

# reACT

catching up with the spirit

daily devotions for week 3

DISCERNMENT AND CHANGE



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## MONDAY – Discernment and Decision



**Act 6: 2b-4** *It is not pleasing to us, leaving the Word of God, to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, look out among you seven men being witnessed to, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this duty. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.*

Discernment is the ability to see the revelatory meaning of the ongoing process in life, to see as the saints say “with the eyes of faith”, the ordinary events that can lead to salvation. (Schneiders 1982:49)

In our lives, discernment is seriously considering a situation, sometimes in consultation with a spiritual companion, in line with our conscience and testing the way forward in light of deeper considerations, desires, motivations and drives. (Pieter G.R. de Villiers 2013)

However, this means a decision must be made, and in the light of who we hold first in our lives, we need to make use of “...the eyes of faith” so as to come to a divine outcome.

In our Scripture passage today, Acts 6: 1-6, we observe dissention between two groups of the early Church about day-to-day human

issues in the heart of the miraculous uprising of the Christian movement. Given the hindsight we have that all service to Christ is part of the same body and is interdependent, both the serving of the Word and the serving of the food, we see this “decision” becomes discernment for a divinely correct outcome.

In our lives we can learn that our decisions can be instruments of discernment when we ensure we are guided by Him who has called us to a relationship for eternity, with the Lord through His Son Jesus Christ.

From our own experience we will be able to witness that as we travel our journey with the Lord, the closer we move towards Him the clearer the act of decision-making and discernment become. The Lord calls us to into this state of being so that our choices closer reflect His Will and speak His presence in our lives.



**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, we pray for Your guidance as we journey with You, for a closer walk and to be there in our decisions that they may become discerning answers in line with Your Will. AMEN

**O Master:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5lqwl6Z8G4>

## TUESDAY – Silence



**Act 15: 7-12** *And after much disputing, Peter rose up and said to them, men, brothers, you recognize that from ancient days God chose among us that through my mouth the nations should hear the Word of the gospel, and believe. And God, who knows the hearts, bore them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit even as to us. And He put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why do you tempt God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples, a yoke which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, according to which manner they also believed. And all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring what miracles and wonders God had worked among the nations through them.*

In the early days of the church that rose out of Pentecost, the Jewish believers felt the necessity for an outward sign of the faith that each held on the inside.

Jesus knew this was not so. When He was questioned why He did not wash His hands, He had replied: **Luke 11: 39** *...Now you Pharisees make the outside of the cup and the platter clean, but your inward part is full of plunder and wickedness.*

We notice that the silence of the multitude gives way for discernment to start working. It is said that a person stops listening when you start thinking what to reply. Here they had “thinking space” and the wisdom of Jesus could be used to guide them to a correct outcome on their outward issue.

Take time for silence.



**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, we pray for patience when making decisions to give ourselves quiet time to think and consider thoroughly to enable discernment. AMEN

## WEDNESDAY – Awareness



**Act 21: 2-6** *And finding a ship sailing over to Phoenicia, going on board, we set sail. And sighting Cyprus, and leaving it on the left, we sailed into Syria, and came down to Tyre. For the ship was to unload its cargo there. And finding disciples, we stayed there seven days; who said to Paul through the Spirit that he should not go up to Jerusalem. But when it was time to finish the days, going out, we travelled on. And they with all the women and children went with us as far as outside the city. And we kneeled down on the shore and prayed. And giving parting greetings to one another, we went up into the ship; and they returned to their own things. (Modern KJV)*

This passage describes a part of Pauls' journey from Asia Minor to Jerusalem but highlights a moment of discernment when the Holy Spirit works through the believers to warn Paul about the suffering he will endure in continuing to Jerusalem.

In **Isaiah 55: 8 & 9** the Lord reminds us: *For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways, says Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.*

The Lord knows and sees things we cannot and the privilege of the

power of discernment is when He will make us aware of something special that needs sharing according to that revealed truth.

- Are you making yourself available for this type of revelation of truth through the Holy Spirit?
- Have you considered telling the Lord of such a desire and then making space in your life for the Spirit to be active in ways that He may choose?

A sincere and motivated desire for discernment on our part, with the necessary patience as we wait for the Lord, can open a wonderful divine avenue in our lives!



**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, thank You for Your love and patience with us as we journey with You, and we wait with expectation and availability to be part of Your Kingdom by being Your heart, hands, feet and mouth to bring Glory to Your Name. AMEN

## THURSDAY – Signs of Confirmation



**Act 6:2b & 3** *It is not pleasing to us, leaving the Word of God, to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, look out among you seven men being witnessed to, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this duty.*

**Act 15: 15-17** *And the words of the Prophets agree to this; as it is written, "After this I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David which has fallen down; and I will build again its ruins, and I will set it up, so those men who are left might seek after the Lord, and all the nations on whom My name has been called, says the Lord, who does all these things."*

(Cross Ref: 15:16 = Amos 9:11-12. 15:17-Zech 2:11, 8:20-23)

In our journey with the Lord, we are ever trying to discern His purposes and will when decisions need to be taken; or when direction is required at the cross-roads of life. In working towards this goal, one of the signposts we can look out for is when the Lord will confirm a divinely correct decision indicating evidence of discernment.

In two of our Scriptures this week, we see evidence of this happening in situations where the newly formed church, post the Pentecostal event are wrestling with normal human issues and trying to discern the Lord's activity and guidance.

The number seven bears witness to the perfect number in the Bible (it is thought to symbolize completion or perfection) and when appearing in the discussion on resolving the service issue in Acts 6: 2, confirms divine attestation to the resolution of the problem. In the second situation, the discussion taken further by James from Acts 15: 13 makes use of reference to scripture in the Old Testament which is a certain basis of a divinely correct outcome for the believers present there.

It therefore becomes one of our actions and privileges to keep a mindful lookout for these revealing signposts.



**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, thank You that You are always present in our lives and we ask humbly, always for Your Discerning Voice as we seek Your ways and purposes for our lives; we look out for and gratefully accept all Your confirming signs of divine testimony.

AMEN

## FRIDAY – Lessons to Learn



**Act 6: 6** *The group presented them to the apostles, who prayed and placed their hands on them..*

**Act 15: 6** *The apostles and the elders met together to consider this question.*

**Act 21: 5** *But when our time with them was over, we left and went on our way. All of them, together with their wives and children, went with us out of the city to the beach, where we all knelt and prayed.*

In our journey with the Lord, we are always aware of His presence, and we are seeking His guidance and knowledge in our own lives. Jesus clearly describes that He must return to the Father so that the Holy Spirit can come and dwell with us. We are privileged to know this and share this knowledge.

The believers that were born out of the Pentecostal event, as described in our readings in the book of Acts, were seeking that same guidance and well, we can learn from their lives, their decisions, and discernments through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Notice that disagreement amongst believers was ever present then as it is today. This is not a stumbling block but a means of taking time together in prayer and positive discussion to flesh out the important divine issues, recognising and setting aside matters of self-interest, material gain or pride.

Because we have been promised that Jesus will be with us, we can eagerly approach matters of difference with the knowledge that using the lessons learned from believers before us, we will arrive at a divinely correct, collective outcome using the same attitude as Jesus: Love.



**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, thank You for Your love and provision that You have made evident from the very beginning of our journey as humans with You, that You give us a pattern to follow in Your Word for a means of discernment in our day-to-day lives and thus to live in the community of believers that You call us to be. AMEN

“He is Here”: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dK\\_gzIPdYQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dK_gzIPdYQ)