

Insight for the Issues

Prov. 4:23

NE→XT STEPS

Prov. 4:23 **Keep thy heart** with all diligence; for **out of it are the issues of life.**

Two weeks ago we began a new series – “Insight for the Issues” – considering issue that believers must confront during our lifetime. Each generation has its own historical epoch that is unique for their time. Some intellectuals label it *zeitgeist*.

Zeitgeist = the general, intellectual, moral, and cultural climate of an era.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/zeitgeist>

What are the issues facing us in our day? How is a Christian to be prepared to properly face and respond to the constant bombardment of ideas, philosophies, that affect our lives? Should a believer be expected to have a Scriptural perspective or viewpoint regarding politics, lifestyles, and other various issues? Note the following Scriptural perspective:

1 Chron. 12:32 “...**which were men** that had understanding of the **times, to know what Israel ought to do...**”

Est. 1:13 “...the wise men, **which knew the times...**”

Mt. 16:3 “...O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; **but can ye not discern the signs of the times?**”

Prov. 22:3 A prudent *man* **foreseeth...**”

I. THE FOCUS IS UPON THE SPIRITUAL RATHER THAN THE EARTHLY

Prov. 4:23 **Keep thy heart** with all diligence; for **out of it are the issues of life.**

A. The Primary Challenge = the Heart

B. The Practical Challenge = The Head

❖ The believer must be in control of his “thought-life.”

Prov. 23:7 For **as he thinketh in his heart**, so *is* he...”

❖ The believer must “think on” some things, and NOT think about other things:

II. THE FOUNDATION IS UPON THE SCRIPTURES RATHER THAN THE EMOTIONAL

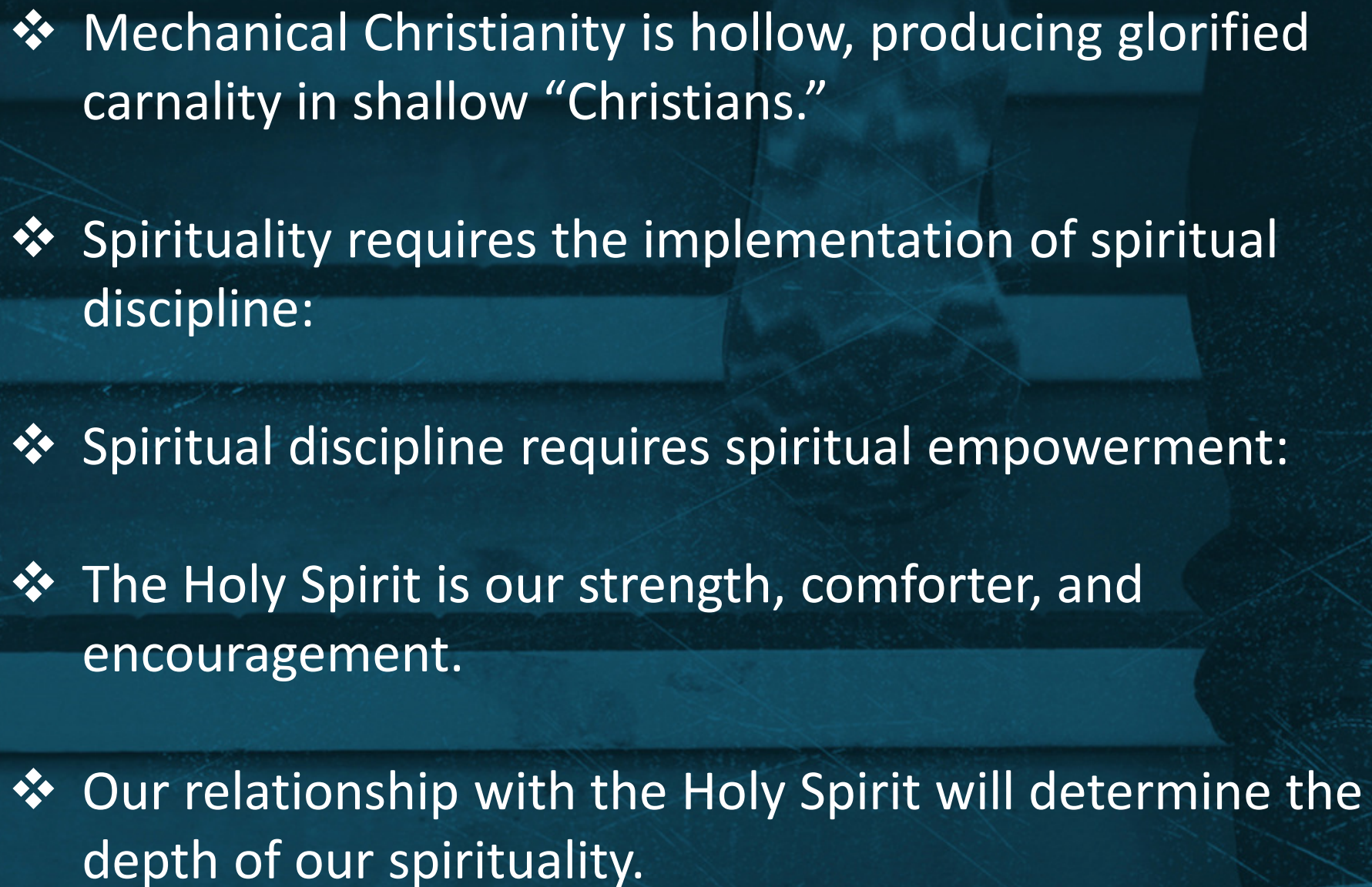
- ❖ In order to focus upon the spiritual rather than the earthly, we must go to the Scriptures – “the sword of the Spirit”

