

# Spiritual Discernment

by John Murray

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual discernment, proving all things, holding fast to what is good, and abstaining from evil to maintain a consistent walk with God.*

**Duration:** 51:22

**Scripture:** Psalm 91:11, Acts 17:11, 1 Thessalonians 5:21

**Topics:** "Discernment"

## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of three exercises of the mind: proving, holding, and abstaining. He explains that these exercises are crucial in navigating the challenges of life. The preacher encourages the congregation to not simply accept things at face value, but to search the scriptures daily to discern the truth. He warns against the temptation to always seek something new and encourages the congregation to hold fast to what is good. Lastly, he urges them to abstain from anything that even appears evil. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the need for discernment, steadfastness, and purity in the Christian walk.

## Transcript

...the fifth chapter of the first epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians in comparison... ...with a daily search in all the truth.

This commentary... ...and yet there is... ...the search... ...now there's evidences... ...and it is a virtue... ...there are a great many people who can listen... ...to something that is... ...and they'll also listen to something... ...why can the people listen perhaps from the radio... ...to a... ...it is just because... ...they are carried about with every wind of gospel... ...by the flight of men... ...they go with wind and time... ...they are carried away... ...and they do not... ...do... ...what? ...for a preacher of the gospel... ...and it is one of the most... ...experiences... ...that is emblazoned on that witness... ...Paul to the Thessalonians... ...is the delightment that is enjoined in our text... ...through all things... ...oh, that which is good... ...abstain from all

appearance of evil... ...and of course it is very... ...this text doesn't enumerate... ...all the exercises of mind... ...but nevertheless it does instance... ...three moving... ...holding... ...and abstaining... ...and you know very well... ...if you have any experience... ...of the exigencies of life... ...how important these three exercises of mind... ...after all if we are honest... ...holding... ...and abstaining... ...and it is on these three that I wish to... ...in the very order in which the apostle gives these... ...in order to put them in more logical order... ...but... ...there must be some way... ...when Paul says... ...who... ...he doesn't mean what we

mean by... ..proving a proposition... ..a mathematical proposition... ..giving as it were a demonstration... ..that

something is true... ..in mathematics you have a certain proposition... ..you try from the hypothesis... ..you don't as it were... ..try... ..he is using the word prove... ..in the sense of test... ..of trial... ..in the very same sense... ..as we have in Albertan... ..when John says... ..try... ..now the reason why... ..is... ..that the defects... ..are not always from the purpose... ..if you have to prove a horse... ..that you were made by as a farmer... ..you have to prove him... ..as the seller says... ..you can take him home... ..and prove him... ..or test him... ..well... ..it's perfectly obvious... ..that the horse wouldn't be a horse with three legs... ..and that horse may be more useless... ..than in fashion... ..sometimes more dangerous... ..and so

you have to test him... ..you have to put him in harness... ..you have to put him in a cart... ..you have to put him under yoke... ..now Paul doesn't mean all things in the universe... ..he's not writing to these... ..to these... ..these... ..Catholonians... ..and asking them to prove... ..all that mathematical proposition... ..all things that are of immediate concern to them... ..in connection with the truth of the gospel... ..all things that may be alleged... ..to be the truth of the gospel... ..these things... ..and the reason why they are to be proved... ..why they are to be tested... ..is that error... ..or wrong... ..is not always... ..immediately apparent... ..if that is the reason why you prove a horse... ..why you prove an automobile... ..that the defect

may not be immediately apparent... ..how much more... ..does that apply... ..to those things... ..of which the apostle Paul is here speaking... ..it's just because there is... ..John said, may I quote again... ..try the spirits... ..whether they be of God... ..for many false prophets... ..and it's just because... ..who... ..he is to be... ..the tamper... ..a lot of people would... ..the eye... ..oh, that misses the point... ..that with which... ..was this... ..that was what made it supreme to the woman... ..it wasn't the lust for the flesh... ..that was the... ..an element of truth... ..in that which the tamper said to the woman... ..because later on... ..and so you discover that there was a very subtle twist... ..in connection with something that was true...

