

Walking Out This Newness of Life, What Are We To Do With It? – Part 4

Divine Discipline: Overcoming Lukewarmness Through Discernment and Vigilance

1. Brief recap from last meeting; we discussed...

- We discussed Submitting to the teaching, correction, and discipline of the Lord.
- We dove into **Heb. 12:5 AMPC** - "...My son, do not think lightly or scorn to submit to the correction and discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage and give up and faint when you are reproved or corrected by Him". We discussed this in-depth.
- We also discussed that we have a loving Father who wants the best for us and at the same time an enemy who wants to devour, steal, kill and destroy us.
- We will now dive into a warning about being lukewarm, about being deceived and because of this we need discernment, and we need to be sober-minded, watchful, alert, vigilant and self-disciplined, standing firm in our faith and continuing in the faith so we do not drift away. **Col. 1:23 (NLT)**

2. A warning about being lukewarm and God reproves and discipline those whom He loves.

- a) Now let's dive into **Rev. 3:19**, which is still using the language of OT **Prov. 3:11**. Let's read this in full context: **Rev. 3:15-22 (NKJV/NLT) - vs. 21**. This passage talks about Jesus rebuking and chastening those whom He loves and also talks about being either hot or cold; with a warning about being lukewarm. (In the AMP, lukewarm is translated to "spiritually useless"). Be all-in or not! You cannot be both; with one foot in the world and one in the Kingdom. Jesus says He will spit the lukewarm out of His mouth.
- b) **Vs. 3:19 (NLT)** really jumped out and slapped me in the face! *"I correct and discipline everyone I love. So be diligent and turn from your indifference".* Wow, pay attention; this is sobering! - **Indifference** – *"absence of compulsion to or toward one thing or another; a lack of concern or uncaring attitude; having or showing a lack of interest or concern."* (*Read **Rev. 3:14-22** commentaries below)
- c) God's ultimate purpose in the disciplines of life is that we become partakers of His holiness **Heb. 12:10 (AMPC)**, partakers of His divine nature **2 Pet. 1:2-4 (NKJV)**, and to "share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light" **Col. 1:12 (NLT)**.
- d) We also need to remember that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. **Mat. 11:28-30 (NKJV)** *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*
- e) As we learn to yield and submit to the authority of the Lord and let Him do His work in and through us, we will find rest for our souls. We can be spiritually disciplined while at the same time experiencing rest. As discussed in our last study, we are told in **Heb. 4:10-11 (AMPC)** to strive to enter God's rest. The end result of discipline is rest for our souls.

3. Fight off lukewarmness with spiritual discernment and by being sober-minded, watchful, alert, vigilant and self-disciplined, standing firm and continuing in the faith.

