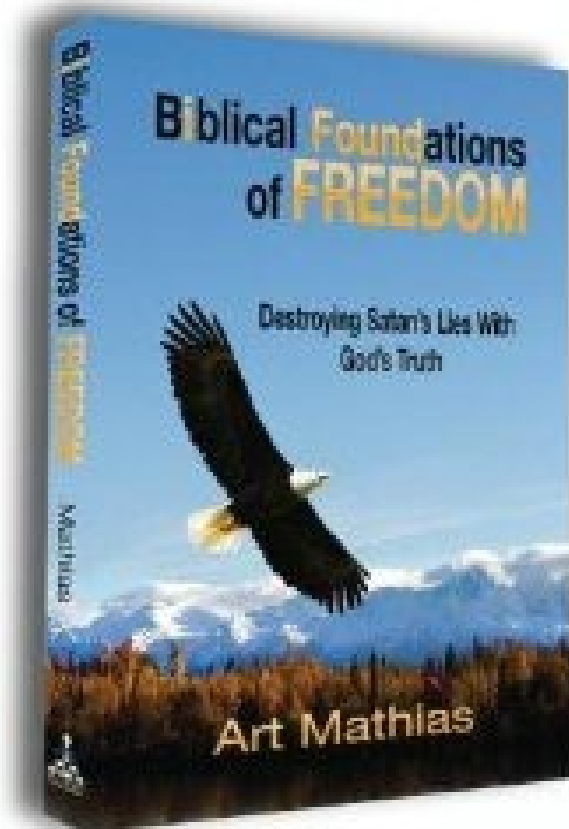


Book's Author: Dr. Art Mathias

Biblical Foundations of Freedom Program & Study Guide

Destroying Satan's Lies With God's Truth



Dr. Dorothy E. Hooks, PsyD
Senior Lecturer

“Biblical Foundations of Freedom Destroying Satan’s Lies With God’s Truth” was written by Dr. Art Mathias:

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Edition of Biblical Foundations of Freedom

About the Authors:

Dr. Mathias has lived in Alaska for more than twenty five years. He is a businessman, bush pilot, outdoorsman, and has authored several books and booklets. He and his wife Patti, of 38 years have two grown sons. Patti is an accomplished teacher and along with her husband are founders of Wellspring Ministries. Dr. Mathias has earned his master and doctorate degrees in counseling. Both Patti and Dr. Mathias travel extensively teaching about and demonstrating a powerful God that has answers.

I had the opportunity to attend one of Dr. Mathias’ “Biblical Foundations of Freedom” seminars around the end of January this year and it was a life changing event for me. I saw firsthand what God was doing at his seminars; I witnessed how powerful forgiveness is – people were getting set free because they decided to forgive – some had been holding onto unforgiveness for years - and that is why I decided to adapt his book into my Recovery program. Forgiveness is powerful because when we decide to forgive, we are obeying God’s Word and when we obey God, we will be blessed and set free.

I am using these materials from Dr. Mathias’ book and other training aids by permission from him and his wife Patti.

Welcome to the journey that is going to change your life!

God bless,
Dr. Dorothy E. Hooks, PsyD

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Topics:

- Preface & Introduction (2 hour)
- What Is Sin – Chapter One (2½ hours)
- Discernment – Chapter Two (2½ hours)
- Accusing Spirits – Chapter Three (2½ hours)
- The Major Strongholds, or Principalities, of Satan (1½ hours)
- Principality of Bitterness – Chapter Five (2½ hours)
- Principality of Self-Bitterness, Unloving Spirits – Chapter Six (3½ hours)
- Forgiveness – Chapter Seven (2 hours)
- Principality of Jealousy & Envy – Chapter Eight (2½ hours)
- Principality of Rejection – Chapter Nine (3½ hours)
- Principality of Fear – Chapter Ten (2½ hours)
- Principality of Occultism, Pharmakia & Sorcery – Chapter Eleven (2½ hours)
- The Kinsman Redeemer – Chapter Twelve (1½ hours)
- The Armor of God – Chapter Thirteen (5½ hours)
- Our Power and Authority in Christ – Chapter Fourteen (3 hours)



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Biblical Foundations of Freedom (BFOF)

Class Syllabus: "Discernment"

Topic & Goals:

- **Chapter Two: Discernment – Goal define discernment and understand its meaning. To accomplish this goal, we will:**
 - ✓ Define Discernment
 - ✓ Explain Spiritual Warfare
 - ✓ Discuss "Does God Allow Evil?"



