

Coaching: Marriage Matters



Week 48

The Discipline of Discernment

Discernment is the process of going about making an appropriate decision. In a perfect world, discernment is about gathering as much pertinent information as possible and considering this information thoroughly and objectively over a period of time before making a decision or forming an opinion. Discernment is methodically and with an open mind choosing from among competing options.

From time to time in any marriage, both a husband and wife will have to address whether the issue at hand is centered on sizzle or substance. That is, there will always be the challenge of discerning what things are merely attractive and what things are really necessary. Whether it's real estate, exotic vacations, nice cars, or stylish clothes, each spouse should attempt to discern whether the things desired are rooted in truth or fiction. For instance, it will take discernment to choose between buying a new car and funding an IRA or paying down what is owed on the credit card.

Discernment is being thoughtful, and there is no circumstance on earth where thoughtfulness is as needed and appreciated as in a marriage. Discernment is not about power, opinions, or strength of will. It is when you are letting the process of inquiry lead you toward decisions that will honor what is true and right. Taking this approach will honor both your spouse and your marriage.

If you and your spouse want to become more discerning in your decision making, it will require effort, patience, and an inquiring mind. It will require both of you to be confident in letting information take the lead rather than searching for information that will reinforce a preferred outcome.

There is always an element of wisdom in any attempt to make a discerning decision, and there is no better place to learn about living a good life than the Bible.

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Some Things to Do This Week

Day 2: Reflect on the message and scripture reading; journal if you like

Day 3: Pray for or meditate on what you think you need

Day 4: Discuss the message and scripture with your spouse

Day 5: Plan how you can best respond to the message

Day 6: Rest; don't think about the message or the scripture; listen in the stillness

Day 7: Recommit yourself to your marriage

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