PART I

**Introduction**

# 1

## THE CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

### A. Why Discernment?

Modernity has struggled into the twenty-first century, sharply aware that
its previously self-confident profile cannot be taken for granted anymore.
Complex questions require immediate and attentive scrutiny: how can the
looming worries of a 'clash of civilisations' be avoided? Wherein does the
dignity of human life lie with respect to its beginning, its end and its rela-
tionship to other creatures? How can we evaluate such diverse phenomena
as the changing expressions of sexuality, innovations in biotechnology or
complex procedures of globalised interdependence? These pressing ques-
tions with their universal implications are accompanied by concerns of
more personal and spiritual significance for believers of the Christian
faith: does the Lord lead individuals in every detail of their lives? Is the
will of God clearly defined? Is it easily accessible? How does the Spirit
guide each believer personally?

These questions illustrate the interest in and need for discernment in
a time far removed from Paul's. So can and should scholarship answer
these questions with the aid of Paul? Is he a reliable guide for issues he
had not foreseen? If we agree that Paul should be consulted, how concrete
or abstract will that help be? Paul has intrigued scholars and believers for
centuries with the gift he introduces in 1 Cor. 12.10, the ability to discern
the spirits. What did he mean? Is it a secondary issue or a central part of
his theology? Is it a gift for all believers or for a few gifted members of
the church?

E. Käsemann, P. Stuhlmacher and J. C. Beker offer a basis for
dealing with this gift in a comprehensive manner. All three situate
discernment at the heart of Paul's theology, yet without clearly substan-
tiating their claim. For Käsemann, 'rechte Theologie' is neither scholas-
tic repetition of tradition nor is it defined by religious or enthusiastic
experience. Rather, he claims, it occurs in the discernment of spirits

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(1 Cor. 12.10).[1] Likewise, Stuhlmacher describes true Christian thought
between the cross and the parousia in precisely the same terms: διάκρισις
πνευμάτων.[2] And J. C. Beker has given the discernment of spirits a cru-
cial role in his incisive presentation of Pauline theology: 'the locus of the
interaction between coherence and contingency [the details of which we
shall return to] is the Holy Spirit, which has the function of the διακρίσεις
πνευμάτων (1 Cor 12:10)'.[3]

   If the assessment of these scholars is correct, then this gift needs to
be embedded in a broader discussion about the nature of Paul's theol-
ogising generally and the structure of epistemology in his letters more
specifically.[4] Recent work has highlighted the need for this broad perspec-
tive. J. G. Lewis proposes that Paul 'theologizes by practising spiritual
discernment, engaging in theo-ethical reasoning'.[5] 'Theo-ethical reason-
ing', according to Lewis, implies that Paul engages in 'reasoned ethical
reflection'.[6] But what does this mean epistemologically for discernment?
It is remarkable that, while Käsemann and Stuhlmacher appear to imply
a process of human thought, Beker assumes that the Holy Spirit is the
subject of discernment.[7] Do these assumptions contradict or complement

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[1] E. Käsemann, '1 Korinther 2, 6–16', in *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen* I
(Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1965[4]) 274.

[2] P. Stuhlmacher, 'Glauben und Verstehen bei Paulus', *Evangelische Theologie* 26 (1966)
337.

[3] J. C. Beker, 'Recasting Pauline Theology: The Coherence-Contingency Scheme as
Interpretive Model', in J. M. Bassler (ed.), *Pauline Theology* I. *Thessalonians, Philippians,
Galatians, Philemon* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991) 18–19.

[4] The primary interest of my research will lie in the seven undisputed Pauline letters.
However, I will, at points, also include Ephesians and Colossians. While I do not intend to
defend Pauline authorship for either one, it is possible to speak of the 'Pauline nature' of
the theology presented there (L. Cerfaux, *The Christian in the Theology of Paul* [London:
Geoffrey Chapman, 1967] 472). In the matter of wisdom, E. E. Ellis believes that Colossians
and Ephesians (e.g. Col. 2.3 and Eph. 1.8f.; 3.9f.) 'only restate exegetical conclusions that
are found in their more original commentary forms in 1 Corinthians 1–4 and Romans 11'
('"Wisdom" and "Knowledge" in I Corinthians', in *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early
Christianity* [WUNT 18; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1978] 60). Cf. J. D. G. Dunn, who uses
both Ephesians and Colossians in *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark,
1998) 732, but does not claim Pauline authorship for them.