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Chapter Two: Discernment

Definition

What is discernment? It is a common enough word, but I wonder if we have ever really stopped to understand its meaning? The dictionary defines "discernment" as "the ability to see clearly, to perceive, to distinguish, or recognize." In **Hebrews 5:14**, the Greek word *diakrino* translated as "discern." It means, "to separate thoroughly good and evil."

In contrast, **Romans 14:21** uses the word *astheneo* translated as "weak." It means "weak; strengthless; without power to distinguish sufficiently between right and wrong, evil, or lawful and unlawful." It speaks to the ability to distinguish between the truth and a lie. **Hebrews 5:14 says, "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."** A mature Christian prays for and practices discernment in the conduct of their life. In doing so, they have learned to tell the difference between good and evil, and then choose to do what is good.

Hebrews 5:11 says, "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing." Paul desires to teach us in depth about Christ, but we are unable to hear his teaching. He is not speaking to our ability to distinguish sounds, nor speak the words written on a page. Our difficulty in learning is not because the concepts are too complicated. Paul's frustration with us is that our attitudes are wrong and these wrong attitudes block the imparting of the kind of teaching we really need. **He continues this thought in Hebrews 5:12-14: "...when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."**

Many of us have been Christians a long time. We should be teaching others, but because we have not aggressively pursued truth we have become insensitive to it – dulled. So, we start at the beginning, once again having to be taught the most basic Christian doctrines. Our growth has been stifled and we are like unweaned babes (**I Corinthians 3:2; I Peter 2:2**). Milk-feeding was a common metaphor among early writers to express the idea of imparting elementary principles of religion and science. They compared sucking to learning; infants to beginners; and meat to those who had mastered basic principles and now sought a deeper level of understanding.



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Discernment Continued:

Definition

In Hebrews 6:1-2, Paul describes the first principles of Christ. "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." As believers, what do we practice in our diverse denominations, and even within denominations? We argue if repentance is necessary for salvation. We argue about how to baptize, and whether or not God still heals people or performs miracles. We dispute over the issue of a literal hell. Yet God created one Church and one Scripture. The Church consists of too many unweaned babes unwilling to move beyond basic principles to the real issues of faith that unite us all in Christ. Paul implores us to go beyond first principles, to grow out of childhood. He points us toward perfection. Would Paul tell us to go on to perfection if it were not possible? We are never to rest until we achieve adulthood as believers, mature in Christ. We to be capable of consuming the strong meat of God's Word, capable of teaching God's Word, and capable of applying our Biblically-informed senses to discern between good and evil, lies and truth. This requires a lot of hard work and effort on our part.

John 12:40 says, "He [Satan] hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." As we yield to Satan, he blinds our eyes and hardens our hearts - our attitudes - so that we don't understand Godliness (II Cor. 4:4, I John 2:11). Satan's first goal is to prevent us from receiving new birth (conversion). Failing that, he strives to keep us from maturing so that we can enjoy a deeper walk with God. Satan desires to prevent us from receiving spiritual healing that could result in physical healing. Jeremiah 17:9-10 says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." We cannot trust our feelings. Rather, we must rely only on the Word of God taken by faith. God's rewards for us are directly related to obeying His Word, not to how we feel or think about it. Disobedience reaps the "fruit of our own doings." We must study to show ourselves approved, rightly dividing the Word of truth (II Timothy 2:15). And we must apply the truths to our life that we learn from our study. In Psalms 139:23-24 David said, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." David passionately asked God to examine him, to know his heart, to renew his spirit, to test him, to examine his thoughts, to root out any wicked way in him, to direct him to walk in God's way. Are we willing to make the same request?



