

Discernment or Deception

Sermon Title: **Discernment or Deception**

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Nathaniel Bronner: Sometimes God just has the strength in our spirit. But to do that, he has to send us through some things.

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And now for 5815, "Discernment or Deception Part Four, His Grace is Efficient."

Nathaniel Bronner: Welcome to Brothers of the Word. Because brother, you need the word. And today I am still in the midst of a series called "Discernment or Deception". How do you know that this is God and how do you know whether it's yourself, the world, or even a satanic or demonic source? How do you know this is God.

Part one dealt with a situation where we walk through the Bible and we saw how even a Class A prophet was deceived and thought it was word from God, but it really was not a word from God?

Part two, we dealt with many of the things that God has spoken in this church and how many of the manifestations had been from the word of God, things that have affected the church and that have affected you of what God spoke and that, which was manifested.

The last message, part three, actually dealt with often we think that just because a thing is from God that it's all pleasant, it's nice, it's good, it smells good, it feels good, it looks good, but often times, things that are from God, they're tough, they're rough, they send us through crisis after crisis after crisis for purpose and we went through some of the life of Job and even the life of Job's wife.

And I showed you from the bible and from other sources how it was tough, but it was all divinely ordained in. God has spoken to me, you'd be really careful about last message, you finish exactly on time and I wasn't even finished, but I cut it off. I cut it off almost at a cliffhanger point. Because I left it with a statement that many would never see the deliverance from some of the stuff

you're in, and I said they're a whole lotta of folk, and you'd never going to have a financial breakthrough.

And it told you upfront, it's rough, does not shout and kind of stuff, but it's the absolute truth. Many folk, they're never going to have a financial breakthrough, they're never going to get rich, they're never going to be at the point where all the bills are paid off, and they just got plenty of money, some folk never going to get to that point.

Some people, you're never going to find that rich, dark, handsome man who just going to show up on his white horse and just going kiss you and take you off to the castle to live happily ever after. Some of you not going ever find a prince. He's going to show up with a beat-up Volkswagen with two flat tires. So, some of you never going to find that prince. Some of you will never get rid of the sickness that plagues you.

It even talks about in the bible, see Elijah mention that his daughter Elisha is going to be preaching this Thursday, that's the prophet's name, so one of the great prophets and the bible talks about, "And Elisha died with the sickness that he had." And he was one of the greatest healers in the Bible and he couldn't even get the sickness off him.

So, there are some of these things that to be honest about it, they're just not going to come to pass. And I want to deal with that in this continuation of the last message where we dealt with Job and how sometimes God's will and his work comes to you but it's tough. Often times, it's tough, but we don't think it's from God because it is tough, but it is.

And I dealt with the scripture towards (00:04:14) it's 2nd Corinthians, the 12th Verse. This is Paul. And I want to just want to read a little bit more of that and deal with Paul. Paul wrote most of the new testament but Paul went through some stuff, but this is a critical part, he said, "I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. I know a man in Christ who 14 years ago who was caught up in the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body, I do not know--God knows. And I know that this man--whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know but God knows--was caught up to paradise. He

heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell.”

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“I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say. And this is the part that you need to understand. To keep me from being conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was give me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me. Three times, I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me, but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

So, this part four or discernment or deception, His grace is sufficient. Now I want you to understand what Paul was saying because many of us, when we undergo tough stuff -- you all say tough stuff. When we undergo tough stuff, so often, we think this is just the devil.

Now what Paul said is this, he said “A messenger of Satan was sent to torment me.” But it was God who did it. Just like with Job, it was God who either did it or allowed Satan to do it. And he did it for a reason. Paul said, “I was given this thorn in the flesh to basically keep me humble.” Do you know tough stuff will keep you humble? Do you know if you walking in pride and you lose all your stuff, do you know it helps your humility and Lord knows, some of us, if we just get one (00:07:06) in the bank, just one (00:07:07) in the bank. I mean a new hat just changes some folk and we get all puffed up in pride. Paul said, “I had to have this thorn in my flesh to keep me humble.” And he pleaded with God three times to take it away.

