



Alêtheia
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
November 7, 2021
“The Test”

Sunday school at 9:30, Service at 10:30 with King’s Kids.

Jan’s Formal Welcome to the Family

Christmas Party December 10, 6:00 - See Karen Dalton

NEWS

Wednesday Nights at Alêtheia 6:30

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

Visit the website ~ www.myaletheia.com

New Podcast Host: myaletheia.podbean.com Or go to Spotify, and type in myaletheia

Like us on Facebook (aletheiachristianfellowship)

Emails: pastor@myaletheia.com, stacey.sundt@myaletheia.com

Sin of any kind in a _____ life is abhorrent. Be horrified by your own sin!

Yet, we, the purchased _____ of the Ancient of Days, are still wearing earth suits. Sin is so instinctive to our nature that even with the _____, we still fall short.

Run immediately to Jesus and confess, repent, accept His _____ and, in His power, fix what you can - keep moving forward.

I JOHN 4:1-6 ~ 1Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; 3and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. 4You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. 5They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them. 6We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

“The Truth will set you free,” and it follows, that the _____ will imprison and enslave you.

- 1) What makes you so sure what you hold dear is Truth?
- 2) How well can you sift through the evidence and discern Truth from untruth?
- 3) Nearly everything you know was appropriated from others - why trust them?

Investigate, study, think, pray, and above all be _____ as you work through the content available. Choose your _____ wisely.

We administer a test. It is a test of information. A test of the information the teacher holds dear. The test of that information _____ the source behind the teaching.

Two kinds of testing in the Bible. The test designed to find the _____ is πειρασμός (pā-řäs-mōs), verb πειράζω (pā-řä-dzō). Satan is the πειράζων (pā-řä-dzōn), the Tempter. (James 1:13-15). Here we are told to perform the other kind of test, δοκιμάζω (dō-kē-mä-dzō), noun δόκιμος (dō-kē-mōs) is derived from δέχομαι (dē-řō-mī), which means to receive something with the idea of _____ that thing. (I Thessalonians 5:21&22).

God is telling the church - please get that - the church... to determine whether a _____ is from God, or from demons. (I Corinthians 12:10 & 14:12).

“Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.” Trust in the Holy Spirit within you - He has enabled you to move from dark to light and He will continue to move you further into the light and further away from the dark so long as you pursue that... So long as we pursue that together as a _____ family.

Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____



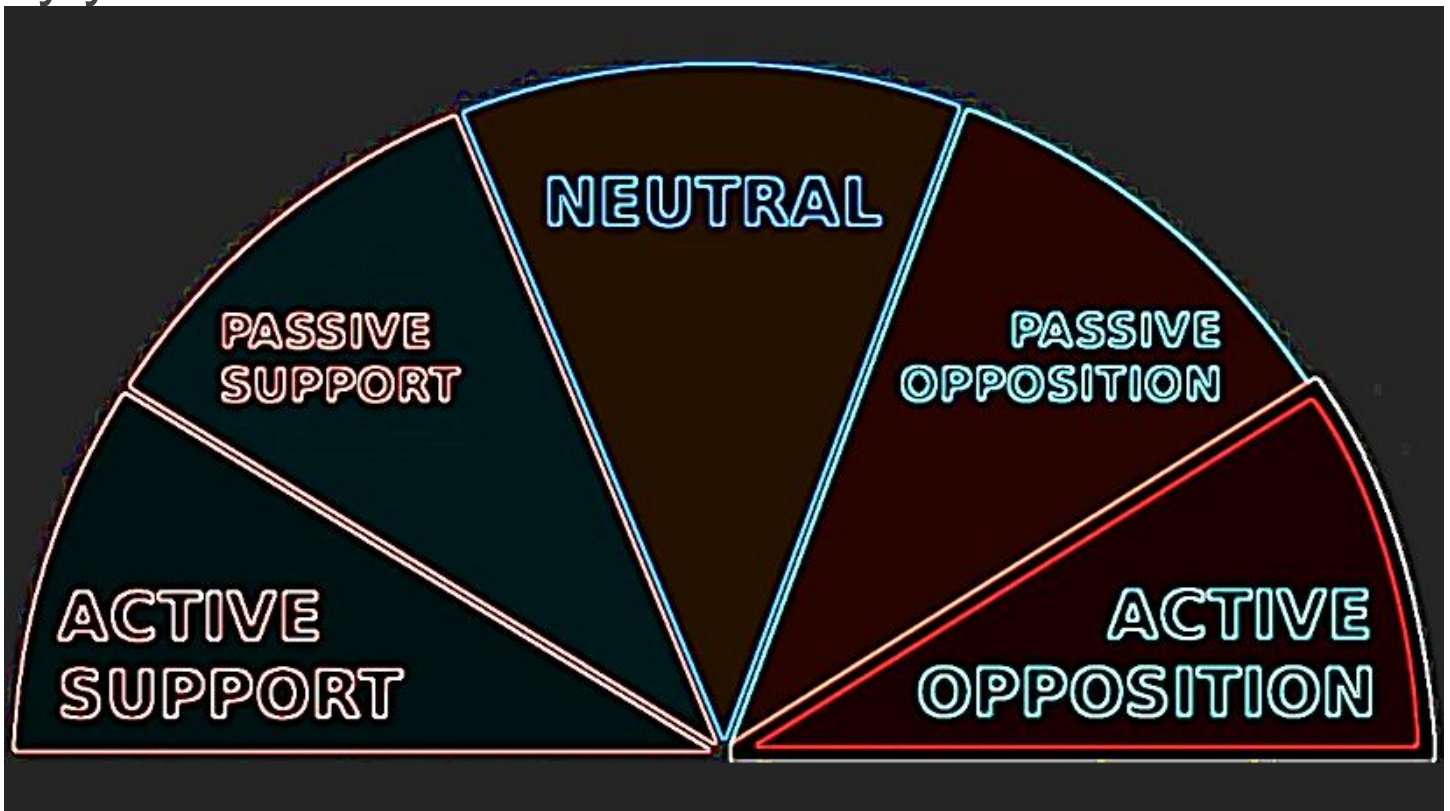
! John

Love one  another



-As I told you, it would be absolutely, totally,
and in all other ways inconceivable!

