

## The Doctrine Test

Welcome to Harvest Community Church

Series: Discernment for the Last Days

**Text: 2 Timothy 3:16-17**

We have to realize that what we believe is just as important as believing itself. We are living in the middle of an outpouring of God's Spirit that Satan would like to derail. We must each do our part to protect and uphold the plan of God for our times. It is important that we understand God's antidote for the deception that will rise up in these, end of days. That is knowing and declaring the truth of God's Word in the purest form possible.

There is danger in in the mixing of truth with even traces of error. **2 Timothy 4:2-5** Small amounts of error can be tolerated without lasting harm if a believer returns to a steady diet of healthy spiritual food. Just like regular food containing just a little bit of poison, over time it builds up in your system, sickens you and eventually becomes deadly. **1 Timothy 1:19 (NLT)** Today there is a saying – “eat the meat and spit out the bones”. God's Word never puts you in danger of choking on something that is not good for you. **Proverbs 3:7-8**

Satan can never destroy the truth, so he attempts to minimize it by diluting it, and making it seem as if the Gospel is on equal footing with other ways of thinking. This is why we must take a stand on the eternal integrity of Scripture and resolve to receive nothing, believe nothing, and follow nothing that we can't find solidly proven in the Bible. There is an entire generation of pillars in the church who are getting older, retiring or who have died in recent years. The vacancies they have left must be filled. We need spiritual standard bearers who will boldly declare God's Word as the absolute, dependable, infallible, reliable, unchanging Word of God. This is the responsibility of every person who is called to leadership or who has a position of authority. This includes parents, teachers, pastors, deacons, and all mature people who have influence. At some point the children become the adults with all of the privileges, responsibility, and obligations. **Hebrews 5:12-14** Infants put everything into their mouths even things that are not safe for consumption. Adults make sure that children do not eat what is harmful to them. We must protect them like a shepherd guards their flock.

In many ways we are cupbearers for the King of kings. A Cupbearer was basically a food and beverage taster for the king. They would sample what the king and his guests would eat to make sure that there was no poison in the food, that the food was spoiled or that it was inedible. Nehemiah is the most prominently known of those in the Bible. **Psalm 34:8** Remember that the food fit for a king was beautiful, skillfully made, and attractive, even in that state, poison could be slipped in. It was up to the cupbearer to discover it. Doctrines of demons will not look horrible. As a matter of fact, the word “doctrine” portrays information that has been masterfully designed and packaged to make it attractive and appealing to listeners.

If Christians in the last days comprehended that they were consuming poisonous spiritual food, they would not do it. The error is so masterfully presented that they have no real understanding of what they are being fed. This is why many are getting sick spiritually in the family of God.

All spiritual leaders have a duty to ensure that what we present to our children, our churches and those we are discipling is the pure Word of life. This means that like a cupbearer we must test things before they are presented. **1 John 4:1**

In scripture wine is often used as an example of the Holy Spirit. **Ephesians 5:18-21** Just like wine can change a person, the Holy Spirit transforms us supernaturally as we are filled and saturated by Him. In these last days we must be certain to live our lives with discernment and not indulge ourselves in every spiritual manifestation that presents itself. Not all “wine” being offered is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will never move contrary to scripture.

### **1 Corinthians 14:33**

God expects us to think and examine before we consume. This is especially true in the last days. **1 Thessalonians 5:19-21** The Thessalonians had been exposed to bogus and inaccurate prophecy. Paul had to remind them that the value of genuine prophecy hadn't changed. There are many things that have been used incorrectly in life. A great example is the car. Just because a car has been used recklessly does not mean that we should stop using one or riding with people who are responsible. Paul said, “prove all things” and then approve after testing. God's people are to test and prove both written and spoken spiritual utterances before fully embracing the substance. Paul says to hold onto and to embrace that which is good, that which is sound, in order or authentic.

### **Important Questions to ask about what you are hearing and learning. James 3:1 (AMP)**

- ❖ Is this teaching Biblically based?
- ❖ Is this teaching in agreement with the entire counsel of scripture or have certain verses been cherry-picked to support someone's ideas?
- ❖ Is this teaching something I would want my children to consume?
- ❖ Is this teaching balanced, or is it a well-packaged diversion?
- ❖ Is this teaching a mixture of worldly philosophy, new age insight or information from other religions? (Humanism, Environmentalism, Yoga, Buddhism, Legalism)
- ❖ Does this teaching co-mingle someone's opinion with truth in a way that would weaken a believer's character, skew the person's path, or affect the quality of their spiritual foundation?
- ❖ Is this teaching going to encourage people to walk by faith and by sight?
- ❖ Is this teaching lifting up Jesus or does it diminish Christ's sacrificial work or mislead in a direction never intended by His word?
- ❖ Does this teaching inspire others to bear fruit for God's glory and that is worthy of repentance?

