

## Develop Godly Spiritual Discernment

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Ge 27:6-7, 28:3-4, 10-21, 32:9-12, 24-31, 48:9-20, Ge. 49:1-28 SR 48:1-20 cf Ge. chapters Ge. 29 to 31, 34, 37 to 45, Ge 31:13, Ps 119:133, Je 23:24, Da 4:13, 17, 23, Ac 5:1-11, 8:23, 14:9, 1Co 2:13-15, 12:10-11, Hb 12:15, 1Pe 5:8, 1Jn 4:1, Jude 22-23

1. In these spiritually treacherous times, teaching on, and development of, godly spiritual discernment is needed more than ever before!
2. While there is the gift of discerning of spirits given to whom the Holy Spirit selects (1Cor. 12:10-11), each Christian has a level of spiritual discernment (1Cor 2:13-15). As a side point, there are many times in Holy Scripture that “nose” and “tower” symbolically allude to discernment.
3. Godly spiritual discernment includes, but is not limited to, knowing whether or not something is truly from God (1Jn 4:1), detecting a spiritual weakness (Hb 12:15), detecting spiritual attacks (1Pe 5:8), perceiving godly ability in some (Ac 14:9), perceiving spiritual defilement in others (Ac 5:1-11, 8:23), and guidance in evangelism (Jude 22-23).
4. The life of Jacob is indicative of the lives of many Christians and will be very helpful for anyone in learning how to develop spiritual discernment.
5. Like each one of us, his spiritual condition is very deficient. However, by the time he is very aged, he is what we might call a “spiritual giant”, being directed by the Holy Spirit in blessing and prophetic pronouncement.

**I. Be Aware Of The All Present God** Ge 27:6-7 [when Jacob “stole” the paternal blessing from Esau] *So Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, saying, "Indeed I heard your father speak to Esau your brother, saying,7 'Bring me game and make savory food for me, that I may eat it and bless you in the presence of YHVH before my death."*

B. Je 23:24 *Can anyone hide himself in secret places, So I shall not see him?" says YHVH; " Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says YHVH.*

C. There is no place in all of creation where God is not present

D. Also, acknowledge the existence of other spirit beings: demons ; angels; watchers (Da 4:13, 17, 23)

**II. Receive The Word Of God** Ge. 28:3-4 (Isaac blessing Jacob before he left home) *“May God Almighty bless you, And make you fruitful and multiply you, That you may be an assembly of peoples; 4 And give you the blessing of Abraham, To you and your descendants with you, That you may inherit the land In which you are a stranger, Which God gave to Abraham.”*

A. Isaac reiterates to Jacob the word of God to Abraham

B. We now have the full written Word

C. Knowledge of the Word of God is essential for godly spiritual discernment. Ps 119:133 *Direct my steps by Your word, And let no iniquity have dominion over me.*

D. The more of the Word we know, and apply to our life, the more discernment we will have.

**III. Be Aware Of The Special Presence Of God** Read 28:10-17

A. Pawnym faces / presence and could imply levels of the presence of God

B. (denying this and other spiritual matters hinders the development of godly discernment)

**IV. Reverence God** 28:18-19 *“Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of that city had been Luz previously.”*

A. Reverence Him every moment. Remember, He is everywhere!

**V. Become Dependent Upon God** 28:20-21

A. Jacob's initial dependence 28:20-21 *“Then Jacob made a vow, saying, 'If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, 21 so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then YHVH shall be my God.22 And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.”*

B. Jacob's increasing dependence on God while in Haran, but most evident when he returns to Canaan and hears that Esau is going to meet him with 400 men. **Read 32:9-12**

## **VI. BE Surrendered To God – Read 32:24-30**

- A. Note that Jacob had encounter with God in the flesh and in order for us to be saved we also must have an encounter with God in the flesh: Jesus Christ
- B. We must be “disabled” by God in order to be truly dependent upon Him
- B1. This ought to heighten our awareness of our need for godly spiritual discernment
- C. “My name is Jacob (deceiver)” - We must confess, sincerely agree with God, we are a sinner and have sinned

## **VII. Be Obedient 31a**

- A. Jacob's obedience to God had increased over time
- B. While in Haran, God told Jacob (31:13) “... return to the land of your family.”
- C. Jacob's crossing the River Penuel despite what seemed to be a major threat by Esau was was a strong act of trusting obedience
- D. The more we obey God the more we will be spiritual sensitive in the realm of spiritual discernment.

## **VIII. BE Meek – referring back to 9-12, and then 31b**

- A. Jacob's prayer to God in vv. 9-12 not only shows his dependence upon God, but also that he did not rely on himself nor anyone else to protect him from Esau
- B. Jacob's limp is a reminder to him to rely on God in spirit, soul, **and body**

## **IX. Be Noting The Consequences Of Sin**

- A. From experiences like dealing with Laban in Syria (Who gave him the wrong daughter to marry at first and changed his wages numerous times) and his sons' lying-by-deed about the true fate of Joseph, learned to hate deceitfulness, realizing the hurt and damage it can cause. (Ge. 29 to 31, 37 to 45 respectively)
- B. From Levi and Simeon's revenge upon the men of Shechem (Ge. 34), Jacob realized deceit and vengeance can be outright dangerous, and very shameful.
- C. A godly distaste for sin helps to develop godly discernment

## **X. Realize Not Only God's Presences, But Also His Providential Dealings 48:15e-16a**

- A. In blessing the sons of Joseph, Jacob said, *“The God who has fed me all my life long to this day, The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil,”*

**XI. Be Worshiping 35:14** So Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He talked with him, a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it.

## **XII. Grow Into A Channel For The Glory Of God**

- A. Blessing (Jacob discerned by the Holy Spirit that God determined to place Ephraim before Manasseh – 48:9-20)
- B. Declaring – including admonitions and warnings (Ge. 49:1-28)

### **Conc:**

Jacob spiritually developed in a time when there was no written Word of God on earth, nor any study tools to go along with it. How much more can we grow now? We have no excuse to not be spiritually discerning.

Unsaved need to discern times. Mt 16:1-3 *Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven.2 He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red';3 and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times.*