Last week we finished chapter 3. That chapter concluded with the idea that sin in the life of a Christian is outrageous and complacency or comfort with it should therefore be inconceivable. We're talking about a child of the Heavenly Father Who is Himself perfectly sinless, a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ Who came to destroy sin, a vessel empowered by the Holy Spirit Whose job it is to convict those committing sin... How could anyone ever think that sin and the person thus described could possibly coexist? It is impossible to reconcile the two diametrically opposed things. Sin of any kind in a Christian's life is abhorrent. Be horrified by your own sin!



Sin is not only the opposite of Godliness; it is in direct and active opposition to God Himself and all He's trying to achieve. Sin should never exist even in our fleeting thoughts, let alone our words and actions. One day it won't, and still, here we are. That day, if you haven't noticed, has not yet arrived for us.

We, the purchased children of the Ancient of Days, are still wearing earth suits, still seeing the misery, pain, and death of the physical realm, and still breathing the sin-polluted air of the fallen and depraved world we have made in our own image. Sin is so instinctive to our native nature that even with the indwelling Holy Spirit, we still fall short.

But we should recognize that no middle ground should be tolerated. It is either full active support, or it is full active opposition - choose. And since you already have chosen - be that.

When we get it, and find ourselves outside of the active support wedge, we should be driven to our knees in sorrow and regret.



That's not always our initial reaction because it's easy to get complacent with repetitive things. Nearly all aviation disasters can be summed up as the pilots were complacent. Complacency is an easy trap to fall into and it is a killer. A killer in actuality as with a pilot augering-in, a killer of marriage as with a taken-for-granted spouse, a killer of your Christian walk as in becoming so accustomed to failure - to sin - that you get comfortable with it.

Sin is never, "No big deal." Take it seriously and take it to the Lord without delay. Nothing is gained by waiting. Run immediately to Jesus and confess, repent, accept

His forgiveness and in His power fix what you can. Use the experience to move forward the better Christian for it. He will forgive and restore you. He will help you make things as right as possible with others, and He will support you as you keep running the race He has set before you as long as you keep your eyes on the prize - on Jesus.