[5] J. G. Lewis, *Looking for Life: The Role of 'Theo-Ethical Reasoning' in Paul's Religion*
(JSNT.S 291; London: T&T Clark, 2005) 222.

[6] Lewis, *Life*, 36–82, here 205.

[7] In a thesis in Greek, J. Jillions claims that Paul's aim is to contrast God's guidance
with the 'first century world' which 'was characterised by allegiance to human guides of all
kinds' ('Decision-Making and Divine Guidance: Greco-Roman, Jewish and Pauline Views'
[Seminar Paper, SBL Conference, July 2003] 10). Although he does not wish to contrast
this with 'rational thought', he does not explain how God's guidance and rational thought
work together. This is a significant problem in scholarship generally, which I mean to rectify

one another? I. W. Scott has presented research on Paul's theological knowledge, which highlights both the rational and spiritual aspects of Paul's epistemology.[8] According to Scott, Paul's reasoning is structured as a story: Paul expects his audience to be 'emplotted' in the 'theological narrative' of Christ, which transforms believers and 'does not allow for the . . . gulf between religious dogma and lived experience'.[9] But this raises further questions: if theology and ethics are interdependent, what implications can we assume for the structure of Paul's hermeneutics?[10] If spiritual discernment is the 'center of his religion', can we establish a theory of how Paul believed it functioned?[11] How do mind and Spirit work together?

It is my aim in this book to attend to these questions. In order to establish an accurate understanding, I propose to broaden the scope of the study. I will include other terms which imply discernment (evaluation, interpretation and judgement) and other passages which highlight the epistemological, psychological and theological background of the process of verification and understanding, thereby offering an investigation into the *concept* of discernment in the Pauline literature. Such a conceptual approach stands in contrast to an exegetical thesis or a concentration on a word study, since it broadens research in a linguistically justifiable manner to include features (words, passages, discourses) which elucidate, but are not semantically tied to, discernment.[12]

The following introduction will delineate the scope of this book. While this will include an overview of the state of research, my primary aim is to substantiate the focus of my argument and the nature of my conceptual approach. In the course of the study, I will present more details of the

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('Decision-Making', is taken from '"Let thy Good Spirit Guide me", Divine Guidance in Corinth: Greco-Roman, Jewish and Pauline Views' [Unpubl. PhD dissertation, University of Thessalonica, 2002]).

[8] I. W. Scott, *Implicit Epistemology in the Letters of Paul: Story, Experience and the Spirit* (WUNT 2,205; Tübingen, Mohr/Siebeck, 2006).

[9] Scott, *Epistemology*, 284.

[10] For Lewis, *Life*, 205ff., the connection of theology and ethics is also an important result of his work.

[11] Lewis, *Life*, 222.

[12] The legitimacy of traditional word studies as the basis for establishing theology has been rightly criticised, specifically by J. Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961). The alternative, more cautious approach of grouping words according to semantic domains, and hence basing theological observations on the shoulders of the broader discourse concepts, has given biblical interpretation firmer ground to stand on (cf. P. Cotterell and M. Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation* [Downers Grove, IL InterVarsity Press: 1989] 106–23).

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history of research into the relevant aspects of Pauline theology and when
we encounter them.

## B.        Delineating the Conceptual Approach

In the three points that follow I aim to outline the concept of discernment.
First, I shall propose a semantic definition, secondly an elucidation of
the epistemological focus on the sources of discernment and, finally, a
structural and theological classification.