A. The Establishment of Spirituality

- ❖ Any spiritual endeavor must begin with the Creator.
- ❖ When a sinner is “born-again,” the spirit is made alive, the sinner changed, and now able to pursue a spiritual relationship.

B. The Exercise of Spirituality

- ❖ Knowing spiritual truth without daily implementation, by believers, is an exercise of futility.
- ❖ Spiritual growth, motivated by love for Christ, produces spiritual churches.

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- ❖ Mechanical Christianity is hollow, producing glorified carnality in shallow “Christians.”
 - ❖ Spirituality requires the implementation of spiritual discipline:
 - ❖ Spiritual discipline requires spiritual empowerment:
 - ❖ The Holy Spirit is our strength, comforter, and encouragement.
 - ❖ Our relationship with the Holy Spirit will determine the depth of our spirituality.

Tonight, as we consider that our relationship with the Holy Spirit will determine the depth of our spirituality, we consider the third aspect for discernment, having *"Insight for the Issues"*...

III. THE FORESIGHT IS UPON THE SPIRITUALITY RATHER THAN THE EXPERIENTIAL

- ❖ Someone has said that hindsight is 20/20.
- ❖ Foresight for a believer's spiritual future is too often clouded by the world, flesh and devil.

Foresight (*noun*)

care or provision for the future; provident care; prudence.

an act of looking forward.

knowledge or insight gained by or as by looking forward; a view of the future.

<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/foresight?s=ts>

❖ Our relationship with the Holy Spirit will not only determine the depth of our spirituality, but, will also enlighten our understanding for our future development.

1 Jn. 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but **try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.**

2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: **Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:**

3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

A. Foresight may be conflicted – 4:1a “Beloved, believe not every spirit...”

1 Jn. 4:3b “...and this is that *spirit* of antichrist...”

B. Foresight must be clarified – 4:1b “...but try the spirits whether they are of God...”

Mt. 24:4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, **Take heed that no man deceive you.**

5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; **and shall deceive many. ...**

11 And **many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.**

12 And because iniquity shall abound, **the love of many shall wax cold.**

...

23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here *is* Christ, or there; **believe it not.**

24 **For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets,** and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, **if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.**

C. Foresight may be controversial – 4:3a “And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh **is not of God...**”