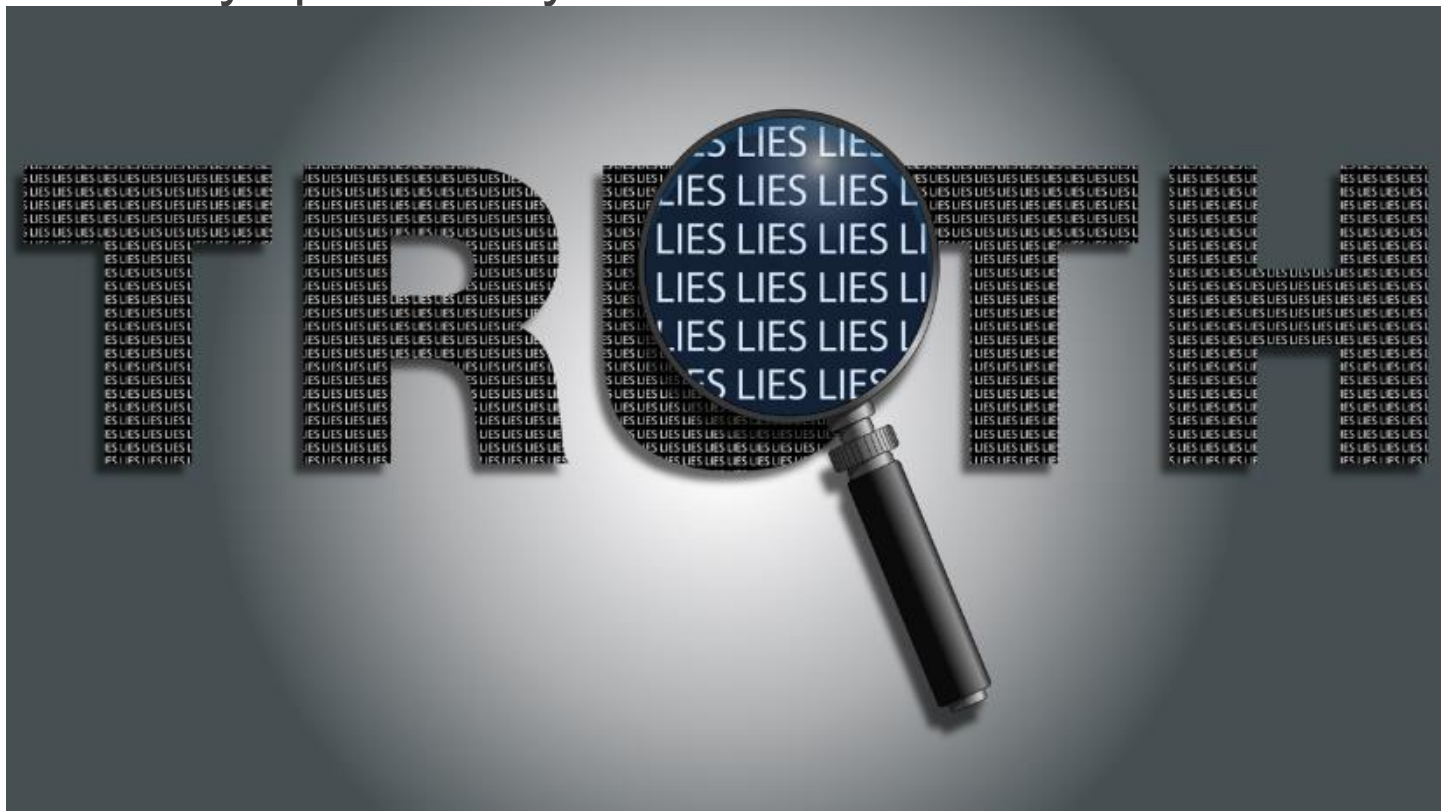


That should fill us with unbelievable humility and gratitude and because of that we should deeply desire to actively build His Kingdom and to genuinely forgive those who hurt us.

Such a Christian has a clear conscience and eagerly and confidently stands in the presence of God, because God has made him or her stand.

Anyone who abides in Christ Jesus, obeys His command to “Love one another,” and in that very act, the reality that Christ abides in such a person is confirmed. This mutual abiding is driven by the Holy Spirit.

So, John then says, since we’re talking about spiritual matters, as in direction from the Holy Spirit, realize that not every spirit is holy.

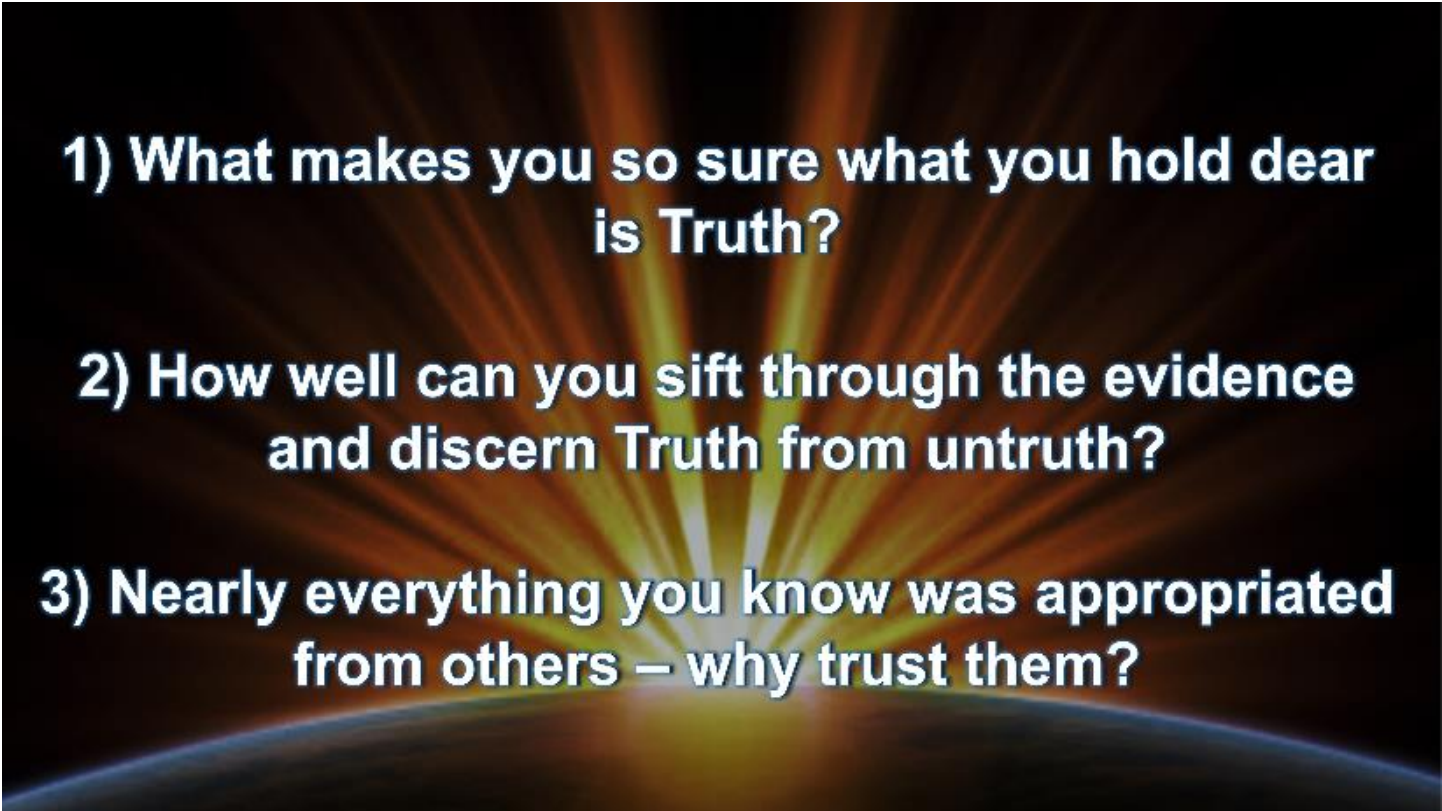


I John 4:1-6, 1Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; 3and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. 4You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. 5They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them. 6We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

With all we've reviewed this morning John now reminds us that the only way we can obey the command to "Love one another," because we "Believe in the name of Jesus," is to abide in Him - to abide in the ultimate Truth, Jesus Christ Himself. That's impossible without first abiding in the Gospel Message of Truth. We must first know and believe and so embrace that Truth - that True information about Christ.