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Discernment Continued:

Definition

We need to seek His face for healing. **II Chronicles 7:14** says, **"If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."** We need to draw nigh to God to be cleansed. **James 4:8** says, **"Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded."** Cleansing our hands requires repentance, a turning away from sin with a determination not to repeat it. Cleansing our hearts requires us to confess our sins, forgive others and ourselves, and ask God for forgiveness. Then we are not only declared righteous and blameless, but we become righteous in our experience, putting us in a position to receive healing of both spirit and body. Our first life priority should be to seek God and His righteousness. If we do this, He promises to bless us. The blessing results from our choice of putting Him first in our heart, mind, and actions. **Matthew 6:33** says, **"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."** God's ways are orderly. He plays the dominant role in all creation, but in His order of things, we must take personal responsibility for our actions. He gave us a free will and we choose, situation by situation, whether or not to obey Him. God never changes nor moves away, and is always faithful to do His part. But He will not bless us when we have chosen sin; that separates us from Him. God longs to bless us as we obediently surrender our lives to Him (**I Samuel 15:22**).

James 4:7 says, **"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."** We are to submit to God and put Him first in our lives. By resisting the devil, he will flee and God will step in to provide His blessing. **Romans 16:20** says, **"...and the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen."** This verse needs to be a constant reminder that we have victory over Satan through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Warfare

Two spiritual kingdoms are at war here on earth, and we're caught in the middle (Revelation 2:16). Many of us are aware of this spiritual warfare and the ongoing battle for our souls, but others are blind. **II Corinthians 2:11** says, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." We must know Satan's devices so well that we can recognize and discern his lies. God warns us not to be ignorant in **Hosea 4:6**: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." God wants us to comprehend truth about Him and Satan so that we can be victorious over evil. Satan attacks us in three dimensions: 1) spiritually, 2) mentally (in our thoughts), and 3) physically. Satan attacks us spiritually by trying to weaken and destroy our faith in God. He attempts to counterfeit everything that is of God. He presents God as mean-spirited, selfish, jealous, and vindictive.



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Discernment Continued:

Spiritual Warfare

He wants us to believe that God is withholding good things from us. He tries to trick us into blaming God for our hardships and diseases, when in truth, Satan is the author of everything negative. He wants to replace faith in God with fear and superstition. How many times have we heard someone say, "I don't understand why God allow my wife to die?" God is the author of life, not death. Satan authored sin and death and published it first on the hearts of Adam and Eve. It then found a ready home hearts of all humans. God the Father is the giver of every good and perfect gift (**James 1:17**). Therefore if it is not good and perfect, it is not from God. When we learn to accept this simple truth at deeper levels in our life, we will gain greater levels of peace and joy. Satan attacks us physically by bringing disease and death to our bodies. Disease and death entered this world by Satan's instigation through one man's sin (**Romans 5:12**). **Deuteronomy 27-28** graphically illustrates the contrasts between obedience and disobedience to God-righteousness and sin. Every manner of disease is listed in the consequences of disobedience.

During each miracle of healing that Jesus performed, He cast out demons or forgave sins, or both. All diseases are from Satan. Disease found its root in Adam's original sin, but takes root in our own sin as well. Every disease is rooted in separation from God, which is the ultimate effect of sin. Not every disease is the result of our personal sin. In **John 9** is the story of the man that was blind from birth. The disciples asked Jesus whose fault it was: was it the sin of the parents, or the sin of the man? Jesus answered, "Neither." In a fallen and cursed world, calamities happen that are not the fault or sin of an individual, but the result of Adam's sin. Sin and Satan are still the cause. The point of this story is that the "works of God should be made manifest" in the healing of the man. The whole point of this story is that Jesus healed and thus destroyed the works of the devil. As we consider discernment, understand that it is the primary weapon we will use to win this spiritual war. The key is to understand that the battles are fought in our minds. We need to learn to take captive every thought. Recognize that not every thought we have is our own, so when thoughts enter our mind, we need to examine them to see who sent them. Satan attacks us mentally and emotionally through our thoughts. Satan uses three types of thoughts in his attack. Expect them; know they are coming. Satan accuses God to us. He'll say, "God doesn't love you. After all, He allowed did not stop September 11." He employs a wide range of tactics, bold and subtle, to try to get you to believe the lie that God either won't or couldn't possibly love you. Satan accuses others to us. Satan will accuse me, this ministry, our church, our husband, our kids, or anyone else. He'll plant doubts and suspicions in our minds about others. "This ministry doesn't really help anyone," or "If my husband only understand, then we could get along," or "My dad is right. I really am no good." Satan accuses you to yourself. Have you ever struggled with feelings of guilt, self-accusation, unloveliness, self-rejection, or self-hatred? You say to yourself, "I'm no good; nobody loves me," or "There I go again, I'll never get it right," or "I'm just a failure." At some time in our lives, we have all faced this type of self-rejection. How could we, who are supposed to love ourselves, say such hateful things to ourselves?