### 1.        Semantic Overview and Definition

The three terms which have been at the centre of attention with respect to
Pauline discernment are διακρίνω/διάκρισις and δοκιμάζω. The debate
about διάκρισις πνευμάτων[13] (1 Cor. 12.10, and διακρίνω in 1 Cor.
14.29) has focussed on its role as a regulative force within the charis-
matic community. Should it be understood exclusively as the interpre-
tation of prophecy or also more generally as an evaluation of spiritual
manifestations?[14] While this discussion continues to require our detailed
attention, it is notable that it has not, in any significant manner, been
related to the broader depictions of Pauline theology noted at the begin-
ning.[15] A similar deficit applies to the detailed studies on δοκιμάζω.[16]

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[13] Both plural and singular of διάκρισις have good textual evidence: the singular with
Sinaiticus, C, D*, F, G, P, 0201, 33, 1175 (*pauci*), latt, sy[p], sa, Clemens Alexandrinus;
the plural with P[46], A, B, D[2], Ψ, 1739, 1881, Maj, sy[h], bo. However, as G. Dautzenberg
(*Urchristliche Prophetie: Ihre Erforschung, ihre Voraussetzungen im Judentum und ihre
Struktur im ersten Korintherbrief* [BWANT 104; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1975] 124) points
out, the *lectio difficilior* is probably the plural, since it is plausible that the early church moved
to the slightly easier understanding of the singular (cf. similarly English Bible translations).
It is possible that the plural expresses the fact that the gift was used frequently. Nevertheless,
I do not deduce any further meaning from the plural and hence interchange between plural
(which I use when citing 1 Cor. 12.10) and the singular (which I generally use) without
implying a difference in meaning or intention.

[14] The two positions are presented by G. Dautzenberg ('Zum religionsgeschichtlichen
Hintergrund der διακρίσεις πνευμάτων [1 Kor 12:10]', *BZ* 15 [1971] 93–104) and
W. Grudem ('A Response to Gerhard Dautzenberg on 1 Cor. 12.10', *BZ* 22 [1978]
253–70). While Dautzenberg has provoked debate with his innovative understanding of
διάκρισις πνευμάτων as an interpretation of prophecy, Grudem insists on the traditional
reading.

[15] This also applies to Jillions ('Decision-Making', 1) who has a conceptual approach
and studies various terms in 1 Corinthians, but does not tie this in with broader questions
of truth formation and theological verification.

[16] L. Asciutto, 'Decisione e liberta in Cristo. Δοκιμάζειν in alcuni passi di S. Paolo',
*Rivista di Teologia Morale* 3 (1971) 229–45; G. Therrien, *Le discernement dans les écrits
pauliniens* (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1973).

Since O. Cullmann designated this verb as 'the key to all New Testament
ethics', its significance has been noted primarily with respect to the eth-
ical dimension of Pauline thought and, more problematically, has been
tied to the word and its cognates.[17] G. Therrien's study is misleading as
his focus on δοκιμάζω and cognates does not do justice to his conceptual
title (*Discernement*) and therefore offers partially incorrect theological
conclusions.[18]

### Excursus: The Conceptual Inaccuracy of G. Therrien's Study

Gérard Therrien has presented a detailed study of δοκιμάζω and its cognates
δοκιμή, δόκιμος and ἀδόκιμος (the latter three provide twenty of a total of thirty-
seven occurrences he investigates). He takes this approach because he follows the
traditional method of a word study.[19] This is inaccurate because, while the title
and intent of his study presupposes a conceptual study, he offers an investigation
of lexically related words.[20] On the basis of an *etymological* argument, he iden-
tifies the basic/proper meaning of δοκιμάζω as 'accepter ou être accepté après
épreuve'.[21] However, such an approach does not do justice to the synchronic use
of the terms and can be rejected as linguistically inaccurate.[22] While δοκιμάζω
is linguistically linked to δόκιμος[23] and both may belong to the same semantic

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[17] O. Cullmann (*Christ and Time: The Primitive Christian Conception of Time and
History* [trans. F. V. Filson; London: SCM Press, 1962²] 228). He goes on to say that
'the working of the Holy Spirit shows itself chiefly in the testing (δοκιμάζειν), that is in the
*capacity of forming the correct Christian ethical judgement at each given moment . . .*' While
Therrien (*Discernement*) places ethical discernment in a broader eschatological context, the
conceptual title is misleading, as his focus lies only on δοκιμάζω and its cognates.

[18] We shall return to Therrien's conclusions in chapter 2.

[19] Therrien, *Discernement*, 4f.