Of course, it's necessary to hear the Truth before you can know it, believe it, and embrace it, but it's also necessary to guard that Truth from corruption once you've chosen to abide in it.

“The Truth will set you free” and it then follows that the untruth will imprison and enslave you. We know that; we pay it lip service and we quote it as a well understood adage suitable for a bumper sticker or bedroom poster. Yet, we rarely do what is necessary to ensure the purity and correctness of the Truth which we hold dear.

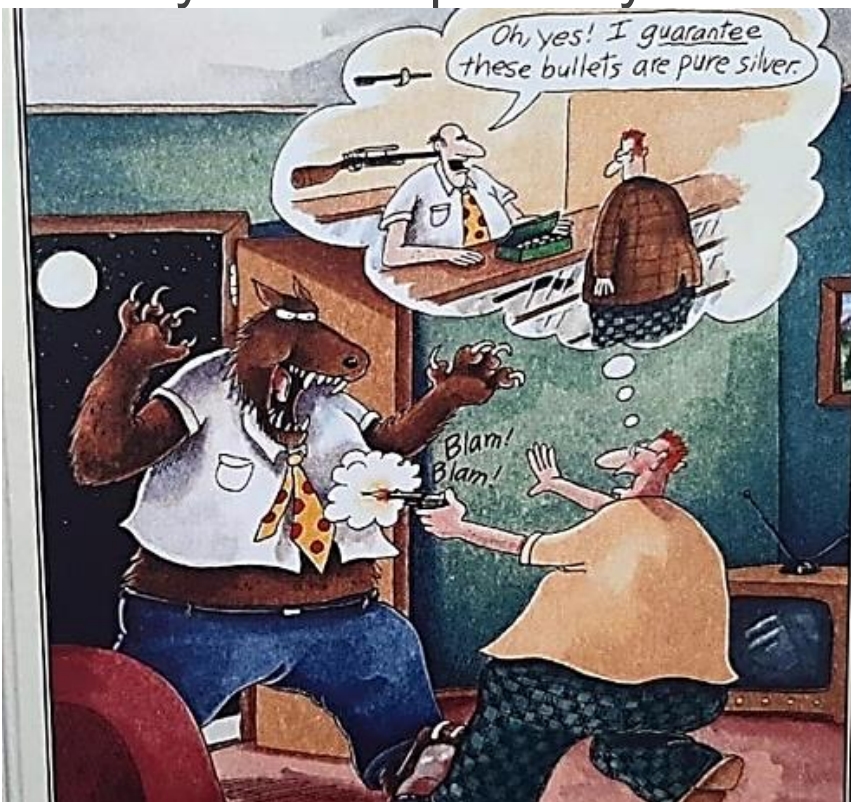


1) What makes you so sure what you hold dear is Truth?

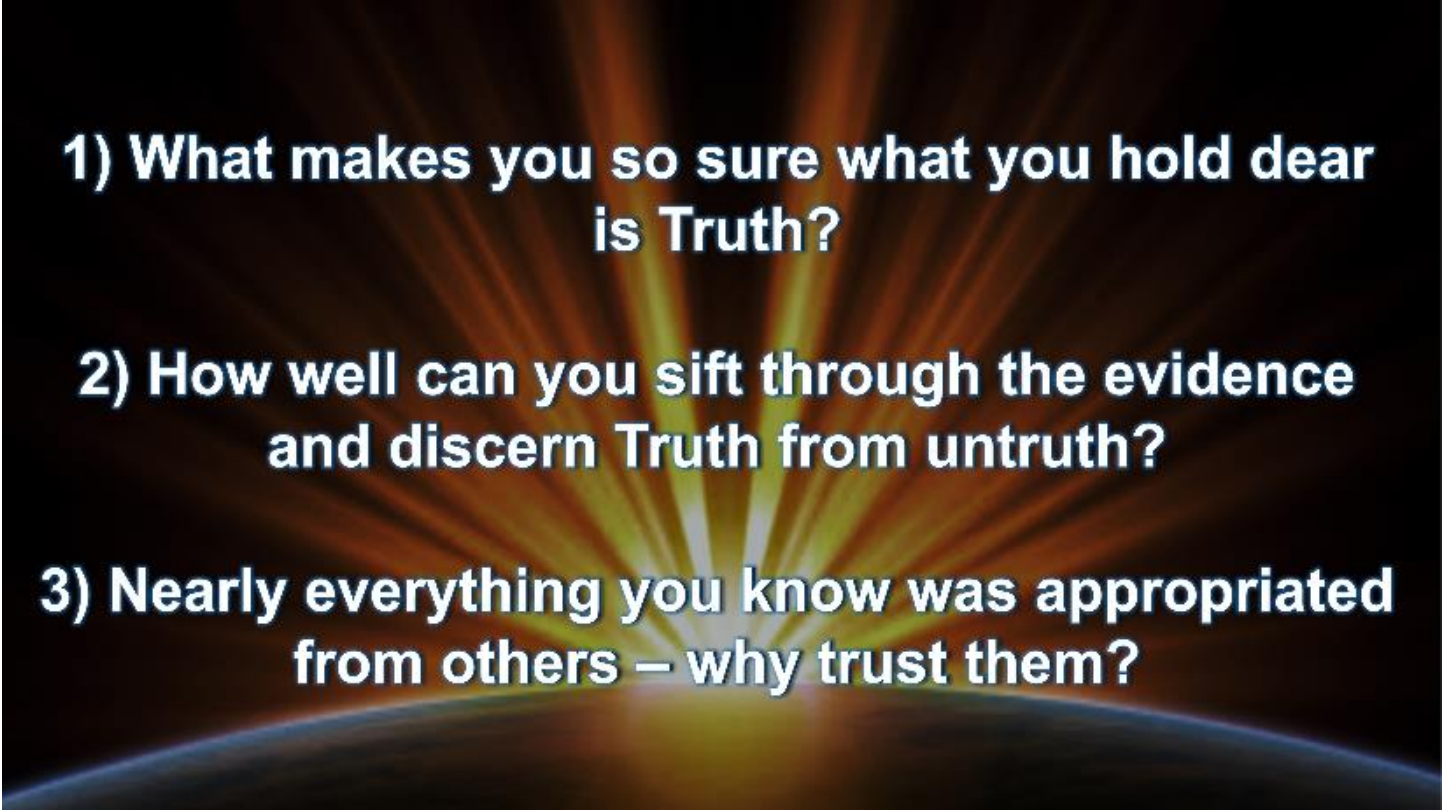
2) How well can you sift through the evidence and discern Truth from untruth?

