

Discernment - 4 Discerning Books, Sermons, Websites

Outline

Introduction

1. Anything you allow into your mind shapes your beliefs.
2. All media are produced by humans and are therefore fallible and not the Bible
3. Check the messenger and the message

Books

1. Who is the author
2. Who endorses the book
3. What do the reviews say
4. Scan the book
5. Check the Table of Contents
6. Check the Bibliography
7. Think as you read
8. Does it line up with Scripture exactly?
9. Is it orthodox?
10. Is it logically sound?
11. Does the author show integrity or does he twist truth, Scripture and logic?

Sermons

1. Whether you enjoyed, were blessed by, or thought the speaker is brilliant are irrelevant.
2. "Is it the truth" is all that matters.
3. Listen with an open Bible and check (no dimmed lights)
4. Is what he says confirmed by Scripture?
5. Does his logic hold up?
6. Keep making connections between the various components of the message.
7. Go away and think it through.
8. What are the implications of the teaching if taken to the next level?
9. Does the Spirit witness or is there a check?

Websites

1. Who is behind the website?
2. Read every section under "about"/"who we are" including:
 - a. What we believe
 - b. Staff / leadership
 - c. Mission / Purpose statement
3. Check statement of faith carefully, or is there not one?
4. Check all the "links" – who does it connect to?
5. Check the content
6. Search rest of internet based on unique phrases
7. Are there many typos, spelling and grammatical errors?

Study Questions – Discerning Books, Sermons, Websites

Introduction

Think about this for a minute – what media in the past has damaged your thinking and shaped you in a negative way?

Before you brought that media into your life, did you check the messenger or the message?

Books

On average, how much time do you spend checking out a book before you order it? What books do you have in your home that really need to be destroyed? Think through the list in the outline for this section, what would be the top five criteria? Would it be worth the effort to memorize this list for future reference?

Could negative reviews actually be a help in reviewing the credibility of a book?

Scanning the book, its Table of Contents, its Bibliography, the contents all take time and effort – how should you justify this use of your time?

What will help you "think" carefully and logically as you read through a book?

Bottom Line Questions:

Does this book line up with Scripture, it is orthodox, is it logically sound and does the author show integrity, not twisting the truth of God's Word in an illogical way?

Sermons

Have you ever been dazzled by some preacher's eloquence, diction, or refinement of speech?

How much does his giftedness really matter?

Do you always bring your Bible when you hear a message in church or on the internet?

Does your church encourage this practice?

If we are lazy thinkers will we be able to think logically through a sermon?

Is this sermon worth a closer examination and will it hold water tomorrow?

Ask this question, "what are the implications if taken to the next level?"

Lastly – pray for the Holy Spirit to lead and give a witness or give a check.

Websites

Think about this statement, "in order to discern a Biblical site you must spend time and effort to investigate and discover whether the site is something you should be looking at." How does this truth relate to other facets of seeking truth?

In finding out "who" is behind the website, what questions should apply from previous sessions?

If you cannot find any section that lists a doctrinal statement of faith what should you do?

Why do you think the "links" section of a website can be important?

If there are unique phrases and you take the time to copy these and check them and if plagiarism is a problem...what does that tell you about the character of the writer?

What 'may' textual mistakes, typos, spelling, and grammatical errors mean?

Conclusion: What wisdom from the Lord have you gleaned from this study?