...and that's... ..the strategy... ..to divert... ..or distort... ..that... ..and that is precisely... ..paradise never comes in the form... ..of blatant... ..unmixed... ..untruth... ..never... ..paradise in the church of God always comes under the guise of truth... ..and that's the strategy of the... ..you remember again another example of the great arch enemy strategy... ..when he tempted our Lord in the wilderness... ..and one of... ..and one of these temptations... ..you remember... ..he quoted this scripture... ..just as it is... ..in the... ..he shall give each angel... ..charge over thee... ..to keep thee in all thy ways... ..lest thou dash thy truth... ..just as he quoted... ..a certain element of truth... ..to ease... ..ye shall... ..but what was

wrong with it... ..when this was taken... ..quotation of the scripture... ..it just... ..it was applied in a situation... ..where... ..on the part of our Lord... ..who obeyed it... ..would have been an act of pre-function... ..that's why... ..the apostle Paul... ..just like the other writers... ..of the New Testament... ..is so insistent... ..in telling us... ..true moral things... ..chapters... ..there may be an element of truth... ..and you require that discernment... ..so that you can discern what is true... ..and distinguish it... ..from what is false... ..there may be a great truth... ..but it may be misapplied... ..it may be distorted... ..from its true meaning... ..from its true purpose... ..and true desire... ..and therefore you must prove... ..true

moral things... ..you know... ..those men who are circumcised... ..the instrument... ..he dissembled... ..and the Jews likewise... ..dissembled with him... ..and Paul says... ..when... ..he needed to be reproved... ..he has been carried away... ..with such a stimulus... ..which hits at the very center... ..in that epistle to the Galatians... ..to such an extent... ..that he said... ..if we... ..are angels from heaven... ..and preach unto everyone... ..the other gospel... ..and that which we have received... ..let it be anathema... ..and it is just because... ..sometimes good men... ..are the instruments... ..of propagating untruth... ..the instruments of error... ..are the instruments of well-doing... ..that it is all the more important... ..for us... ..to

take heed to this injunction... ..prove all things... ..all facts... ..that which is good... ..and experience... ..that... ..he has given us a standard... ..in which there is no deception... ..in which there is no deduction... ..he has given us in his words... ..that standard which is perfect... ..and which is in perfect manner... ..let us pray... ..if we give heed... ..to... ..if any of you lack wisdom... ..let me ask the cross... ..who giveth us for all men... ..literally in their greatest knots... ..and it shall be given him... ..but let him ask him... ..and blessed be God... ..he hath not only given us... ..an objective criteria... ..that one rarely does astray... ..as we in simplicity... ..and humility... ..subject ourselves to it... ..but... ..to lead

us... ..you remember what John said... ..these things like I unto you... ..concern them that seduce you... ..but the anointing... ..which ye have received of him... ..abide with him... ..and ye need not contend him... ..and teach him... ..ye have anointed him from before him... ..and ye know all things... ..and my friend... ..my beloved... ..I will reiterate... ..that which the apostle John... ..by the inspiration of the spirit gave us... ..these things like I unto you... ..concerning them that seduce you... ..and bear in mind... ..the example that is given to us... ..or whether ye have... ..never touched the spiritual... ..they brought everything to the test... ..possessing other criteria... ..and they were undoubtedly led... ..my beloved... ..that you have an

objective criteria... ..that never itself leads astray... ..we may distort it... ..we may divert it from its true meaning... ..and pop up and define... ..but itself never leads us astray... ..give unto all who believe... ..that the spirit... ..with he being evil... ..know how to give good gifts unto you children... ..how much wars shall the heavenly cause... ..you'll find oftentimes in the New Testament... ..a great deal of emphasis... ..being of one mind is the same thing... ..as the unity of the spirit... ..being of one mind... ..and my friend... ..why is it... ..that we are so often... ..why is it... ..that we do not have... ..that attainment... ..of being of one mind... ..is just because... ..of our own pride... ..our own high-mindedness... ..our own

conceit... ..as to the illumination of the whole... ..when in the New Testament... ..it is so frequently said... ..be ye all of one mind... ..be of one mind in the Lord... ..but it is enjoying... ..the people of God... ..because they have... ..an impartial criteria... ..and because they have... ..an impartial illuminator... ..who beholds them... ..now in the second place... ..we have the... ..this injunction of course... ..is very closely related... ..to the other... ..we don't have these... ..in disjunction... ..the one from the other... ..who hold fast... ..that which is good... ..when the second... ..of course is the... ..is the... ..you see there is... ..to make relationships... ..there are plenty people... ..and they are... ..they have a great deal of...