3) Nearly everything you know was appropriated from others – why trust them?

In taking false teaching seriously, there are three things we should regularly consider. 1) First, much of what most Christians already hold as Truth is usually a bit off, to put it kindly. It might be minor non-salvific issues, but most Christians already hold ideas that are wrong. 2) Second, most of us are not especially gifted in the area of intellectual discernment, to put it mildly. 3) Third, whatever we think we know was learned from someone else. It is incredibly rare for people to come up with ideas that are uniquely their own and those ideas are almost never Truth in this sense. Whatever you think you've understood, especially about God, it came from someone else. Who is the someone else in whom you have placed your trust?



Moments before he was ripped to shreds, Edgar vaguely recalled having seen that same obnoxious tie earlier in the day.



1) What makes you so sure what you hold dear is Truth?

2) How well can you sift through the evidence and discern Truth from untruth?

3) Nearly everything you know was appropriated from others – why trust them?

What does that all mean? First, humble yourself and recognize that the information you think is Gospel Truth may very well need revision. I often talk with other pastors about controversial Biblical issues. In my situation as a non-denominational guy, with no denominational doctrine to defend, I can and do study the very best scholarship on every side of such issues. Whenever I share what I've learned, I see the same old pattern play out again and again. Brilliant, well-educated, pastors self-identifying as open-minded life-long learners, when faced with something different from their bias, simply dig in deeper to the positions they learned in their church, Bible college and

seminary. They cannot see any other way of understanding and instead of thinking about the issue they just defend their learned opinion.

The other day I had a guy refute my argument by citing renowned scholars who agreed with his position. Great, both they and you were indoctrinated in your denomination's dogma - what other position would they, or you, hold?

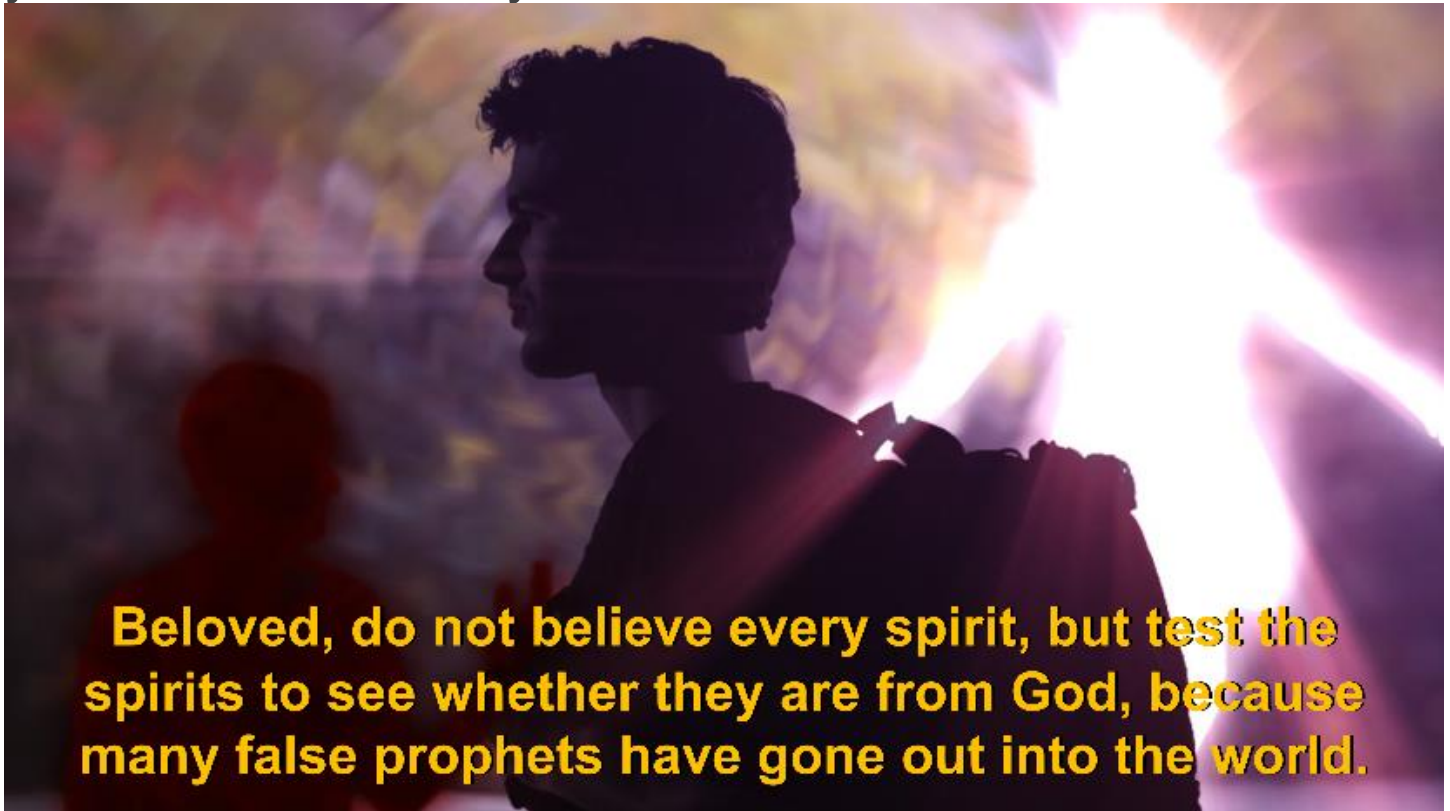
Karl Popper famously said, "No rational argument will have a rational effect on a man who does not want to adopt a rational attitude." The bigger problem is the people refusing to think rationally do not have a clue that they are not thinking rationally. I have talked about the anti-intellectualism plaguing our society and it is alive and well in the church. That brings me to another pertinent Karl Popper quote, "Our knowledge can only be finite, while our ignorance must necessarily be infinite." Yet, we are loathe to admit our ignorance. "Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and as Socrates affirmed, "A humble admission of ignorance is the beginning of learning."

