

Equus March 7, 2010

Phillipians 4:1 My dear, dear friends! I love you so much. I do want the very best for you. You make me feel such joy, fill me with such pride. Don't waver. Stay on track, steady in God. 2 I urge Euodia and Syntyche to iron out their differences and make up. God doesn't want his children holding grudges. 3 And, oh, yes, Syzygus, since you're right there to help them work things out, do your best with them. These women worked for the Message hand in hand with Clement and me, and with the other veterans - worked as hard as any of us. Remember, their names are also in the book of life. 4 Celebrate God all day, every day. I mean, revel in him! 5 Make it as clear as you can to all you meet that you're on their side, working with them and not against them. Help them see that the Master is about to arrive. He could show up any minute! 6 Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. 7 Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life. 8 Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious - the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. 9 Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies.

Last week we talked...I talked... you listened...maybe...about vision and seeing and perspective and point of view and Gods gift of sight to the blind...those who know it and those who don't know it. I focused on the recognizing our inability to see and judge for ourselves and we prayed for Christ to give us His vision and discernment through the Holy Spirit.

We will talk more today about discernment.

Phillipians 4:8 KJV Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

So... what is true

What is honest

What is just

What things are pure

What does 'of good report' even mean

What are virtue and praise

I am not going to try and define any of these here today it would take too long ...I would do a poor job of it...and some of you would be cured if you were suffering from insomnia
Instead I am going to let you do it...in you own time

I would like to define discernment and will use an article by Paula Marolewski who you will soon recognise as the writer of this article that I'm about to read if you haven't already.

What is really involved in Christian discernment? Is it something mystical? An inner sense? Or is it more practical than that?

Hebrews 5:14 notes that discernment is the ability to recognize good and evil: "Solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil." But you might say that recognizing good and evil is the end product of discernment. What about the actual process of discernment: how do we get to the point of recognizing good from evil? How do we gain that ability? What is involved in discernment? If we know the process, we will get the product.

The process begins with establishing a solid definition. The American Heritage Dictionary defines discernment as: "To detect or perceive with the eye or the mind; to perceive the distinctions of [which can be considered "to define"]; to discriminate."

To detect. To define. To discriminate. Three "D's" that define "discernment."

To detect. The first aspect of discernment is detection. Put simply: open your eyes! Be observant. Pay attention. Scripture commands us to "be sober" (I Thess. 5:8), and to be "on the alert" (I Peter 5:8).

Remember what the Bible says about Satan and sin and evil: that people fall prey to "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life" (I John 2:16). That "each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust" (James 1:13). That there are people who "hold fast to themselves for an evil purpose; they talk of laying snares secretly; they ... devise injustices ... for the inward thought and the heart of a man are deep" (Psalm 64:5-6).

The implication is that evil is often disguised, camouflaged, or hidden. You have to be watching out for it. Satan doesn't walk around with a sign around his neck that says, "Satan: Watch Out!" In fact, the Bible teaches that he often appears as an "angel of light" (II Cor. 11:14). He is a deceiver - "a liar, and the father of lies" (John 8:44). You have to keep your eyes open, or you will lose the battle before you ever knew there was a fight.

To define. The second aspect of discernment is to define what you see. First, you have to see what's around you. Then, you have to think about what defines it. What are the characteristics of this thing, this thought, this situation? Why do I want this thing, this

goal? How is this the same or different from other good or evil things I am familiar with?

To discriminate. First, you detect something. Then, you define it. Finally, you have to decide about it. "I've thought about this thing, this thought, this situation, this decision in my mind. These are its characteristics. Now, what does the Bible say about this? What does my reason tell me about this? What do trustworthy Christians think about this? What is God's Spirit telling me about this?"

This is where you are deciding if something is good or evil. After that, it is up to you to obey God, or to disobey him. Remember, the spiritual discipline of discernment - like all spiritual disciplines - is meant to bring us closer to God. Discernment helps us to recognize good and evil, and therefore, if we choose the good, to live a holy life. In doing so, it strengthens and deepens our relationship to God.

Detecting, defining, and discriminating: three very practical "D's" that define the art of Christian discernment.

a fine summary...But there is a missing element

Oswald Chambers Feb 28 Contemporary Classics

Genuine saints will discern whatsoever things are true, just, pure, lovely, and of good report.

True holiness discerns virtuous and praiseworthy people and deeds and delights in these.

The discerning of spirits is one of the gifts of the Spirit.

Cor 12:10 He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and to another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to know whether it is really the Spirit of God or another spirit that is speaking. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, and another is given the ability to interpret what is being said.

Real discernment does not consist of the vague impressions of a lively imagination.

Discernment works by the Word of God.

The Holy Spirit glorified Jesus; and the Spirit-filled, sanctified saint intuitively discerns any person, teaching, or doctrine that does not glorify Him as Lord.

A sanctified person immediately recognizes spiritual error because the Holy Spirit will bring to remembrance all that Jesus taught. The Holy Spirit will lead one into all truth and will help every “sheep of the Lord” to detect a stranger’s voice.

