



DISCERNMENT

CONVERSATION #5: THE KINGDOM LENS CHALLENGE

READ: CLARITY FOR THE FIRST TIME

I didn't realize how bad my vision had gotten until I put on the glasses. I had learned how to compensate - squinting, leaning closer, assuming everyone else saw the world the same way I did. Nothing felt *wrong* enough to question. This was just how things looked to me. Then the optometrist handed me a pair of glasses and said, "Try these." And suddenly everything was clear. What surprised me most wasn't how blurry things had been - it was how confident I was that I was seeing clearly. I wasn't ignoring reality. I just didn't know I needed help seeing it. I think that's how our beliefs sometimes work, too.

We pick up ways of thinking from our families, our experiences, our fears, our successes, and even from church. Over time, those beliefs start feeling like facts. We don't usually ask, "*Is this actually true?*" We ask, "*Does this make sense?*"

Spiritual growth doesn't start by changing everything we believe. Maybe it starts by realizing we're looking through a lens at all. Discernment is learning how to slow down, hold our beliefs up to Scripture, and ask, "Does this help me see truth more clearly - or is it quietly distorting it?" Discernment is holding the lens of God's Kingdom up to our eyes, to make sure that we can truly see.

THE CHALLENGE:

Scripture calls us to examine what we believe, not just repeat it. The Apostle Paul reminds us that spiritual transformation happens through the *renewing of our minds*, so that we can learn to test and discern what is truly from God (**Romans 12:2**). In other words: clarity over assumption. Ownership over imitation. So this week, we're going to practice doing that work for ourselves - identifying the beliefs we live by, holding them up to Scripture, and allowing God's truth to sharpen how we see and how we live.

Challenge #6: THE KINGDOM LENS CHALLENGE - Identify **five core beliefs** that currently shape how you live - the values that influence your decisions, relationships, priorities, and responses under pressure (not what you think you *should* believe, but what your actions reveal you believe is most important). For example, things like:

*You should always do your best.
Always do what you can to keep the peace.
Every day is a chance to get better.
Happiness is the key to a well-lived life.
It's a free world, I can do what I want.*

For each belief, clearly state it in one sentence, identify where it has been most formed (personal experience, culture, family, church, fear, desire, or Scripture), and then study specific biblical passages that speak directly to it.

As you read, note where Scripture affirms, challenges, or redefines that belief, and then rewrite it using only biblical language - even if the result is more demanding or less comfortable. This challenge is complete when each core belief has been examined and reshaped by Scripture rather than assumption.

TO HELP YOU PREPARE AND WORK ON THIS CHALLENGE:

STEP 1: Identify Your Current Core Beliefs
<p>Take a few minutes with your partner to write down the most important things that shape <i>how</i> you live—what actually drives your decisions, reactions, and priorities. Try to put words to the values, assumptions, and lenses through which you view the world.</p> <p>If you get stuck, pay attention to your emotional reactions. Think about what irritates you, frustrates you, or quickly gets you worked up. Those moments are often strong indicators that one of your core values or beliefs is being challenged or violated. Use those reactions as clues to uncover what’s really sitting at the center of how you live.</p>
STEP 2: Examine Each Belief Honestly
<p>For each belief you’ve written down, take time to slow down and examine it honestly. Ask yourself where this belief came from and who or what shaped it over time. Consider how it influences your reactions, priorities, and fears in everyday life, and whether you’ve ever actually tested it against Scripture or simply assumed it was true. Remember - confidence does not equal truth.</p>
STEP 3: Filter Each Belief Through Scripture
<p>For each belief, find at least one passage of Scripture that speaks directly to it. As you read, ask whether Scripture affirms the belief, challenges it, or reframes it altogether.</p>
STEP 4: Adopt the Biblical Rewrite (Ownership Moment)
<p>Then rewrite each belief using biblical language and perspective. For example, a belief like “God helps those who help themselves” is corrected by Proverbs 3:5–6 into this truth: God calls me to trust Him fully rather than rely on my own understanding. Once you’ve rewritten your core beliefs, compile them into one document that you can share with your discipleship partner(s) and return to whenever you need clarity or direction.</p>

CLOSING THOUGHTS:

As you finish this challenge, remember that the goal wasn’t to fix every belief or arrive at perfect clarity. The goal was to practice discernment - to learn how to slow down, test what you believe, and let Scripture shape your thinking. This is what it looks like to move from being fed by others to feeding yourself.

Each time you examine a belief, search God’s Word, and allow truth to refine your perspective, you grow in spiritual maturity. Over time, this practice trains you to see more clearly, respond more faithfully, and live from convictions that are rooted not in comfort or confidence, but in God’s truth.