**Discerning the Kingdom**

There is only one way to discern the true things of the Kingdom of God. **1 Corinthians 2:9-14; Romans 8:5-7** They have to be spiritually discerned. They can’t be discerned through the natural mind. The natural mind opposes the things of God and always will!

***Romans 8:6*** *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

***7*** *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*

***8*** *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

The things of the flesh and the things of the Spirit are opposites. They can’t be mixed together. **1 Corinthians 15:39-50**

In order to spiritually connect to God and his kingdom, you have to be born again. **John 3:3-6** Since the flesh can’t access spiritual things, unless we have a different way to access them we can not see the things of the kingdom, neither can we enter into the things of the kingdom unless a change takes place. The kingdom is within us. The kingdom is not about rules and regulations. The kingdom is about experiencing righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. **Romans 14:17**

We have to be born of water and the Spirit in order for us to have any spiritual sight. In other words, the word we know **[water- John 15:3]** has to be interpreted by the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that connects us to the things of God.

We are saved by grace. We are God’s workmanship! **Ephesians 2:5,8-10** In other words, we are freed from the limitations of the flesh that keep us from experiencing the things of God by grace. According to Strong’s Concordance, grace means “the divine influence of God upon the heart and its reflection in the life of the one who experiences His influence.” To put it plainly, grace is God at work through the power of the Holy Spirit writing things upon our hearts in the form of revelations that connect us to him.

***Proverbs 22:6*** *Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

 We provide training for our children in order to equip them for life in this world. In the same manner, God is spiritually training his children to assume their position in His kingdom.

***Romans 8:14*** *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

Many of the negative experiences people have as Christians can be traced to the fact that we have not understood the difference between the way flesh operates from the way the spirit operates. We have mixed two things that cannot be mixed.

The Bible speaks about two mysteries. By definition according to Strong’s Concordance, a mystery is something that can only be discerned or understood by spiritual revelation. By making a short study of these two mysteries we can get a better understanding of the differences between operating in the flesh and operating in the Spirit and how they got mixed up.

**The Mystery of the Gospel**

**1 Corinthians 2:6-10,12** talks about the wisdom that is of God, not of this world. It refers to getting an understanding of the things, which God has prepared for those that love him. The Spirit reveals them to us.

**Colossians 1:27-28** refers to the same mystery and defines it as “Christ in me, the hope of glory.” The mystery of the gospel is involved with coming to an understanding of the unity that we have in Christ. We are one with Him. **John 17:22-24** We are members of his flesh; bone of His bones and flesh of His flesh. **Ephesians 5:30-32** Our strength comes from our union with Him. He is the source of everything. **[We can only be connected to God through grace or through the voice of the Holy Spirit]** We have been created to walk with God in a relationship whereby we are complete in him **Colossians 2:10** and we bring Him to his fullness **Ephesians 1:22-23.** He is the vine and we are the branches. Abiding together with Him, we bring forth fruit. He is the source; we are the vessel that brings expression to Him. **John 15:1-8** God is using us to fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. **Genesis 1:26-28**

We were created in the image of God. We are joint heirs with Jesus. We are righteous because Jesus exchanges his life for ours.

The focus is always a “God conscious” focus. Our faith becomes powerful and active by acknowledging every good thing in us in Christ Jesus. **Philemon 6**

**The Mystery of Iniquity**

The mystery of iniquity is a perversion of the truth. We have an enemy of righteousness who has perverted all of the right ways of God. **Acts 13:10**

**2 Thessalonians 2:7-10** The mystery of iniquity is already at work. Satan and his lies author it. He deceives us with unrighteousness. In other words, he causes us to focus on our flesh apart from our union with God. The word iniquity means unrighteous, a violation of the law. In the message Bible the word iniquity has been substituted with the word anarchy. Anarchy in a government is where no one recognizes the head and each man is trying to establish himself as the head. In other words, Satan singles us out and separates us from our source that brings us life. The focus becomes man’s unrighteousness and what man must do in order to perfect himself. **Romans 10:2-3**

Satan is an angel of light. He deceives us with something that sounds good; the works of our hands. **2 Corinthians 11:13-15**

When the works of our hands become the focus, everyone will fall short of the glory of God. **Romans 3:23** It is a futile focus that will never yield fruit. The things of the flesh have no lasting value. **1 Peter 1:22-25** Only the things generated by the spirit revealed Word of God are eternal.