- a) Let's start with discernment. Quick word study: *"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."* **Heb 5:14 (KJV)**. Let's investigate "discern" as it is used in **Heb. 5:14**.
Discern: Strong's NT Greek – 1253 διάκρισις, εως, ἡ - diakrisis - (dee-ak'-ree-sis)
Definition: the act of judgment.
Usage: distinguishing; hence deciding, passing sentence on; a thorough judgment, discernment.
Spiritual discernment is all the above with the help of the Holy Spirit.
- b) Important to keep in mind when reading scriptures. Discernment synonyms include wisdom, understanding, knowledge, discretion, prudence, testing, and sense. When you see these words being used, chances are they are dealing with discernment.
- c) One study on discernment has this to say if we are without it:
"Without discernment, the body of Christ is vulnerable to the assaults of Satan and the poison of false teachers and teaching within the church are unable to minister Jesus' healing and freedom to those oppressed by evil spirits and are unable to move forward boldly, trusting the leading of the Holy Spirit."
- d) All believers have been given a measure of discernment because of the Holy Spirit that lives within. - *"But you have an anointing from the Holy One [you have been set apart, specially gifted and prepared by the Holy Spirit], and all of you know [the truth because He teaches us, illuminates our minds, and guards us from error]."* **1 Jn. 2:20 (AMP)**.
- e) The word says if we lack wisdom, we are to ask God for it and He will give it liberally and without reproach. **Jam. 1:5-8 (NKJV/AMPC)**.
- f) I love Paul's prayer for spiritual wisdom and knowledge in **Col. 1:9-12 (NLT/AMPC)**. The phrase "Spiritual wisdom and knowledge" is another way of saying "spiritual discernment."
- g) **Heb. 5:13-15** talks about solid food for the spiritually mature and having senses trained by practice to distinguish good from evil. **Heb. 5:13-14 (AMP)**.
Heb. 5:14 commentary: *"Solid spiritual food is for the full-grown, for those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. By obeying the light they receive from God's word, these people are able to form spiritual judgments and save themselves from moral and doctrinal dangers."* i.e. from being deceived.
- h) I like this Charles Spurgeon quote on discernment: *"Discernment is not knowing the difference between right and wrong. It is knowing the difference between right and almost right."* ~ Knowing what is right and wrong is one thing, but when you have to know the difference between what is right and almost right, that is when you need spiritual discernment. There are non-truths that can sound like truth.

- i) One commentary put it like this: *"The Christian must take care to develop his "sixth sense" of spiritual discernment. This is why the psalmist prays, "Teach me good judgment and knowledge" (Ps. 119:66). – Now for us believers living in the New Covenant, this prayer is towards the Holy Spirit who will teach us all things, guide us into all truth and give us spiritual discernment.*
- j) We should be relying on divine wisdom rather than solely trusting our own judgment. We should not be leaning on our own understanding but should be trusting God to help us with spiritual wisdom and knowledge, i.e. with discernment. **Prov. 3:5-8.**
- k) The things of God must be spiritually discerned. **1 Cor. 2:14-15 (NKJV/APMC).**
2:14 Believer's Bible Commentary: *Not only is the gospel divine in its revelation and divine in its inspiration, but now we learn that it can only be received by the power of the Spirit of God. Unaided, the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. They are foolishness to him. He cannot possibly understand them because they can only be spiritually understood.*
- l) **1 Cor. 2:14-15** ties into **2 Cor. 3:16 (NKJV)**. *"Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away".*

4. Therefore, be sober-minded, watchful, alert, vigilant and self-disciplined so you are not deceived.

- a) Do not be deceived; warning scriptures to keep us on guard: **Col. 2:8; Mat. 7:13-17; Eph. 4:11-15; Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Jn. 4:1; Jn. 8:44.**
- b) Therefore, be sober-minded, watchful, alert, vigilant and self-disciplined: **1 Pet. 1:13, 4:7, 5:8-10; 1 Cor. 16:13-14; Col. 4:2; Lk. 21:36; Mat. 24:4-6; Eph. 6:10-18.**
- c) *"Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light."*
Rom. 13:11-12 (ESV). - **Rom. 13:11 Believer's Bible Commentary:** *The rest of the chapter encourages a life of spiritual alertness and moral purity. The time is short. The Dispensation of Grace is drawing to a close. The lateness of the hour demands that all lethargy and inactivity be put away. Our salvation is nearer than ever. The Savior is coming to take us to the Father's house.*
- d) Paul wrote to the believers in the Church in Thessalonica and told them to *"stand firm and keep a strong grip on the teaching we passed on to you both in person and by letter."*
2 Thes. 2:15. (NLT) Just before this in **2 Thes. 2:1-12** Paul was telling them about the *"lawless one", the antichrist who would come and use every kind of evil deception to fool those on their way to destruction."* **2 Thes. 2:10 (NLT).** He's talking about unbelievers being fooled here, but he is also still telling the believers and *"stand firm and to keep a strong grip on the teachings they have heard about Christ,"* so that they too would not be deceived. We can paraphrase **2 Thes. 2:15** as *"stand and keep a firm grip on the word of God and to be on guard for deception of every kind."*

- e) There is much deception out there regarding the Word of God and what it really says. There is much twisting of the truth and redefining of the scriptures to be conformed to the world. Fight this deception by keeping a firm grip on the Word and what it is teaching. We must read the Word of God in full context ourselves to know what it is teaching. If you're not grounded in the Word of God you will be easily deceived and will be in danger of being *"tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine"*.

