



Is This Real?

Part 1: Becoming A Discerning People

Brian Coles
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WORSHIP

Begin your group with a time of worship. If someone in your group can lead worship, invite them to lead two or three songs. Alternatively, consider using one or more of these songs from our Sunday morning worship time:

- **In Christ Alone** (*Bethel*)
- **Washed** (*Elevation Rhythm*)
- **Echo Holy** (*Red Rocks Worship*)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- 1 Kings 3:9-10
- Colossians 1:9-14
- Ephesians 1:15-23
- Philippians 1:9-11

OPENING PRAYER

Open your time together in prayer.

OVERVIEW

In a world flooded with misinformation, deep fakes, and shifting cultural values, how do we become people who can recognize truth? This week Pastor Brian introduced the concept of discernment — not just for small everyday choices, but for the high-stakes decisions of life. This guide will help your group dig deeper into what it means to pursue and practice discernment as followers of Jesus.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Becoming a discerning people starts with humbly approaching God and asking Him to give us discerning hearts.
2. Discernment is essential to recognizing God's absolute truth and understanding His objective moral law.
3. Discernment is essential to following Jesus and walking in our purpose.
4. We continually seek God for more and more discernment.
5. The enemy is the father of lies; his only desire is to distort the truth.
6. The Holy Spirit has been given to us to guide us into the truth.

OPENING ACTIVITY

Before diving into discussion, take two to three minutes as a group to pray Solomon's prayer together in your own words. Ask God specifically to give each person in the room a discerning heart. Let someone close by reading Philippians 1:9-11, where Paul prays that love would abound in knowledge and depth of insight so that believers may discern what is best.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Opening

1. When you hear the word "discernment," what is the first thing that comes to mind? Before this sermon, how would you have defined it?
2. Pastor Brian listed some of the high-stakes decisions that require discernment — taking a job, choosing a relationship, medical decisions for a loved one, raising children. Which of these resonates most with you personally, and why?
3. Have you ever made a decision without discernment and experienced consequences that were more severe or permanent than you expected? Without sharing anything too personal, what did that experience teach you?

Going Deeper

4. Pastor Brian described discernment as acting like a mental filter to "sift apart" what is real, useful, or true. In your daily life, what are the biggest sources of noise or misinformation that make that sifting difficult right now?

5. The sermon walked through a chain of logic: if God is the source of reality and goodness, then truth is not a human invention and our choices carry real moral weight. Where do you find that line of thinking compelling? Where do you find it challenging to hold onto in everyday life?
6. Pastor Brian made this statement about consequences: "Your moral guilt and shame can be taken away, but the consequences of our sins are oftentimes way more severe and permanent than we expect." How does understanding that reality change the way you approach decisions?
7. The sermon pointed to Genesis 3:1 and Matthew 4:6 as examples of how the enemy works — first challenging God's instructions, then challenging the identity of God's children. Where do you see those two tactics showing up in your own life or in culture today?
8. Read John 16:13-14 together, where Jesus describes the Spirit of truth who will guide believers into all truth. What does it look like practically for your group to rely on the Holy Spirit as a guide rather than just your own reasoning or feelings?

Reflection Questions

9. Pastor Brian offered five questions to ask when trying to discern something. Walk through them together as a group:
 - Is this Biblical?
 - Have you prayed about it?
 - Have you talked to anyone?
 - Do you have the witness of peace in your heart?
 - Have you examined your motives?

Is there a decision someone in the group is currently facing that you could apply these questions to together right now?

10. Of the three prayers for discernment Pastor Brian highlighted — Colossians 1:9-14, Ephesians 1:15-23, and Philippians 1:9-11 — which one speaks most directly to where you are in life right now, and why?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION (10 Mins)

Choose one or more of the following to commit to before your group meets again:

Personally:

- Select one of the three Scripture prayers (Colossians 1:9-14, Ephesians 1:15-23, or Philippians 1:9-11) and pray it over yourself every day this week. Write it somewhere you will see it.
- Identify one area of your life where you have been making decisions without intentionally applying the five discernment questions. Begin applying them this week.

In Your Relationships:

- Share the five discernment questions with a family member or close friend and invite them to use the questions together with you when facing a decision.
- Identify one person in your life who models godly discernment well. Reach out to them this week and ask them how they seek wisdom.

As a Group:

- Pray the prayers from Colossians 1, Ephesians 1, and Philippians 1 together at the start of your next group meeting, inserting each other's names into the text.
- As a group, discuss what it would look like to create a culture of accountability where members feel safe bringing real decisions to the group and walking through the five discernment questions together.

Closing Thought and Prayer

Close your time together by returning to Solomon's request in 1 Kings 3:9-10, where Solomon asked God for a discerning heart to govern well and distinguish between right and wrong — and God was pleased. Invite each group member to voice one area of their life where they are specifically asking God for discernment right now. Then pray over one another, asking the Spirit of truth to guide your group into all truth in the weeks ahead.