I often say that the most important thing higher education teaches you is how little you really know. A polite and respectful conversation about controversial things begins with that humble understanding.

Beyond recognizing how much we don't know; we need to be honest about our ability to gain knowledge. Please accept the fact that nearly all of your knowledge has been given to you by teachers. Whether formal teachers or your parents, and other family members, mentors, friends, and associates, as well as information gleaned from books, movies, art, and YouTube videos... Practically everything you know, someone gave to you.

Therefore, choose your teachers wisely. There is a seemingly endless stream of teachers available today... In other words, there's a whole lot of information screaming for your attention. Having the discernment to sift through all of that is a daunting task. Don't assume what you think you know is right. Don't assume what you read or hear today is true.

Investigate, study, think, pray, and above all be humble as you work through the content available. Choose your teachers wisely.



Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Verse 1, confuses people a bit with the use of the word “Spirit.” What does John mean with that term? Well, once again, I could spend a ton of time going through all the options and why I settle on the one I do, but it’s time consuming and most would find the journey tedious. John uses the term here to tie this thought back to his last thought we discussed at length last week and that I just summarized this morning. The two ideas are tied together, John was basically saying that, our ability to experience eternal life, here and now, as

well as there and then, is dependent on embracing the Truth. The spirits that he's talking about are the underlying forces supporting Truth and those supporting untruth. It's important not to get bogged down on those underlying supports, because the point is the Truth versus the untruth, not the forces fostering them (even though that will become integral to the argument later). For now, keep your focus on what is Truth versus what is untruth. For the moment forget about the spirits, the false prophets, and the antichrist, and focus on true information versus false information, alone.

Again, we get that we must hear and accept and embrace the Gospel Message in order to be Saved. What we get to a lesser degree is the necessity to guard that Truth while learning more Truth. How to gain further insight without being tainted by untruth in the process. What we get even less than that, is how to do it. How do we continue to grow in Truth without being influenced by the opposite?



Verse 1 continues with the answer. We administer a test. Note that it seems like we test the underlying spiritual source of the information in order to know Truth from untruth... That goes counter to what I just said about ignoring the spirits, the false prophets, and the antichrist for now and focus on the actual information.

