

Teaching - Part 1

Vocational Maturity is the ability to discern the vision and voice of God and obey their callings

Belief #1

- God Reveals...God is eager to communicate

Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?

(1 Kings 3:9)

The wisdom of the prudent is to discern his way, but the folly of fools is deceiving.

(Proverbs 14:8)

Whoever is wise, let him understand these things: whoever is discerning, let him know them; for the ways of the LORD are right, and the upright walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them.

(Hosea 14:9)

Belief #2

- We Receive...We are capable of knowing

"Discernment, in a most general sense, is the capacity to recognize and respond to the presence and activity of God – both in the ordinary moments and in the larger decisions of our lives"

(Ruth Haley Barton, Pursuing God's Will Together, p10)

Belief #3

- Others Confirm...Our callings are discovered and enjoyed communally

"Discernment is much more than mere decision-making; it is, first of all, a habit, a way of seeing that can permeate our whole life..."

Discernment is a quality of attentiveness to God that, over time, develops into the ability to sense God's heart and purpose in any given moment. We become familiar with the tone, quality and content of God's voice"

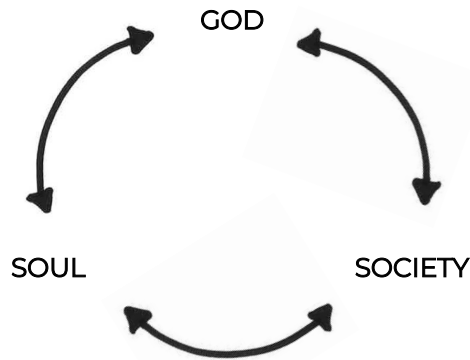
(Barton, Pursuing, p56-57)

Exercise 1



Discernment Defaults Exposed Through Practice

- Choose a focus for today: _____
- Identify what vision is clearest and which voice is loudest with regards to your focus for the day.
- Imagine you're in a conversation with the Father/Son/Spirit, yourself 10 years ago or 10 years from now, your closest confidant and a total stranger.



Origins

Outlooks

Obstacles

Opportunities

Teaching - Part 2

Avenues of Discernment

Universal Callings - design & destiny of all people, everywhere, for all time

Unique Callings - design & destiny of only me, only here, right now

Consolation - the fruit of purposeful and fulfilling activity

- Purpose vs. Power/Prestige/Possessions
- Fulfillment vs. Pleasure

Desolation - the vanity of chasing the wind

- Conviction toward wholehearted living

Local Callings - here-and-now

- "Persons"

Global Callings - everywhere-and-always

- "Peoples"

And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.

(Isaiah 30:21)

Your kingdom come, and your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

(Matthew 6:10)

"The relation of God's will and my will is not a specialized religious question; it is *the* question. The way we answer it shapes our humanity in every direction"

(Eugene Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, p99)

"Consolation is the interior movement of the heart that gives us a deep sense of life-giving connection with God, others and our authentic self.... Desolation is the loss of a sense of God's presence...of being off-center, full of turmoil, confusion and maybe even rebellion. Or we might sense our energy draining away, tension in our gut or tears welling in our eyes"

(Barton, *Pursuing*, p58)

"People with a mature vision of God and extensive experience in his ways have no need to be excessively anxious about doing the right thing. For the most part they will simply know what is right. But their confidence is finally not in a word from the Lord but in the Lord who is with us"

(Dallas Willard, *Hearing*, p208)

Exercise 2



Exploring the impact of your calling

Who, What and How does this calling impact?

Who	What	How

Does seeing this bring consolation or desolation?