[20] Therrien, *Discernement*, 5. For the rationale behind concentrating only on δοκιμάζω
and related words, he refers to Spicq ('Le langage humain est comme le sacrement de la
pensée révélée . . . chaque terme doit faire l'objet d'une étude sémantique si l'on veut retrou-
ver sa puissance et sa vérité d'évocation) and Congar ('la philologie a parfois renouvelé
heureusement certains paragraphes de la théologie').

[21] Therrien, *Discernement*, 10 (following Prellwitz he refers back to δέχομαι and even
back to Sanskrit for clarification); cf. W. Grundmann, 'δόκιμος κτλ.', *TDNT* II, 255: the
'Stammwort' is δοκή.

[22] Cotterell and Turner, *Linguistics*, 25, distinguish diachronic and synchronic linguistics
as follows. A diachronic study takes a historical 'cross-section' whereas a synchronic study
is the 'examination of a single cross-section'. 'The history of a word (a *diachronic* study
of its use) may explain *how* a word came to be used with some particular sense at a
specified time . . . The state of a language, and of its lexical stock, can be understood
entirely by direct observation of usage at the time in question (synchronous study)' (132,
cf. 113).

[23] Δοκιμάζω 'ist Denominativ von δόκιμος' (G. Schunack, 'δοκιμάζω', *EDNT* I, 341).
Cf. J. H. Moulton, W. F. Howard and N. Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* II
(Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1923) 405.

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domains ('to learn', 'to think'),[24] not all references relate to discernment. What terms are not relevant then for this discussion?

Except for the word play with δοκιμάζω, δόκιμος and ἀδόκιμος in 2 Cor. 13.4ff.,[25] the related terms (δόκιμος, δοκιμή, ἀδόκιμος) can all be eliminated from this study. They do not refer to my concept of discernment.[26] It is not justifiable to relate the 'worthiness' of the believers' or apostle's work to their discernment.[27] This criticism also calls into question the inclusion of those instances of the verb δοκιμάζω where God tests his people (1 Cor. 3.13; 1 Thess. 2.4).[28] Linking this aspect with the discernment that believers undertake is only supported on the basis of the same word-form being used in both contexts. For one, there is no contextual evidence that these two aspects are to be correlated.[29] Further, it is unthinkable to apply a similar logic to other verbs, such as πειράζω. For instance, Therrien would surely not explain Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians to *test* themselves (cf. 2 Cor 13.5 where πειράζω is used synonymously with δοκιμάζω) in the same way as Satan *tempts* (cf. πειράζω in 1 Cor. 7.5). It is also hard to conceive that he would see a parallel with those that tested God and were destroyed by serpents (cf. πειράζω in 1 Cor. 10.9).[30]

But what references of δοκιμάζω are applicable to my concept of discernment? It is helpful to organise these according to the objects of δοκιμάζω. The believers are to:

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[24] J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, *Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament* II (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988) 364.

[25] The thrust of this passage (2 Cor. 12.19–13.10) is partially ironic and no doubt Paul is playing with different aspects of 'passing a test', cf. R. P. Martin, *2 Corinthians* (WBC 40; Waco, Tx: Word Books, 1986) 481f. 'Paul is concerned that the test imposed in 13:5 and 13:6, respectively, be passed. But he will be more than happy, if he does *not* pass the test of 13:7. If he fails this one that means he will not have to discipline the church, for its members will have repented' (*2 Corinthians*, 482). The 'common denominator for all uses' is 'that the presence and power of Christ be demonstrated in each instance'.

[26] Most of the occurrences can be translated by 'proven worthiness' or its negation (or by the more precise German term *Bewährung*; δοκιμή: Rom. 5.4; 2 Cor. 2.9; 8.2; 9.13; Phil. 2.22; δόκιμος: Rom. 16.10; 1 Cor. 11.19; 2 Cor. 10.18; 13.7; ἀδόκιμος: 1 Cor. 9.27). The rest can be understood as 'evidence/proof' (δοκιμή: 2 Cor. 13.3), 'human approval' (δόκιμος: Rom. 14.18), 'debased' (Rom. 1.28).

[27] If Therrien wanted to do that, he would have to also study synonymous words which signify the value of works such as δίκαιος.