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Discernment Continued:

Spiritual Warfare

The key to winning the war in our thought-life is found in **II Corinthians 10:4-6**: **"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled."** First, we don't have to fight this war in our own power. Our weapons are not carnal — of man — but of God. We possess the full power and authority of Jesus in this war, and all authority has been given to Him. We must learn to rely on and use His power and authority, not our own. Jesus' power and authority gives us the ability to destroy Satan's strongholds. Through Christ, we have the ability to defeat Satan in every area of our lives. Secondly, we must cast down imaginations. To cast down something means to shatter it, demolishing it. The Greek word for "imaginations" means reasoning and thoughts. We are to demolish all reasoning and thoughts that run contrary to sound Scriptural teaching. We demolish the reasoning, or theories, of humanistic philosophers and their vain, empty speculations that attempt to nullify Scripture and the Gospel. We also demolish cultural influences in our lives that run contrary to sound teachings. Jesus came to destroy the works of Satan and gave us His authority and power.

Discernment is a powerful battle weapon that starts with bringing into captivity every thought, so that all our thoughts are obedient to Christ (**II Corinthians 10:5**). We demolish all kinds of wrong and evil thoughts through our use of God-directed discernment. All thoughts that are contrary to virtue, purity, and righteousness are demolished. Like begets like, so that impure thoughts result in impurity, hateful thoughts result in hatred. In today's vernacular we say "garbage in, garbage out." To be victorious, our minds must remain vigilant, sensitive to God's truth so that we will not allow Satan any fraction of a victory over us.

In order for our minds to become vigilant, we must digest God's Word by meditating on it "day and night" (**Joshua 1:8**). To have victory in a certain area, you would find the scripture in the Bible that correspond with what you are struggling with. For example, forgiveness, **Matthew 6:14-15, 18:35** gives you instructions concerning forgiveness; therefore you would digest these Scriptures about forgiveness so they can get into your heart. After having digested these Scriptures about forgiving others, you will no longer be concerned when somebody hurts you, rejects you, or insults you. Our humanity still feels the insult, but inside, suddenly, instantly, the hurt is quenched. It is gone, and in its place there is love and compassion for the person who harmed us. We see them as under the devil's influence. This is a powerful teaching, and I want you to understand it.



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Discernment Continued:

Spiritual Warfare

When somebody hurts us, we don't just blank out our hurt feelings saying "Well, God, You're just going to have to deal with this." No. God asks us to deal with our own unforgiveness. We forgive others as an act of obedience to God, and it accrues to our own benefit. Do you see the difference? In contrast, Satan would have us think, "I'm just going to blank out the hurt that so-and-so caused and, God, I'm just going to give this to you. I'm just going to blank my mind out; I'm just going to let you fill me up, Lord." Or worse, "That so-and-so will get his someday. I'm done with him. It's the last time he'll hurt me!" Satan may bring to mind other hurtful experiences in which you failed to forgive this person, making the most recent hurt even more painful ... and self-destructive. The Bible teaches that forgiveness begins with *you*, and it starts in your heart. If *you*, from your heart, don't forgive your brother his trespass, God will not forgive *you*. This requires action on our part. God doesn't just erase the hurts in our life. He wants to meet with us after we choose to obey Him. Then He speaks to our heart and heals it. Forgiveness does not set the other person free; it sets you free from the bondage of bitterness.