...intellectual discernment... ..and discrimination... ..but just for their own amusement... ..and there are a great many people... ..indeed... ..who will listen... ..to addresses... ..and listen to sermons... ..and they are... ..just as a matter of... ..mental gymnastics... ..well you see... ..that's the very thing... ..that the

apostle Paul is... ..is aiming his dart against... ..who was in... ..hold fast... ..discrimination... ..this is... ..now this injunction... ..hold fast... ..that which is good... ..of course is... ..against... ..a very common... ..error... ..a very common temptation... ..and the common temptation... ..against which this is directed... ..is the temptation... ..just to fall in line... ..with... ..with novelty... ..to go with wind

and time... ..you know one of the most... ..dispressing features... ..of... ..the leaders... ..in the church of... ..or at least... ..ever brand of theology... ..is most popular... ..at a particular time... ..within the past... ..and then there came along... ..another brand of theology... ..about... ..the... ..the other brand of theology... ..and that practically... ..carried... ..today... ..and it has been... ..carried today... ..at the present time... ..and a great many... ..who were... ..of the literal... ..brand... ..have been so influenced... ..by the... ..impact... ..of this party... ..and theology... ..that they have been... ..carried away with it... ..well it's just this... ..that men are not able... ..to stand up... ..against... ..that

particular... ..unless they are... ..searching for... ..something that is... ..new... ..something that is... ..novel... ..something that is... ..that is different... ..from the old... ..and they have not been... ..willing to hold... ..fast... ..that which is... ..good... ..my friends... ..why has our... ..reformation heritage... ..fallen upon... ..such... ..such evil... ..why in the last... ..say... ..one hundred... ..and why is there so much... ..as it were hobnobbing... ..why is there so much... ..disposition... ..why is it that the... ..reformation heritage... ..is not held fast... ..it's just because... ..the Church of God... ..where to we have... ..already attained... ..that is blocked... ..by the prayer rules... ..this doesn't mean... ..there is

to be no... ..progression... ..in the Church of God... ..it doesn't mean... ..that there is to be no... ..progression... ..for the individual... ..believer... ..which God has... ..been given us... ..in His Word... ..whenever there is... ..a true... ..trance of Christ... ..there is progress... ..of the Lord Jesus Christ... ..and so... ..hold fast... ..that which is... ..good... ..but if we hold fast... ..that which is... ..good... ..we shall gain more... ..to whom... ..to him that hath... ..to him shall be given... ..and he shall have... ..abundance... ..all parts... ..that to which you have... ..attained... ..knowingly be... ..and there's always... ..the danger... ..that we just... ..have blessed God... ..so it must be... ..constant... ..hold fast... ..

...that everything... ..that is good... ..is good... ..and everything... ..that is old... ..is obsolete... ..great... ..don't my friend... ..be enfeued... ..with the notion... ..that you must... ..keep up... ..with the time... ..that God... ..has... ..that you must... ..are... ..involved... ..that which is involved... ..at the present... ..carried away... ..with his own impact... ..the other two... ..are positive... ..two positives... ..but here are negative... ..and it's very likely... ..that you might be... ..disposed to think... ..it's far... ..and more important... ..to abstain... ..from all... ..you go back... ..to Eden... ..one of the particular... ..commandments... ..indeed it was... ..what happened to be... ..the spherical commandment...

...and it was a negative... ..for us... ..those who have got... ..each of the three... ..of knowledge... ..of good and evil... ..for in the day... ..that we deserve... ..they shall truly die... ..well it was negative... ..because there was... ..a liability... ..to sin... ..if there had been... ..no liability... ..to sin... ..there would be... ..no need... ..of a negative... ..well as you see... ..there'd be no negatives... ..in heaven... ..because there'd be... ..no liability... ..to sin... ..and there'd be no need... ..for... ..exhortation... ..or commandment... ..in a negative form... ..but there was a liability... ..to sin... ..and therefore... ..God said... ..don't... ..ask not... ..why are so many... ..of the ten commandments... ..in negative

form... ..eight of them... ..only two of them... ..are... ..are... ..are directly positive...