[28] It is generally pointed out that this aspect has its origin in the OT: cf. Therrien (*Discernement*, 305ff.) and Grundmann ('δόκιμος', 257). Schunack ('δοκιμάζω', 341) shows that in the LXX the verb is used for the Hebrew *bahan* where it is found particularly in poetic texts and has Yahweh as subject twenty-two out of twenty-eight times, e.g. Pss. 16.3; 25.2; 138.1, 23.

[29] Neither in 1 Cor. 3.13 nor in 1 Thess. 2.4 is God's testing linked with human discernment.

[30] Finally, I exclude three occurrences of δοκιμάζω from my study because they refer to an approval by Paul (2 Cor. 8.8, 22) or by the Corinthians (1 Cor. 16.3) and are not linked in any particular manner to a process of discernment, but to other types of testing; so, correctly, Asciutto ('Decisione', 230), who excludes these.

- test themselves and their 'work' (Rom. 14.22; 1 Cor. 11.28; 2 Cor. 13.5; Gal. 6.4);
- test 'everything' (1 Thess. 5.21);
- discover 'the things that are important or pleasing to God' (Rom. 2.18; 12.2; Phil. 1.10; cf. Eph. 5.10).
- The Gentiles did not see fit to acknowledge God (Rom. 1.28).[31]

These objects call into question a further point of Therrien's study: his focus solely on ethical discernment.[32] My argument in this book will give evidence that such a focus does not do justice to Paul's thinking. At this point it must suffice to note that Therrien misses that δοκιμάζω is partially synonymous with other verbs denoting discernment.[33] In 1 Cor. 11.31 διακρίνω is used as an equivalent term to δοκιμάζω.[34] And, in 1 Thess. 5.21 it could be interchanged with ἀνακρίνω, which is used in a similar manner in 1 Cor. 2.15, where Paul also claims that all things can be evaluated. Nevertheless, not all occurrences of δοκιμάζω should be used identically. Some of the occurrences emphasise the *process* of examination (1 Cor 11.28; 2 Cor. 13.5; Gal. 6.4; 1 Thess. 5.21), others stress the *result* of the examination (Rom. 1.28; 14.22) and others combine both aspects (Rom. 2.18; 12.2; Phil. 1.10).[35]

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[31] For the significance of the 'deliberate decision' of the Gentiles, cf. J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC 38A; Dallas: Word Books, 1988) 66. H. Schlier (*Der Römerbrief* [HThK 6; Freiburg: Herder, 1977] 63) points out that the 'Verweigerung' of God is not a 'Fatum' but a decision, a 'Prüfung und ein Entschluß'. Rom. 1.28 also shows that both δοκιμάζω and ἀδόκιμος can be used in the same verse without any relationship to one another. There is no reason why Paul could not have used πονηρός or κοινός instead of ἀδόκιμος and hence there is no need to extrapolate meaning from them appearing together (contra Therrien, *Discernement*, 135).

[32] Therrien deals with and explains all the passages mostly within his 'moral' framework, even those clearly denoting a broader object (such as Rom. 1.28; 1 Thess. 5.21; *Discernement*, 78f., 302).

[33] Although, in his introduction, Therrien promises to touch on the other terms, the treatment is not only 'en proportion moindre', as he promises, it is essentially insubstantial (*Discernement*, 4). Διάκρισις/διακρίνω is referred to only in passing. 1 Cor. 12.10 and 14.29 are offered as parallels to 1 Thess. 5.19–21 (*Discernement*, 72–9) and he mentions these passages when he deals with 1 Cor. 11.28 (89f.). The links to σοφία, φρόνησις, σύνεσις and, for that matter, to 1 Cor. 2.6–16 appear as references in the concluding section of his work, where he synthesises the foundations and principles of δοκιμάζω, but they are not dealt with on their own terms (*Discernement*, 273f). Therrien's claim that Romans treats the concept of discernment in greatest detail is incorrect in view of the centrality of the issue in 1 Corinthians (*Discernement*, 264).

[34] Cf. W. Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther (1 Kor 11,17–14,40)* (EKK 7/III; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1999) 54, who shows διακρίνω and δοκιμάζω are interchangeable there. The same process is implied.