Ask yourself how you are dealing with the thoughts and reasoning that come into your mind day and night. Do you find yourself thinking about someone who hurt you, or about a situation where you lost out to someone who harmed you? Do these thoughts sometimes come so fast you can't really think them through? Do thoughts of certain people or events cause you emotional pain? Do you harbor unforgiveness or resentment about your past? Do your own thoughts put you down? If you experience these kinds of thoughts, then Satan's lies are present in your mind. The good news is that you can win victory over Satan. **Ephesians 6** says our battle is not against "flesh and blood." This means our battle is not against people. We might think most of our conflicts are with our mother, father, brother, sister or someone else who has hurt or rejected us. We meditate on these negative thoughts and in so doing, we see their face and remember what they did to us. Satan runs this projector in our minds and whispers in our ear interjecting past hurtful feelings into the present. All too often, we buy the lie! That person is *not* the one who really wronged you! Let **Ephesians 6** give you the answer. Our battle is not with flesh and blood — people that hurt us. Satan wants to hide behind or inside these people. But to be healed, we must begin separating the person from their sin. We must separate the lie from the truth. If we fail to forgive others, our unforgiveness is a sin against God. Unforgiveness is an act of disobedience against God that involves arrogance, pride, and self-exaltation. **Matthew 18:21-22** gives us Jesus' instruction about forgiveness. "**Then came Peter to Him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times: but, seventy times seven.**" Seventy times seventy is four hundred and ninety times in the same day for the same thing. Jesus meant for us to forgive others moment by moment because that is how He wants to forgive us.



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Discernment (Continued): **Spiritual Warfare**

In the manner that we forgive others is the same manner that He will forgive us (**Matthew 6:12**). It doesn't matter what someone's debts against us may be. As mature believers, we need to cast down the imagination and reasoning that keeps us from forgiving (**I Corinthians 10:5**). We cast down destructive thoughts because harboring unforgiveness gives the devil a place in our lives. An evil spirit of bitterness takes root and speaks through us. **John 8:32** says, "**And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**" The purpose of forgiveness is to set us free to become Christ-like. God wants us set free in Christ. I want to be free, and I want you to be free also. I am tired of having Satan steal my life and I hope you are, too. This is why it is so vital that we learn to recognize the wiles and devices of the devil. **Read II Corinthians 10:5** again: "**Casting down imaginations, and every high thing.**" "**High things**" are Satan's demons that bring "**spiritual wickedness in high places**"

Spiritual wickedness exists in high places (**Ephesians 6:12**). What forms the various components of spiritual wickedness? Bitterness, for one thing. Others are unbelief, doubt, and fear. Still other spiritual wickedness in high places includes unforgiveness and resentment. I pray the Holy Spirit is speaking to your heart right now as He spoke to mine about this important matter of discernment.

Retaliation is another spiritual wickedness in high places. "I'm going to get even if it's the last thing I do. I'm going to get them for what they did to me." What are some other forms of spiritual wickedness in high places? Anger, rage, panic, violence, murder, rejection, inferiority, self-hatred, and guilt. What is a "high place"? The highest place in our body is right between our ears — the brain that houses our thoughts and directs our emotions. So what if somebody gets angry with us? So what if they tell lies about us? We must have the discernment to realize that it's the devil committing spiritual warfare against us through that person.

Ephesians 6 says that our battle is not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places. Through the eyes of the Spirit, we can look directly at a person who is victimizing us or putting us down, and we see what is really happening. We look past the person talking to us and see the demonic spirit in high places that controls them. We realize it's not them talking to us, its "spiritual wickedness in high places" inside them talking to us through them. **II Corinthians 10:5** instructs us to cast down every imagination, reasoning, thought and high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. What is "the knowledge of God"?



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Discernment (Continued): **Spiritual Warfare**

I believe that the most important practical application of the knowledge of God for a Christian is: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15). Our own healing begins with forgiving others. So, the knowledge of God involves both the power of forgiveness and knowing who the real target of our spiritual warfare is; it's not flesh and blood, but principalities and powers in high places.

We defeat the devil by first submitting to God. This gives us the right and ability to resist the devil who no longer has a place in our lives. God will do His part by making Satan flee. Satan will no longer have any authority over us. Each time we fail, we need to get back up! We need to confess our failure, repent and go on. It is in this practice and exercise of our senses that we learn to have discernment. What are we to discern? We are to discern whether our thoughts are from God or Satan; whether they are good or evil; the truth or a lie.





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Discernment Continued:

Does God Allow Evil?