1 Cor. 14:33 For **God is not the author of confusion,** but of peace, **as in all churches of the saints.**

D. Foresight manifests convictions – 1 Cor. 2:13-16

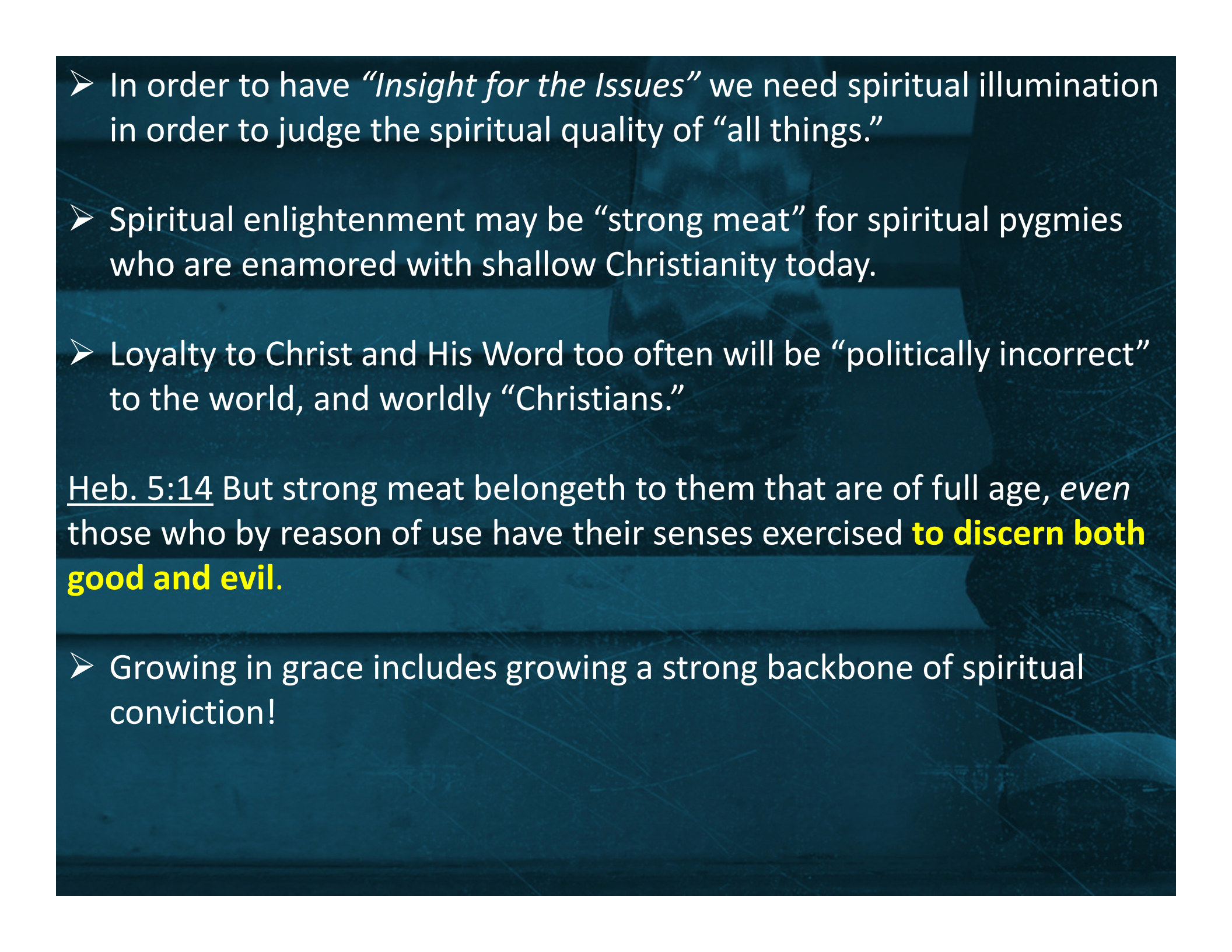
1 Cor. 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; **comparing spiritual things with spiritual.**

14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, **because they are spiritually discerned.**

15 But **he that is spiritual judgeth all things**, yet he himself is judged of no man.

16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

- ❖ Conviction of the source – 2:13b “...which the Holy Ghost teacheth...”
- ❖ Conviction of spirituality – 2:13c “...comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”
- ❖ Conviction for self-control – 2:15 “...he that is spiritual judgeth **all** things...”

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- In order to have “*Insight for the Issues*” we need spiritual illumination in order to judge the spiritual quality of “all things.”
 - Spiritual enlightenment may be “strong meat” for spiritual pygmies who are enamored with shallow Christianity today.
 - Loyalty to Christ and His Word too often will be “politically incorrect” to the world, and worldly “Christians.”

Heb. 5:14 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.**

- Growing in grace includes growing a strong backbone of spiritual conviction!

Conclusion

1 Kings 3:9 **Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart** to judge thy people, **that I may discern** between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

Ezek. 44:23 And they shall teach my people *the difference* between the holy and profane, and **cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.**

Mal. 3:18 Then shall ye return, and **discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.**

Eccl. 8:5 Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: and **a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment.**

Heb. 4:12 For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* **a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.**

Psa. 119:105 **Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.**

130 **The entrance of thy words giveth light;** it giveth understanding unto the simple.