[35] Against G. D. Fee (*Paul's Letter to the Philippians* [NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995] 101) who comments that δοκιμάζω 'always carries the connotation of "proving", thus "approving" something by putting it to the test'. This can be misleading as it is too categorical and does not allow the different nuances to stand out. See particularly Schunack ('δοκιμάζειν', 341), who warns that the meanings are not to be harmonised. There is a possible distinction to be made between 'put to the test, examine' and the result of the

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Gérard Therrien's approach is too narrow and too broad at the same time. It is too narrow because, as my thesis will demonstrate, it misses the breadth of Paul's view by neglecting all the other terms denoting the concept of discernment. It is too broad because the information he does offer has in part no thematic link to discernment but only a lexical connection to δοκιμάζω.

Having clarified the inadequacy of a focus on certain words, what does my *conceptual* approach entail? While for analytical purposes I will study the evaluation and interpretation of ethical and spiritual (πνευματικά, 1 Cor. 2.13, and πνεύματα, 1 Cor. 12.10)[36] matters separately, my argument will be concerned to give a coherent depiction by interrelating the terms in a more extensive theological manner.[37]

This kind of extensive picture emerges when we position 'discernment' within the general semantic domain of intellectual ability, which includes the more specific domains 'know', 'learn', 'think', 'understand'.[38] The acquisition ('to learn')[39] and possession of information ('to know') or understanding ('to understand')[40] form the essential backdrop to my

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examination, 'regard as worthwhile'. But the latter definition implies a certain amount of reflection preceding the approval, as in Louw and Nida (*Lexicon* I, 364).

[36] For a clarification of how and why I use 'spiritual' in contrast to 'theological' see n. 58 (chapter 1).

[37] Sometimes an explicit differentiation is given on the basis of a difference between διακρίνω and δοκιμάζω (J. Martucci, 'Diakriseis Pneumaton [1 Co 12,10]', *Église et Théologie* 9 [1978], 467), while at other times no clear reasoning is given. J. D. G. Dunn (*Jesus and the Spirit* [London: SCM Press, 1975] 223ff.) differentiates implicitly in concentrating on δοκιμάζω 'which refers to ethical decision making' and, on the other hand, the evaluation of inspired utterances (διάκρισις πνευμάτων; 233ff.). However, in *Theology of Paul* (648 n. 110) Dunn mentions that δοκιμάζω and διακρίνω should be seen in connection with one another, but he does not elaborate on this.

[38] Louw and Nida, *Lexicon* II, 380. These domains are 'fuzzy sets', as Louw and Nida call them, implying that 'considerable overlapping and indeterminate borders' are to be expected between them. Generally though, Louw and Nida differentiate these domains further: the domain 'Know' 'involves the possession of information' while 'Learn' 'involves the acquisition of information' and 'Understanding' is to comprehend (cf. *Lexicon*, 325, 349). 'Think' 'involves essentially the processing and manipulation of information, often leading to decision and choice' (349).

[39] For my purposes this may include general perceptive apprehension such as γινώσκω (e.g. 1 Cor. 13.12), ὁράω (Rom. 11.22; Gal. 2.4; 1 Thess. 5.15) but also specific terms of watchfulness/soberness such as πειράζω (2 Cor. 13.5), βλέπω (1 Cor. 1.26; 3.10; 8.9; 10.12; 2 Cor. 10.7), νήφω, ἐκνήφω (1 Cor. 15.34; 1 Thess. 5.6,8), προνοέω (Rom. 12.17), γρηγορέω (1 Cor. 16.13; 1 Thess. 5.6,10), cf. νουθετέω (Rom. 15.14; 1 Thess. 5.12,14).