The New Testament equates God to love and names Him as light, the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him, the giver of every good and perfect gift, and the beginning and the end. The Old Testament names Him the Creator, Redeemer, Shepherd, Savior, Provider and many other positive names; His names also describe His nature. If His nature consists of these attributes, how can there be evil in the world? "God allowed this cancer (or other negative event) to happen," is a timeworn cliché. Insurance companies label large storms as "acts of God." Philosophers and theologians ask if God "allowed" Hitler to kill millions of Jews during World War II. Did God "allow" all the male babies under age two in Bethlehem to be murdered by Herod in his vain effort to kill the baby Jesus? Many people go through life angry at God because a loved one died or they had a personal tragedy. Why do so many people blame God for these things? They see Him walking around carrying a big stick ready to punish them. Many people think God "allowed" evil things to happen. Let's look at the word "allow." Does it mean that if we choose to allow or not stop something from happening, that to some degree we approve or condone that action? If we choose to allow our children to do something, are we then responsible to some degree for the consequences of that action? If God really allows evil to happen, does that imply that to some degree He approves or condones it? Would it make Him responsible for that evil action? To be responsible for evil requires the commission of a sin. Does God ever sin? Of course not! Something is wrong with our human reasoning when we allege that God allows evil to happen.

Isaiah 45:7 says that "The Lord created evil;" what does this mean? The Hebrew word for "create" is *baw-raw* (HsN-1254) and it means to bring about; bring into existence. **The Hebrew word for "evil" is *rah* (EN-7451). It is never translated "sin." It is translated in the following ways: "evil" (Isaiah 45:7, Genesis 2:9, 17; Genesis 3:5, 22); "calamity" (Psalms 141:5); "adversity" (I Samuel 10:19; Psalms 94:13; Ecclesiastes 7:14); "grievous" (Proverbs 15:10); "sorrow" (Genesis 44:29); "trouble" (Psalms 27:5, Psalms 41:1, Psalms 107:26); "distress" (Nehemiah 2:17); "bad" (Genesis 24:50, Genesis 31:24; Leviticus 27:10-14).** God created the law of sowing and reaping, and those who sow sin will, for certain, reap evil. God decreed that misery, wretchedness, sorrow, trouble and distress will result from sin (**Galatians 6:7-8**). The Hebrew word *rah* (EN-7451) is translated "evil" 442 times, and it is never with the idea that God created sin. People sow their own sin and reap their own sin and reap their own evil; the responsibility for both is theirs. God gave the law and it provided penalties for breaking the law. In light of this, we all should examine what we have been taught, or what we believe. Who is really responsible for evil? Scripture is replete with references to the two kingdoms all mankind inhabit. Satan is called the "god of this world" and the "prince of the power of the air" (**II Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2**); he heads an earthly kingdom. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit live in our lives. Jesus sits at the right hand of God in the third heaven, but His Spirit lives within us and He is in a heavenly kingdom from which He rules the universe. Satan's goal is to destroy us.



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Discernment Continued:

Does God Allow Evil?

The devil employs clever lies and principalities with their demons to persuade us to participate in evil and sin. God comes to us through the Holy Spirit and His Word, and wants us to embrace the truth and be set free from Satan's power. In God's manifold wisdom, He created all of us with a free will. Our free will allows us to choose how to live. We have the option to follow God and His precepts, or Satan, the god of this world. These are the only two choices. The ability to choose is valuable to each of us, but in order to choose there must be choices. Though God created good and evil, evil is not a sin until it results in an action. Our free will is also very important to God. He wants each of us to freely choose Him as He has already chosen us. This reveals the heart of God. God is Love. Have you ever been able to make someone love you? No! Has anyone ever tried to make you love him or her? Love requires an act of our free will. Love is an action and a choice. God wants each of us to choose a love relationship with Him, where we remain faithful to Him. It is the only kind of relationship that has any meaning to it. It is an intimate fellowship that only God can have with each of us.

The word "fellowship" found in **Ephesians 3:9**, means a partnership or joint effort. This type of fellowship can only happen if both parties voluntarily agree. God wants us to choose to love Him as He has already chosen to love us! "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (**Ephesians 3:9-10**).