See, many of us, we’ve been praying “Lord, get me out of this situation.” “Lord, deliver me from this.” “Lord, take this away from me.” “Lord, straighten this out.” Paul said, he pleaded, three times, not just one time. Now this was a man who wrote

most of the new testament. He pleaded three times, “Lord take this thorn out of my flesh.” The Bible never says what the thorn is. But there’s one thing I’m pretty sure of, all of us have a thorn.

Turn to the person, ask him, “What’s your thorn?” See all of us have a thorn of one form or another, that’s for sure. All of us have at least one thorn, and some of us have multiple thorns. Some of us just look like a porcupine. Some of us have multiple thorns, but Paul had at least one thorn, and the thorn was never enumerated, the thorn was never delineated, the thorn was never named or explained or detailed. All you know is Paul had some kind of thorn stuck in his flesh. And as much as he pleaded with God, God would not remove the thorn.

And my guess is that many of us, we have been praying for God, “Lord, please take this thing from me,” or “Change this thing,” and God will not do it. And yet he often has placed it there. And the more I live, the more I see and even remotely begin to understand why God orchestrates some things in our lives.

Last week, I had an experience and I had told Pastor James, and I had told Susan. I said, “God spoke to me on Sunday night at 9:10 p.m.” He said, “I am going to open windows of opportunity for you.” And I said, “He said he’s going to do it in seven days.” So, I told James and Susan I said, “By 9:10 p.m. next Sunday night, there will be some windows of opportunity that will be opened.” Well, when it got to 9:10, nothing had happened.

And I emailed both of them probably about 9:30, I said, “It’s past 9:10, nothing has happened.” And then God said, “Nothing you immediately know of.” But I still didn’t see anything happen. I had a meeting the next day at a place where we have the Ark Buses park. We have the Ark Buses park there because we had someone break in the fence here, stole the catalytic converters, took us a whole lot of money to get the busses fixed, so we moved the buses.

00:10:04

So, we moved the buses over to a place that’s fenced in, and the place has a 24/7 guard at the gate all of the time. So, it makes the level of difficulty to get into the buses super difficult.

Anyway, as I was about to go to a meeting, I see the Ark Bus and I see the doors open on the bus. But I was just in time for my meeting, so I didn't have time to go and investigate it and when I left the meeting, I had forgotten about the buses. So, Suzanne texted me and says, "Do you realize that the door to the bus is open?" And I turned around and came back and we both went to the bus, looked inside, the door to the bus wide open.

The problem was, there was no sign of any forced entry. Suzanne went and checked with the guard, "Has anybody been in?" He said, "Nope. I got to log it. Nobody has been in." There's a fence there. The fence is not cut. There's no scrape on the door. The driver side of the door is locked. The door was open and I couldn't even get the door shut. I tried to crank the bus up, the battery was dead. The door is electronically operated. We couldn't get it shut, even when they came and boosted the bus off, the door still wouldn't shut. I had to take it to the mechanic shop and the mechanic had to work on it to try and get the door shut.

I was on a meeting and Suzanne texted me again and she had a picture of the door open again and I thought it was the same bus. I didn't realize two buses had doors stuck open that we couldn't close. It cost \$603.20 for the mechanic to get both doors closed. And then God says, "It's not just a door, it's a door and windows, because the door has two big windows in it." So, it was a total of four doors and four windows that mysteriously opened in the night that we couldn't close.

And my next question was, "Well, what did that mean, Lord?" Sometimes, God will not reveal what it means until down the road. All I know, they were Ark Buses and the doors opened and we couldn't shut them. And sometimes, God will show you some things, it's not what you think, but I could realize multiple doors are going to open, multiple windows. And when God opens the door, you can't shut it.

And I remember in my office, I got a little placard there, because in the office where I used to have the meeting, we'll be sitting in a meeting, the door will be latched, and all of a sudden, the door would open, and swing open and there would be nobody there. It happened about three or four times. It started scaring folk. And I said, "It's just God opening the door." And the company began to move and boom and rise from level to level to level.