[40] This includes the possession of γνῶσις (cf. particularly 1 Cor. 8.1), σύνεσις (1 Cor. 1.19), σοφία (throughout 1 Cor. 1–3) which Paul criticises, as well as ἐπίγνωσις, αἴσθησις, γνῶσις (e.g. 2 Cor. 1.13f.; Phil. 1.9; Philm. 6) which are a feature of the believers' lives (or a dialectic phenomenon, cf. 1 Cor. 8.3, 7–11; Gal. 4.9; Rom. 1.18–32. Here the misuse of noetic knowledge is emphasised). It is, of course, remarkable that the positive valuation becomes so much more frequent in the contested Pauline literature (cf. Eph. 1.17; 3.4, 19; 4.13; 5.15; Col. 1.9, 10, 28; 2.2; 3.10, 16; 4.5). However, an example of how much Paul generally expects his readers to consciously follow his argument can be shown by his

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discussion. However, it is the manipulation and processing of thought to achieve certain ends ('to think') which more narrowly defines the term discernment.[41] Hence, I offer the following working definition of discernment: the process of reflective thought leading to decision and choice on the 'correctness, meaning, truth, or value of something or someone'.[42]

### *Excursus: Does Paul Use Δοκιμάζω in an Original Sense?*

Two linguistic issues require clarification for our understanding of δοκιμάζω.

First of all, C. F. Evans assumes that δοκιμάζω when not followed by a direct object but by an indirect question appears for the first time in Greek literature in Rom. 12.2 and Eph. 5.10. This leads him to state that this 'would require a distinct shift in meaning from "testing" or "proving" by the application of known criteria to something like "ascertaining (by exploration) what still has to be discovered"'.[43] With that shift in meaning he claims to see Paul's 'emphatic affirmation of, and massive confidence in, the ability of the believer's renewed intellectual and moral judgement to discover and discern the divine will in its completeness'. First of all, we may note that δοκιμάζω *is* used with indirect questions in Greek literature and not in any novel sense.[44] Moreover, there is no need to overload the

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appeal to the thinking of the Thessalonian church (καθὼς οἴδατε; 1 Thess. 1.5; 2.1, 5, 11; 3.3, 4; 4.2; 5.2, 12).

[41] Four interrelated aspects are important:

1.      To think and to reason: λογίζομαι (Rom. 3.28; 1 Cor. 13.11; Phil. 3.13; 4.8), δοκέω (1 Cor. 7.40);
2.      To think expressing intention: βουλεύομαι (2 Cor. 1.17), προνοέω (2 Cor. 8.21), cf. γνώμη (1 Cor. 1.10);
3.      To think as the basis of valuation: φρονέω (Rom. 8.5; 12.3, 16; 14.6; 15.5; 1 Cor. 13.11; 2 Cor. 13.11; Phil. 1.7; 2.2, 5; 3.15, 19; 4.2; cf. Col. 3.2), οἶδα (Rom. 14.4), cf. πείθω (Rom. 8.38; Phil. 1.6), σωφρονέω (Rom. 12.3; 2 Cor. 5.13), φρόνησις (Eph. 1.8);
4.      To decide: προαιρέω (2 Cor. 9.7), ἀνακρίνω (1 Cor. 2.14, 15; 14.24; cf. the judicial use in 4.3, 4; 9.3; 10.25, 27), συγκρίνω (1 Cor. 2.13; 2 Cor. 10.12), κρίνω (Rom. 14.5; 1 Cor. 7.37; 10.15; 11.13; 31; 2 Cor. 5.14), διακρίνω and δοκιμάζω (passages described in more detail in chapter 3).

[42] Louw and Nida, *Lexicon* I, 363. It could be argued that this definition is essentially that which Louw and Nida call the subdomain '*To Distinguish, To Evaluate, To Judge*', since they go on to argue that this 'normally implies careful thinking about various alternatives and then deciding what is to be regarded as more justified' (*Lexicon*, 363). Yet they also define this subdomain as the 'final result of the process of thinking', which narrows the scope too much as I will also incorporate reflective thought.

[43] C. F. Evans, 'Romans 12.1–2: The True Worship', in L. De Lorenzi (ed.), *Dimensions de la vie chrétienne (Rm 12–13)* (Rome: Abbaye de S. Paul h.l.m., 1979) 29.

[44] Used with an indirect question: Demosthenes, *Orationes* 60:17: ἔστι γὰρ ἔστιν ἁπάσης ἀρετῆς ἀρχὴ μὲν σύνεσις, πέρας δ᾽ ἀνδρεία. καὶ τῇ μὲν δοκιμάζεται τί πρακτέον ἐστὶ, τῇ δὲ ᾠζεται ('For of all virtue, I say, and I repeat it, the beginning is understanding and the