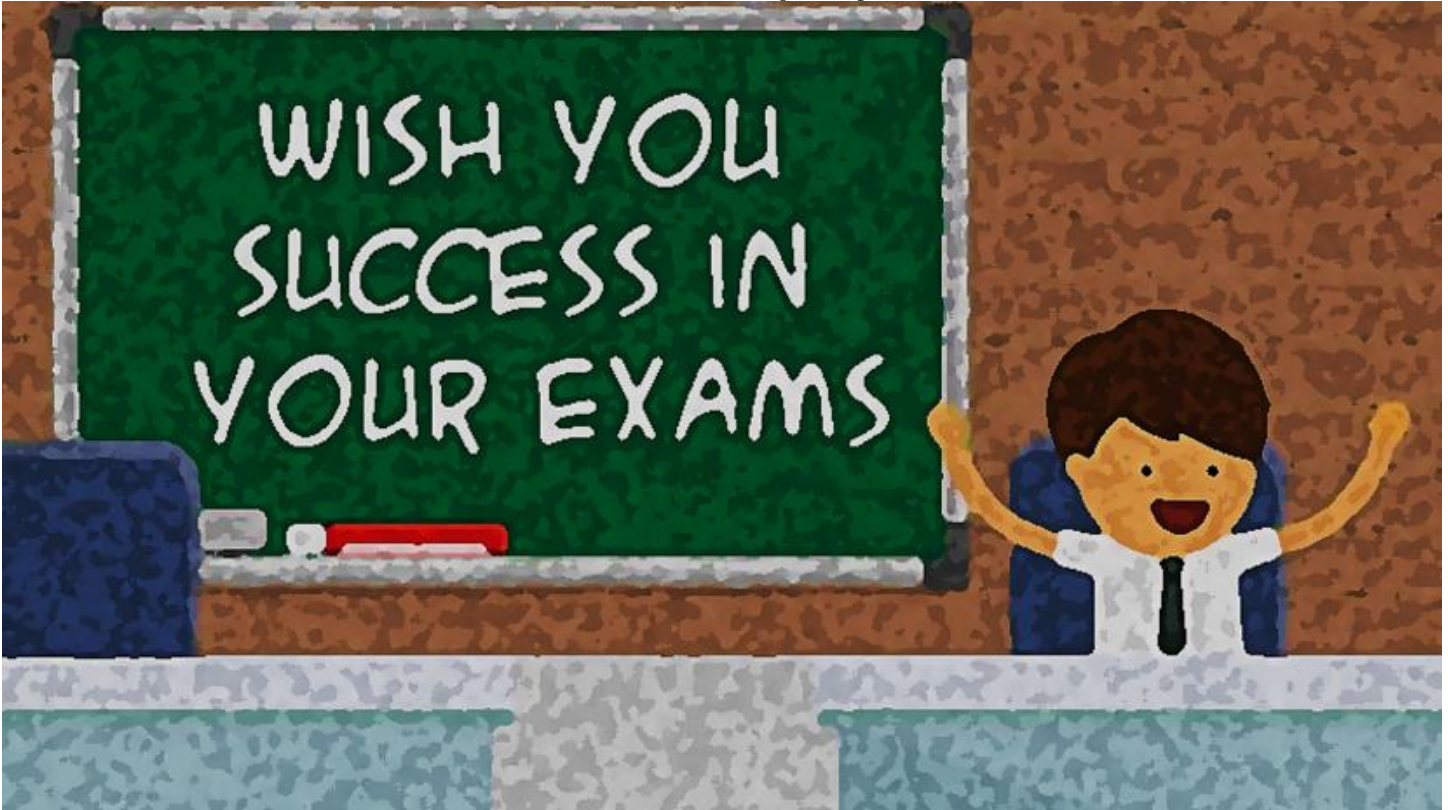
If we look at the actual test in verses 2&3, we recognize that it is a test of information. The test of the information or the content of the message reveals the source behind it.

So, we test the source, by testing the message. You may recall that I've talked about the two kinds of testing in the Bible. There's a test designed to get the worst out of the subject and there's the test designed to get the best out of the subject. The first kind of test is πειρασμός (pā-räs-mös), also the verb to put to the test is, πειράζω (pā-rä-dzō). It is the test that Satan uses, in fact one of his many names, is the personification of this kind of testing, πειράζων (pā-rä-dzōn). The word family is usually translated as, a temptation, to tempt, and of course Satan the Tempter. If you put a huge chest of unattended cash in your yard next to a "no trespassing" sign, that is merely a test of passersby, but we would call it a temptation. A temptation is a test designed to get the worst out of someone as it is crafted to entice them to wrongdoing or error.

Every time the Gospels record the Jewish leaders testing Jesus it is πειράζω. When people ask me a question that they are sure they know the answer to - it is a πειρασμός.

The Bible clearly states in James 1:13-15, 13Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He

Himself does not tempt anyone. 14But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. 15Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. Each time it is πειράζω.



In our passage today, it is not that. Here we are told to perform the other kind of test, δοκιμάζω (dō-kē-mä-dzō), the noun δόκιμος (dō-kē-mōs) gives rise to the verb δοκιμάζω, but itself is derived from a much older verb δέχομαι (dē-xō-mī), which means to receive something with the idea of accepting that thing. I hand you a gift and you quickly evaluate the situation and choose to receive it from me - that is accepting it for

what it is. Moving ahead this type of test is trying to discover what is acceptable - what is good.

It is an evaluation to determine the quality of a thing with a positive, rather than a negative agenda. It's what Paul was talking about when he wrote in I Thessalonians 5:21&22, "But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil." Examine is δοκιμάζω.

When I was trying to get on with the airlines, it was an intimidating task. There were a whole bunch of very qualified pilots and very few vacancies at the airlines. As a result, there were companies in the business of helping pilots get hired. You'd pay them an upfront fee and they would give you all the gouge, or insider information, about each airline and their interview process. Pilots would also share information with their friends. All of that to say that many airlines conducted the panel interview, the personnel testing, the simulator evaluation, the physical exam etcetera, to apply as much stress to the pilot as possible and provide every temptation imaginable to get the applicant to fail. They were trying to find your breaking point. In those days if you broke you were passed over.

I had seen plenty of that in the military and encountered a bit of it in my own job search, but the main reason I accepted a position with the airline I did, was because they had a revolutionary new process where they did everything to put the candidates at ease to see what they were capable of under the best of circumstances. Then they would increase the pressure to ensure the pilot wasn't just a fair-weather flyer, but the whole process was so refreshing. To be treated as though you were the experienced professional pilot you were, at least for me, motivated me to do my best with a positive attitude, rather than me simply trying not to fail because of intense fear not to fail.

