

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. 1John 4:1

Store In My Heart

Luke 9:23-24

And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it."

This quote from Jesus reminds us that we are called to a life of service and sacrifice. Answering the call of the Lord is not going to bring ease to our life. God expects no less from us than He required of His Only Son. We must willingly give our life for the Will of God.

This does not mean that we must die a cruel death at the hands of men, but that we must be willing to give up everything to serve Him. We are obligated by our answer to this call to leave self behind and give our all to the Lord. Living for the here and now will never bring us to the hereafter. We must leave self and the world behind and follow Christ

Do Not Be Deceived

Ben Smith

I recently received an email that appeared to be congratulating me on a prestigious academic nomination. It gave a long explanation about my academic performance at school and said that I could be able to enter a national collegiate honor society. Unsure if this was a legitimate email, especially since it was in my spam folder, I showed it to my mom. She was fairly sure it was spam, especially considering it wanted \$97 before deciding if I was actually worthy of inclusion, but she looked it up just in case. After getting feedback from other parents who have experienced the same "nomination" for their child in the past, it was clear. This was just a way to con families out of money for the sake of pride, trading something valuable (time and money) for something that only seemed more valuable (a sense of notoriety). Even if this were a legitimate award, it is not one that would be necessary for school or career advancement.

A similar scenario occurred in **Genesis 3**, when Satan tempted Eve to eat from the tree in the center of the garden. Satan made some very convincing points in an attempt to get Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. Look at verses **4-5**: *"Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'"*

In a sense Satan was telling the truth. The most convincing lies are those that are based in truth. It was true that Eve would become like God in that she would know good and evil, but the deception was that she would not gain God's power or likeness in any other ways. This form of deception is quite common today, creeping into the world around us (look at politics), our personal lives (ever told a little white lie?), and even in the church (denominational-like teachings).

How do we avoid such cleverly disguised, subtle deception? The first way that one can be alert for these kinds of falsehoods is to simply be well versed in the Bible. This is shown in **2Timothy 2:15**, where it reads, *"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker that does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*



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For Our Information

Joyce Vendable has been dealing with wooziness the last few days.

Gracie Simpson has a couple more days of quarantine required by contact with a positive student in volleyball.

This evening at 5 pm our class on Judges will continue at chapter 6:33.

Our Wednesday evening class on 1Corinthians will start at 7 pm with chapter 11:2-16.

Pray for safety, courage & healing.

We often do not know things that are mentioned in the Bible, or do not know them very well, because we either have not studied them enough, or it's been so long since we studied them that we've forgotten. Being "diligent" means that we must continually build upon our Bible knowledge to gain more depth of truth. Lack of knowledge and understanding makes us more prone to being deceived by false teachers, even by those who deceive us unintentionally by not knowing the truth themselves. This correlates with **Galatians 1:8-9**, which reads: *"But even if we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed."*

We must never believe something simply because we trust the one who said it. People are fallible. God and his Word are infallible. Since the only source of true spiritual knowledge is the Bible, we should always look back to the Bible, whenever we need to confirm something another person says. Consider **2Timothy 3:13-17**, which reads, *"Evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."*

It is particularly important to always watch out for false teaching, because it can subtly creep into your mind and deceive you to the point that you lose your salvation! This sobering reminder makes a firm point that false teaching should be avoided and watched for at all costs, because despite how close to the truth something may look, it may be a complete lie. The only way to know is to make Bible study the highest priority in your life and be watchful. That way, you are much less likely to be deceived by the false teachings and also be equipped to teach the Word of God to others.

As I mentioned in my introduction, inclusion in that so-called collegiate honor society would not be beneficial to me based on the outcomes that others have had with the organization. So, I will leave you with one final point about recognizing false teaching according to its outcome:

Matthew 7:15-20, *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, you will recognize them by their fruits."*

(Ben Smith gives us some important reminders in the articles he is writing. Be careful of the source of your learning & study. DLH)



We seek only to serve God according to His Will!