All the others are, first of all, negative--thou shalt have no other gods before me, thou shalt not make unto me any graven image before worship, thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbours, thou shalt not have it. Why so many in negative form? Well, you know, you must be positive, and you know that is negative.

And all acts of immorality, and all acts of out-delinquency, the word of God is negative. So why is it negative? It is negative because of sin. The word of God is realistic, you see, not idealistic.

It's real. It deals with real situations. And that's its grandeur.

It's not something you wear up in the clouds. Christianity is something that deals with reality, don't you see? That's why it's negative. Thou shalt not, and don't be afraid of, oh, it may be some, because there are the negative in the word, appear to be evil to someone.

Oh, the divine will judge not according to the appearance, but just like His judgment. And you know, there's a lot of, that very situation, in another of his epistles, First Epistle of Timothy, the fourth chapter. At the beginning, Now the Spirit speaketh, You would think that the unbred, theoretical heresy, Speaking lies and hypocrisy, Having, what's he dealing with? He's dealing with a certain prohibitionism, that they hold them all at that particular time.

Forbidding to marry, And commanding to abstain from meats which God hath created, To be received with thanksgiving, Of them which believe and know the truth, For every creature of God is good, And nothing to be refused, If it be received with thanksgiving, For it is sanctified, By the word of God and prayer. Yes, there were those of ethics, Who were going to arise, Or who were arising at that particular time, And the apostle Paul, Called the doctrine of these ethics, Whereby it prohibited certain things, Which God created to be received with thanksgiving, By honest and propaganda, Of seducing spirits, And doctrines of demons. And that's what the Prophet, In a very large extent, told itself out.

When the devil is laughing up his sleeve all the time, Because it's after all the propaganda, Of seducing spirits, From every form. When our version was made, Of course, they wanted to, There's absolute prohibition, And that's the only absolute prohibition, The absolute prohibition of sin. And it is absolute.

And here we have an absolute, For which there must be no deviation, And with which there must be no compromise. Every form of sin, Every form of evil, Abstains from it. Now that's very practical.

How often do you find the argument, That we may just do a little evil, And a greater good will come from it. Well, you know, that's just principle. You're confronted with it in business.

You're confronted with it in your everyday life. In your dealings with your fellow men. You don't have to go out into the business world, With its trials and its tribulations, In order to be confronted with this.

You're confronted with it in your home. You young people are confronted with it in the school. Oh, just tell a little lie, To cover up a bad situation.

Tell a little lie, as it were, To protect your neighbors. Just a little untruth, Nobody will know about it. Because you're the only person who happens to know, And just put a little twist in it, In order to protect yourself.

There must be no deviation from the truth there. It's necessary. Well, you're perhaps confronted with it in your business.

When you say, Well, I have to live. If you're going to live in this world, You just have to do a little dishonesty. You have to be just a little dishonest here, And a little dishonest there.

Because after all, I have to get along in the world. I have to live. You see? Oh, yes, yes.

Yes, please. There has to be no deviation. There has to be no compromise with error.

There has to be no compromise with untruth. There has to be no compromise with wrong. There has to be from every form of evil.

And you know what the apostle Paul said about that philosophy? Let us do evil that good may come. He put it in the Quad. Let us do a little evil that good may come.

He said, That's his verdict. That's God's verdict. You see here, my friends, we have absolute prohibition, we have absolute abstinence, and there's to be no contradiction.

I stand from every appearance, that is every form of iniquity. That's the thought of Christianity, my friends, that's the standard, and there's to be no You see, my friends, how jealousy, and the very thought of peace himself, the soul and body be preserved nameless. The apostle Paul's view in life, in this perspective of the view in life, in this perspective of the divine criterion would be applied.

One day be presented, when we are convinced of our God, we come up to standard. God's driving to us, God's saying unto us, God is speaking in truth of all. O Thou Eternal and who art holy, holy, holy, and whose law is holy, just, and good, we pray Thee that we may be thankful.

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