Now, I bring all that up to show what God is instructing us here is quite the reverse of the way so many Christians approach the task.



The sense of verse 1, is God is telling the church - please get that - the church... This is supposed to be the church's job. You as an individual take that responsibility because we have become so individualistic since the age of reason displaced God and the church and elevated man. It is the birth of humanism and the philosophy of modernity that has made everything about me. What we're supposed to do is work together as a church family to determine what is Truth and what is untruth. We can only trust the church if we know the church and largely, we don't and that is why individuals take the reins and judge their own pastors.

Because of our culture we need to take more individual responsibility, but as I said before, that's daunting and that's why we were supposed to do it together. Anyway, just because a piece of information comes from a seemingly good source and just because it sounds reasonable, or worse, resonates with you, don't assume that it is God's Truth. Instead, with proper dignity and respect for God and for the person giving the information, find out if all is as it seems. In other words, let the church determine whether it is doctrine from God, or doctrine from demons.

Realistically, if you don't trust your local church to have that level of discernment, you should find a different church.

Bottom line, this is not a mandate for individual Christians to lone wolf it, ever looking for any and every imagined falsehood, and tempting people when that doesn't work, so that everyone but them and their select comrades are... Get this, not just wrong, but evil unsaved wolves in the sheep pen. False prophets and antichrists.

Most of Fundamentalist and much of Evangelical Christianity devolves into this vile misappropriation of Scripture. Cults nearly always operate in this way - we're right and everyone else is evil and out to get us. Even political cults operate this way.

It's what's behind most of the wild-eyed conspiracy nonsense. A deeply rooted desire to be relevant in a world that barely knows that you exist.

This is not that. This is letting Christians know that in cooperation with your church family use a little discernment. Some people are better at that than others and that's why discernment is a gift God gives to the church. That's I Corinthians 12:10, in I Corinthians 14:12, God's Word says, "Since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the church." If the church is edified, it means all of us associated with the church are edified.

John then reiterates that there is no end to the attacks on the church that are ultimately birthed in the Spiritual war raging behind the scenes. Satan and his forces are arrayed against God and His plans. God allows this

within very tight parameters. Please note, that for us, that's all we really need to know.



God's Truth given to Adam and Eve and extending all the way down the halls of time to us sitting here presently demonstrates an unmistakable reality... Unlike the religions and belief systems that men dream up, the Truth is that God, and God alone, has all the power. Any power you think the president has, that the governor has, that I have, or that you have, is power on temporary loan from God. It is identical in the spiritual realm as well. Every bit of power wielded by angels or demons including the former archangel Lucifer, now Satan, is on temporary loan from God.

Without question the two most powerful beings in the Bible ever created by God are Michael the archangel and Satan. How do they stack up to God? Revelation 20:1-3a, 1Then I saw an angel (this is just a regular angel - not Michael, not even the “Strong Angel” from earlier in the Revelation, just a regular joe sent by God with a task) Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him.



People come under spiritual attack, and they want to blame Satan and they want to do battle with the demons. Friends, any spiritual battle is one God allows. Go to Him for relief. You want to be a spiritual warrior?



The true spiritual warrior is a prayer warrior. Press into Jesus when you feel like evil is afoot.

The final thing I want to say about verse 1 is that the vessel through whom falsehood comes - those who speak untruth - the false prophets and the antichrists - those human beings being used to corrupt Truth... They are not necessarily aware of their role. In fact, I would say the majority of people spreading falsehood

in the church are Christians, too lazy and too arrogant to realize that they are being used as tools of darkness.

That's why I say, work at Truth and always be humble in your pursuit of it.

As I already mentioned verses 2&3 give us the actual test. John put it positively and then negatively to emphasize its importance and to ensure that there was no mistake.



The key is to discover whether the teacher of new information has a sound foundation in the true Christ. No Mormon, or Jehovah's Witness, adhering to their

church's doctrine can pass this test. The test is much larger than it seems at first blush and actually includes all the above the line beliefs necessary to enter Christian fellowship. It includes none of the below the line items.

The point is that if a person embraces the True Jesus, then they have the indwelling Holy Spirit and while that does not guarantee good doctrine across the board, it does ensure that the person is at least starting from the right basis. It is preliminary.

After giving instruction for three verses, John switches to giving encouragement along the same lines. His point in verse 4 is that God is with His children and as long as His children abide in the Truth that initially set them, set us, free, and because of that abide in Christ and in love, then God Himself will guide the church in discerning what is His Truth and what is not.

That's the true meaning of one of my favorite bits of the Bible... "Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." The immediate contextual meaning is trust in the Holy Spirit within you - He has enabled you to move from dark to light and He will continue to move


you further into the light and further away from the dark so long as you pursue that... So long as we pursue that together as a church family.

Nothing in this world including Satan himself influencing this world can ever derail you as long as you are in Christ... Never fear the enemy. Jesus has already won the eternal victory and so have we in Him.

In verses 5&6 we get the second part of the test. Show me a Christian teacher/preacher/pastor, whom non-Christian people love, and I'll show you a false prophet.



Jesus talked about His sheep hear His voice. In the Marine Corps it was common for a Drill Instructor to approach another Drill Instructor's formation from behind. He would bark out a command and no one would even flinch. May the good Lord help those who did respond. You see, every platoon knew the voice of their leader and could instantly identify a false voice.



**Hearing Jesus requires
listening to His voice**

If 18-year-old Marine recruits can do that - can't we?