"So that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Eph. 4:14 (ESV)

"So then, we may no longer be children, tossed [like ships] to and fro between chance gusts of teaching and wavering with every changing wind of doctrine, [the prey of] the cunning and cleverness of unscrupulous men, [gamblers engaged] in every shifting form of trickery in inventing errors to mislead." Eph. 4:14 (AMPC)

Some more on "Standing":

- f) Stand firm in the Lord. **Phi. 4:1**
- g) Be steadfast and immovable. **1 Cor. 15:58**
- h) Be watchful, stand firm in the faith. **1 Cor. 16:13-14**
- i) Stand firm in your faith. **2 Cor. 1:24**

This connects with where I started in **Rev. 3:19 (NLT)** "...So be diligent and turn from your indifference".

Next meeting... Jesus is The Light of the World and His true light is shining in our hearts. We are to be Living as Children of Light, walking and living in the light. Living by the Spirit's Power. We are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. How do we let our light shine in a dark world and be ministers of The New Covenant?

Rev. 3:14-22 NIV Grace and Truth Study Bible Commentary

3:14–22 Laodicea was about 40 miles southeast of Philadelphia and the last stop on the postal route beginning in Ephesus, which was about 100 miles due west. Laodicea was a very wealthy and successful city. It was a banking center. It had a textile industry famous for its black wool. The city was also known for producing an expensive medical eye salve. It was devastated by an earthquake in AD 60, and when Nero offered financial help, the city declined because it had plenty of money to rebuild on its own. The churches at Laodicea and Sardis (vv. 1–6) are the only churches that received negative criticism and nothing positive in John's vision. Both were wealthy, comfortable, and self-sufficient.

The church in Laodicea, like Sardis, was not doing as well as they thought. They saw themselves as vibrant, useful, rich, healthy, without any needs. But Jesus calls them lukewarm, wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. Laodicea piped its water from nearby hot springs, and by the time the water arrived in the city, it had cooled and become lukewarm. Both hot and cold water were preferable for drinking, but lukewarm water was undesirable. That Jesus wants to spit them out is reminiscent of how the land wanted to spit out the people of Israel when they were so sin-saturated (Lev 18:28; 20:22). Because Jesus sees their true condition, he counsels them to depend on him for true riches, pure white clothes to cover their shame, and spiritual sight. Faith in Christ and dependence on him alone provide all anyone really needs for life and salvation.

The reason for Jesus' strong rebuke to these believers is because they are his people, and he loves them enough to discipline them like a father disciplines his own children (Pr 3:12). Jesus moves from the idea of discipline to an image of him knocking at a door and waiting for it to be opened. In this picture, the church is gathered for a meal, and Jesus is excluded as he stands outside and knocks. If they hear his voice and invite him in, he will gladly fellowship with them. Those who are victorious overcomers are promised the right to sit with him on his Father's throne (Rev 3:21). As sons and daughters of God through Christ, they will rule with him.

See also: **3:14–22** Baren's Notes on The Bible

Be zealous therefore, and repent - Be earnest, strenuous, ardent (enthusiastic or passionate) in your purpose to exercise true repentance, and to turn from the error of your ways. Lose no time; spare no labor, that you may obtain such a state of mind that it shall not be necessary to bring upon you the severe discipline which always comes on those who continue lukewarm in religion. The truth taught here is, that when the professed followers of Christ have become lukewarm in his service, they should lose no time in returning to him.