Sometimes God will open some opportunities in your life but it'll cost before you start getting the reward back in. We had to pay \$603.20 to get those doors shut. So, it will cost you before you start even getting the benefits back in. But I want you to know and I want you to understand Paul's point. He understood that this was God who had placed the thorn, that God wouldn't remove it and what Jesus told him was, "My grace is sufficient." And once Paul understood that the grace of God was sufficient, he started changing his tune. He started thinking differently. And the way that he started thinking was totally different. "My grace is sufficient for You for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions and difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

If I ask all of you out there now to raise your hand if you're dealing with a weakness, an insult or hardship or persecution or a difficulty. My guess is most of you would raise your hand. But you're dealing with it with the concept of, "Lord, get this thing off of me." Paul changed his whole mentality and he says, "When I am weak, then I am strong. I delight in hardships. I delight in persecutions, I delight in insults, I delight in this stuff because when I'm weak, I can see the power of Christ."

My daddy used to have a statement that went like this. My daddy used to say, he said, "A man who has a lot of problems gets more out of life than a man who has only a few problems." And he said, "I'm having a ball," because he was dealing with a whole lot of business stuff. And sometimes, when you're growing a business, you just deal with all kind of problems, you deal with all kinds of issues. But if you can change how you view your stuff in life, if you can begin to view it like Paul viewed it, when I have hardship, when you can see the beauty of the hardship it changes. Because I'm going to tell you people, you're going to have some stuff.

The Bible says even the best of our years are filled with pain and soured. You're going to have people die, you're going to have forget sick, you're going to have problems come against you, it's going to attack your money, it's going to attack your relationship, it's going to attack your piece of mind.

Tell me, I'll just get -- just stop attacking your ride. You only just attacking your car, you just have major problem with stuff just attacking your ride. So, when stuff attacks you, if you can change your mentality, and if you can view it like Paul, he said, "I delight in it, because it's going to make me strong. Oh, here comes another opportunity for me to show how Christ is working in my life. Here comes another thing for me to overcome. Here comes something that's going to make me strong, it's going to get my faith muscles up, it's going to change some course in my life, because I recognize God is always orchestrating everything in my life."

What is the benefit of this? When you can change your mind to that, it changes how you respond, it changes how the thing responds and it changes your level of joy. I am a happy man. And just like when the prophet came, he touched me, he felt, but he said, "Man, I've never touched anybody with as much joy as you and I got some issues. Your (00:16:08) pastor got issues." I got issues in my way. Not like I don't have stuff. I have to deal -- I have issues in every single arena of light. I got issues in the way, it's not like I don't have issues, but I'm more like Paul. I relate to Paul more than I do. Jesus, I would be honest about that. Well, why don't you relate to Paul more than you do to --? Paul had issues. Paul had some struggles. Paul said, "Look, what I'm trying to do right, the very thing I all night to do that, the very thing I find myself --," I relate to Paul."

So, I understand this, but I can also relate to Paul that I have gotten to the point where everything now that happens in my world, first of all said, "This thing is orchestrated or allowed by God." So, if God is orchestrating and allowing it, why? So, when the doors are stuck open, I don't say, "Oh my goodness, we got to pay \$600 to get them done." "No, no, no, God opened them doors." So, the question is what is God trying to tell me about him opening the doors on two buses in one night. Why did he send an angel to open two buses, two doors in one night?

And he didn't answer me. He still hadn't answered me. All he told me was, "Multiple doors and multiple windows," but he did not tell me what it means. All I know that it's a God. Now, see some folk would be stuck on the \$603.20. This is going to cost me \$603.20. Lord, help me! \$603.20! And you're stuck on the negatives of your world, you're not stuck on what God is trying to do in your world.

And some of us God has to remake us. He's got to strip us down. We're having the office remodel and they have to put varnish and stain on the door. First of all, get some sandpapers, scrub them down, they scrubbed it down, then they put primer on it, then they put one coat, then they put two coats.

Some of you all are in the scrub down process because before you can put a new coat on, you got to get the old stuff off. And you can't get the old stuff off, of what they call a whisk broom. Do you all know what a whisk broom -- just a little bit of the straw thing, you get dust of it. Some dust are embedded. You have to have some really rough -- what they call high grit sandpaper and you have to scrub, and you have to get the old stuff off, but the scrubbing process is never pleasant.