Does this understanding of choosing to love God cast a different light on our relationship with Him? Does this cast a different light on our responsibility to properly exercise our free will? Everything bad that has ever happened to us on earth was planned in hell and executed by one of Satan's demons. These bad consequences happen because of one or more of the following three aspects. First, because this is a fallen and cursed world, things will go wrong — bad things will happen. There are natural disasters, diseases and other calamities that result from the curse. An example is the blind man in **John 9**. But these are still the result of sin and Satan. This was a perfect world before Satan's temptation of Adam and Eve led them to sin, and it will be again when God provides the new heavens and the new earth. Second, exercising their free will, people choose to follow Satan and thus commit acts. These evil acts hurt innocent people. This is what Hitler, Herod and many others have done throughout history. In our choices to follow Satan and not God, each of us has also hurt innocent people. Third, we suffer the consequences of our own sins. These consequences are something evil that enters our lives. As a result of our sins, God turns us over to our own devices (**Proverbs 1:27-30**). We will reap what we sow; in this God will not be mocked (**Galatians 6:7**). The bottom line is that God is Love. All of His acts, even those we don't understand, are motivated by His love.



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BFOF Study Guide

Topic: "Discernment"

GOAL:

To gain discernment about God's principles and Satan's attacks.

TO THINK ABOUT:

Write in your own words a definition for discernment.

According to **Hebrews 5:14** what does the word "Discernment" mean?

What is a mature Christian able to do? (**Hebrews 5:14**)

What are the first principles or basic principles of Christianity? (**Hebrews 6:1-2**)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Who has blinded our eyes? **II Corinthians 4:4, John 12:40**

What does **Jeremiah 17** say about our hearts?

Are you willing to pray David's prayer in **Psalms 139:23-24**? If so, do it now.



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BFOF Study Guide (Continued)

Topic: Discernment

James 4:7 requires each believer to do two things, what are they?

1. _____
2. _____

If we do these two things what does God promise to do? (**James 4:7-8**)

1. _____
2. _____

Satan attacks each of us in three ways; what are they?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What does **II Corinthians 10:5** teach us to do?

What is "spiritual wickedness"? List several examples.

What is a "high place"?

What is the knowledge of God?

What are "fiery darts"? List several examples.

What does it mean to "take your thoughts captive"?



BFOF Study Guide (Continued)

Topic: Discernment

Job 3:1 says that Job opened his mouth and cursed his day. **Chapters 3-32** list 91 sins Job committed. What are some of them?

What did Job repent of in **Chapter 42**?

List the three ways that we suffer in this world:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Note: notice that sin is the one thing in common in all three ways that we suffer.

Is God ever our enemy?

Are we our own enemy?

Who is our enemy?

Read **James 1:16-17**. Do you agree with this statement: "God the Father is giver of only good and perfect gifts? If it is not good and perfect it is from the devil?"

What does it mean to expose your thoughts to "the obedience of Christ"?

After you have learned to "think about what you are thinking" what do you do with the thoughts?

Read **Philippians 4:8** in your Bible. What does it say we are to do with our thoughts if they align with Scripture?



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BFOF Study Guide (Continued)

Topic: Discernment

If the thought does not line up with scripture what do you do with it? (**II Corinthians 10:5**)

How do we take revenge on evil? Remember that only forgiveness and repentance cancels the devils rights to us.

Who created evil?

Is evil sin?

Why Did God Create Evil?

Who allows "evil" in this world?

What does the word "allow" mean?

Is God responsible for the evil acts of people? Some teach that since God is sovereign He allows and therefore is responsible for our evil acts. Is this true?

What about Job? Most teach that Job was sinless and that God tested him with disease and other calamities. Is this correct?

Does God always have our best interest in mind? (**Matthew 7:11**)



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BFOF Study Guide (Continued)

Topic: Discernment

According to **Proverbs 1:24-31**, what happens when we disregard the wisdom and knowledge of God and sin?

Read **Deuteronomy 28**. List the contrast between obedience and disobedience to God?

Are these the same as the laws of sowing and reaping in the New Testament? See **Galatians 6:7**

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

List ways in which Satan attacks you.

1. Physically
2. Spiritually
3. Mentally

APPLICATION:

Write out **Psalm 139:23-24** replacing the personal pronouns with your own name.