**Matthew 7:16-20** beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep’s clothing. They bring forth something that sounds good, but it will kill you! How do you recognize the false prophet? You recognize him by the fruit, which comes from the words of his mouth. If the words are coming by the inspiration of the Spirit, they will produce a sense of righteousness, peace and joy. But, if they are coming from the wrong source, they will produce condemnation, guilt and defeat.

A good tree brings forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. The word “corrupt” means something that is decaying because it is separated from its source of life. Satan tries to separate us from our source of life. He causes us to focus on the things of the flesh that cannot produce good fruit.

**Matthew 7:13-14** tells us to enter in at the straight gate. There is another gate. Many enter into a relationship with God through the wide gate. It looks good. It looks like truth, but it does not lead to life because the focus in on the works of man rather than on the provision of God. Many Christians are occupied with perfecting their flesh; with the things of the law. Those things will not lead to life. They will only lead to destruction. **Matthew 7:21-23** Not every one that says Lord Lord will enter into the kingdom of heaven. Where is the kingdom? It is within you. There are a lot of people doing work for God, but they have never entered into that place of rest that resides within them where righteousness, peace and joy abide. **Romans 14:17** God calls them “workers of iniquity” or by definition of iniquity-those occupied with the things of the law.

The mystery of iniquity has been at work since the beginning. Let’s take a look at the “garden incident” in Genesis. We have a flesh picture of the scene. Eve was deceived by a snake. What really happened? God spiritually communicated with Adam. If you allow me to be your source of discernment **[the tree of life]**, you will experience life. But, if you try to be your own source **[the tree of the knowledge of good and evil]** you will die spiritually. You can’t discern the things of the kingdom in the flesh! Satan came in immediately to challenge the God given word. Does he come in in the form of a snake? No he comes in with a lie that he whispers in our ears.

***2 Thessalonians 2:3*** *Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;*

***4*** *Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.*

Where is the temple? We are the temple. He speaks something that sounds good; like a wolf in sheep’s clothing or an angel of light. We think that it could be God because it sounds so good, so right! In Genesis it says that a serpent deceived Eve. We immediately picture a snake sitting on her shoulder. The word serpent defined in Strong’s Concordance means; a serpent [from its hiss.] When you look up the word hiss, it means to learn by experience, to prognosticate [to predict the future based on present circumstances.] When you learn by experience, it is different than when you learn by revelation. Experiences are perceived in the flesh. Satan, through a thought [just like he does with us today] challenged what God had revealed to Adam and Eve. He referred them to the things of the flesh that always oppose the things of the Spirit. **Romans 8:6-8**

Eve said, “I will be like God if I can discern the things of the Spirit without God’s help.” When she did this, she immediately lost sight of all spiritual truth. **Genesis 3:6** What God said would produce death, suddenly looked like truth. No good fruit came of it. Adam and Eve hid in shame because they partook of a corrupt tree [one that was separated from its source of life.]

But what happened to the serpent? We again have a “flesh” picture of God cursing the serpent by telling him that he would crawl on his belly and eat the dust of the ground. **Genesis 3:14** God is telling Satan, you will never have any spiritual sight! You will be confined to the things of the earth, of the flesh. **Ecclesiastes 12:7**

***1 Corinthians 2:6*** *Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:*

Satan, you will never understand the mysteries of the kingdom.

***1 Corinthians 2:7*** *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:*

***8*** *Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

To be carnally minded [occupied with thoughts that originate in the flesh] is death. To be spiritually minded [occupied with spiritually discerning the things of the kingdom through the voice of the Holy Spirit] brings life.

**James 1:8** A double minded man [one that mixes the things of the flesh with the things of the spirit] is unstable in all of his ways.

The lies that Satan has carefully crafted are being exposed. It is the truth that sets us free. **John 8:32** Once we begin to get a glimpse of the truth, the lie is easily discerned.