST THE YEAST OF _____.

“Whoever desires to become honestly a disciple of Christ, must be careful to keep his mind pure from those leavens; and if he has already imbibed in them, he must labor to purify himself till none of their polluting effects remain.” —John Calvin