And with some of us, God has to scrape the old stuff off before he can put the new stuff on and in. Sometimes, we are so just sensitive about somebody saying something about, "You know what they said about you?" Well, probably, is it true? We wouldn't even ask that. All we are concerned about, "They said this," but is it true? Whenever somebody says something, that's the first question I ask myself. I don't ask or get upset because they said, the first question is, "Is it true?" So, if it's true I need to deal with that, not being mad about the other person who called they said, I need to deal with whether or not it is true or not.

So, sometimes God will send people to just insult us so we can face some things and then become not so self-conscious, so self-centered, so delicate about feelings and emotions, and all this. Sometimes God just has to strengthen our spirit. But to do that, he has to send us through some things, discernment or deception. You have to have the ability to discern, this is God working in my life and God does not work all of the time smoothly and painlessly. God will send us through some stuff. He will send us through some stuff that will break us down to our knees and have us crying and have us in all of this what we feel like our world is falling apart, but it is that thing that builds our faith and makes us strong.

And I've told you the story, when I was laying in the street over in Greece, bleeding, blood running down the street --

Knew I could die and I wasn't worried about it one bit. I really honestly wasn't. I said, "Lord, I'm where you told me to be. If I die now, so be it." I understood Job, though he slay me, yet will I trust him. I'd ask him later, why you sent me through that? Because I know he did. Why did I have to do it? You had to learn how to face death without fear. When you can face death without fear, you live differently. Couple of weeks ago, I went sky diving, jumped out of a plane 18,000 feet, ain't worried about it a bit. Shoot, I'm not ready to face death? It just ain't bother me. You live differently. Some folk will be scared of everything. You live differently.

When you are not worrying about death, you just live differently. So, sometimes God will have to send you through a near death experience for you to just appreciate life, not be scared of death. Sometimes God has to send you to some scary situations just to get defeat. Do you (00:20:56) just live in just fear of stuff.

Fear is the exact opposite of faith. Fear is demonically based and not only are they afraid of so much stuff, they're afraid of the wrong thing. Folks, a lot of time, they're scared of stuff, won't even hurt him and the stuff just kill him (00:21:11) so the folk, they have no fear of death. So, you have to get an understanding of God working in your life and being able to understand this is God. And when you can understand this is God, it changes how you react. So, when you're in your circumstance, how can I glorify God in the midst of this? And what has God given me? Yes, I have a thorn in my flesh but what is he giving me?

We also have the tendency to focus on what we are missing not on what we have. And it changes your whole vibration, your whole outlook on life and it can take you to a level of joy that comes from the inside. The world, people, will never be perfect. It's not designed to be. It's a flawed sin-filled world but it's also a world full of love and it's a world full of beauty. It's a world full of kindness and compassion, but you won't see that on the news. So, if you're looking at the news all day long, you won't see that part of the world but it's there and how you live and what you focus on, it depends upon, are you looking and can you see Christ or you do just see all the negative.

See Elijah post it on Prayer Drive. And for those of you who are not subscribed to Prayer Drive either the email or social media,

the last post that he had has a man talking and he said he was criticizing his wife, Melissa, because he spent 45 minutes a day with God in prayer and his wife just went ahead doing it. She did not hardly spend any time in prayer. And he said, he was thinking negatively about his wife and how she wouldn't spend any time with God and one day, God spoke to him and said, you spend 45 minutes a day with me. He said, "But Melissa abides with me all day long."

When we learn to abide, I don't care what happens, when you learn to abide in Christ, when every waking moment you feel God's presence, you feel him surrounding you, you know you were with God, when you've learned to abide in God -- look, don't wait for something to happen to you, call in (00:23:20) don't wait to a tragedy. You need to abide in Christ. You need to recognize God in everything and when the tragedy hits, it won't shake you because it's coming. Stuff happens. I go like this? It's coming. So, if you abide in Christ, it makes a difference and it gives you peace that surpasses all understanding.

The majority of stuff that we deal with every day, that stuff is sent by God to train us, to teach us, to move us into position, so we would not be on that white robe with the crowd heading to destruction. This is the end of this message, you can go to brothersoftheword.com. Listen to the entire series, "Discernment or Deception" absolutely free of charge. Thank you for joining us today at Brothers of the Word because brother, you need the word.

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