Spiritual discernment is keenly sensitive to the glory of God.

A spiritually discerning saint walks in the light and with the Light who is Jesus Christ.

Oswald Chambers finished with this prayer thought: I desire to know truth. Grant to me, Lord, wisdom to discern the truth.

Jesus Christ looked for and focused on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious - the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse
The only thing he ever denounced was anyone and anything that stood in the way of God’s people getting closer to Him.

Only a heart surrendered to Him will allow us to do the same unfaithfully.

Alas! The missing element...lets digress and expand...two of my favorite things to do...

We bought a horse this week

Much thought and prayer and careful evaluation goes into a decision like this...unless you are a member of my family.

Note to self...when wife says “We’re going with Cher to look at a horse; do you wanna come?”

The correct answer is “no, not really.I really need to put my tools away, and sharpen my iceskates”

Further note to self... 'look at a horse' means 'shop for a horse'... funny we never go to the market and say 'I'm gonna go look at some milk, or look at some pasta, or look at some mayonaise...

Discernment...

We are not new to horses...

SuSu and I had a horse in Arizona so we know the drill

Diamond

A paint... that would be a horse of some different colors.. half quarterhorse if I remember correctly... that would make her an eighth horse... I suppose... I'm no expert in horse math...

Diamond was reputed to be very good at barrel racing and at dressage... things we knew nothing about... we were seen by our horse as staff at her personal spa... she enjoyed a two year vacation at our expense... at the end we sold her back to the folks we bought her from at a 20% discount...

This whole experience for me falls under the 'high cost of education' category...

We still ride occasionally, in the jungle of Belize near San Ignacio, the ruins of Copan in Honduras, in the Galapagos Islands, on the beach at the other side of the bay...

Renting a horse is actually pretty inexpensive, especially compared... to buying one.

There is a special relief for this situation in that we are putting 'Serrucho' in the equine therapy program at Rancho El Camino to work with abused, or other special needs kids.

But done is done and I brought this up... this horse thing... not to prove my weak humanity and poor parenting abilities... but to illustrate and expand on the missing point I mentioned...

The relationship between horse and rider is remarkable... almost unique...

I suppose that camels and elephants are similar but my exposure has been limited and I hope to keep it so...

Honey we're going to look at an elephant... wanna come...

The relationship is remarkable in that when you get it right the horse and rider pair has a 'one flesh' quality about it...
You feel and respond to the horse and it feels and responds to you...the horse we are buying is very responsive

I noticed early on that a horse is not a bike or a car...It is intelligent and forms a relationship with the rider...though it is possible to ride without getting inside the horses head...it is not possible to ride well...the relationship matters...bring a carrot...
A horse has a strong will initially, a will that does not want to include a rider...it has to be 'broken'
Sound familiar?...it's will is to reject it's destiny so it's will must be broken

...to fulfill it's purpose it's will must be broken
When we speak of breaking a horse we speak of breaking it's will
There are numerous approaches to this art...some cruel and some mystically gentle...(see horse whispering)
The goals are the same.
First to simply accept the lead rope, then the bridle, then the bit, then the saddle, then the rider.

Once broken the horse will always retain some will...
To return too fast to the barn...
To take corners too sharply...
To stop and feed...
To continue when he should stop...
To stop when he should continue...
To run when he should walk...
To walk when he should run...
But the greater the mental distance from the rider...the more latitude in the attitude of the horse...
Sound familiar?

The good rider will engage the horse until the relationship is established...and then will ride as one flesh

In this analogy have no doubt that we are the horses and then consider:

The good rider has somewhere that he is going...the horse may or may not know...guessing too much waste time and energy...We need to wait on instruction from the master.

We need to be sensitive to the guidance of the master...and respond immediately

The good rider has a plan and strategy for the journey ahead... one that our horse brains can't begin to comprehend...we need to be obedient and trust the rider

The good rider prepares for the wellbeing and needs of the horse...in accordance with his plan...we must push on even when our limbs tire. He feels our pain and will not let us stumble and fall

Avatar if time permits...

Na'vi...Neural interface...with direhorse/pa'li (Equidirus hoplites)
Neytiri

Real discernment can only occur where man has been set apart...sanctified...sainted... for God's purpose...where the words of Christ and the urgings of the Holy Spirit lead him to wisdom and knowledge

So that essential element...brokenness...surrender...the heart and voice of Jesus beating in your chest and renewing your mind...bound together one flesh...one will...riding off into the sunset

One flesh...one will

As Oswald Chambers put it..."The Holy Spirit glorified Jesus; and the Spirit-filled, sanctified saint intuitively discerns any person, teaching, or doctrine that does not glorify Him as Lord.

A sanctified person immediately recognizes spiritual error because the Holy Spirit will bring to remembrance all that Jesus taught."

Prayer...

BTW 'of good report' means of good reputation, or standing, of good name, honor