- ❖ Does this teaching help someone to grow closer to God and His ways; does it cause people to trust Him more?
- ❖ Is this teaching going to help produce mature, stable Godly Christians or does it move into the mystical, fanciful or the weird?

Every word, every phrase and every nuance that is spoken is significant to God.

**1 Corinthians 14:29 NKJV & AMP), 2 Corinthians 13:1**

### **Death in the Pot – 2 Kings 4:38-41**

The young prophet was inexperienced in selecting fruit that was good to eat. He never intended to hurt anyone, he was simply incapable of selecting good ingredients because of his inexperience. He mixed a great deal of good with some of the bad and in doing so poisoned people. There was just enough bitter taste to tell that something was off. The antidote to the poison was meal or wheat. Wheat is symbolic of the Word of God. The only thing that can correct the poison of incorrect teaching is to pour on the truth. When the wheat of the Word is injected in large doses into an otherwise dangerous situation, those life-giving words have the power to nullify the poisonous influence and turn the situation around. **1 Timothy 5:22** The Bible warns us that we should never appoint a novice or a new believer or someone unskilled in the Word to teach and lead.

Ultimately it is up to us to be responsible for what we are consuming and to respect God and ourselves enough to refrain from eating when we taste “death in the pot”, when we know something is off. Sometimes the best way to win a spiritual war is with common sense.

Anyone who has been called to preach or teach is entrusted with incredible responsibility. There is a charge that is given by Paul to Timothy that is really the charge given to anyone who would share the Word of God. **2 Timothy 4:2**

1. Preach the Word. – To speak, proclaim, declare or announce. This word was the job description of someone who would speak on behalf of a king, much like an ambassador. **2 Corinthians 5:20** The job is to proclaim with clear and unquestionable articulation the desires, dictates, orders, policies or messages the king wished to express to the people. Those who are God’s spokesman are charged to speak His Word accurately, precisely and faithfully the way that He wants it to be expressed.

The Prophet Ezekeil gives us good scriptural principles that we should take to heart. **Ezekiel 3:1-3** Before a messenger of God can deliver His message, they must first taste it and digest it for themselves before they can speak it. We must know the pleasurable parts and the bitter parts. **Revelation 10:8-11** God’s Word must first work in us before we can expect it to work in others. We must allow the Word of God to affect us completely so that it can work through us powerfully. We must first be corrected, changed and nourished deeply by the Word before we can feed others.

An important part of the work of the church is dealing with the hot topics and cultural issues of our day. **Silence** is not an option. The answers, healing, solutions and principles to deal with societies dilemmas are found in the Word of God. In the first century those converting to Christianity from paganism came with the baggage of messy relationships, addiction, nonsensical thinking and the residual soul damage incurred before Salvation. We must **boldly** confront, address and bring healing and help to these issues. If we do not deal with these issues, the vacuum will be filled with the voice of the world which will lead people away from God.

2. Those who teach the Word must be **instant** in season and out of season. In the good times or in the bad times. This is a military word that means to stay at your post. In the rain, in the sun, in the heat or in the cold - stay with the Word. Declaring the Word in public or in private is the highest form of spiritual warfare. **Hebrews 4:12**

~ 2 Timothy 4:2 – could read like this – *Take a firm stand and resolve to stay at your post to preach God's Word as God intended it to be preached! Regardless of whether times are good or bad or whether or not you are enjoying the task, that post is your place of responsibility. So, dig in and resolve that you are going to be faithful to take a firm stand, no matter what you experience from the atmosphere around you.*

There are three things that we are to do with the Word of God. **2 Timothy 4:2 (AMP)**

- **Reprove** This is to correct or to convince. This is to convict and educate with such effectual impact that one is brought back to their senses. We are to correct those who are in error in their belief, doctrine or behavior. This will cause people to either repent or reject what they now know to be true. This allows the Holy Spirit to bring conviction and change to a person's life. Reproving is essential in order for the Holy Spirit to produce purity and spiritual fire in the Church.
- **Rebuke** This is to warn a person or people. It is the same idea used when Jesus rebukes a demon. It is a correction that expresses disapproval of thoughts, actions or deeds. It points out where a person is wrong and provides instruction on how to do right. Godly rebuke is always redemptive. It always provides direction and hope. Rebuke supernaturally represses the prevalence of evil and opposes what is wrong in a person or in a society.
- **Exhort** This is to teach and encourage people with both urgency and patience. Exhortation is insistent but understands that learning takes time. This is a type of teaching and preaching that strengthens, undergirds (supports) and leads people forward as they become fully mature disciples of Jesus. Exhortation is strong, anointed and motivational. It stirs people to cast off defeat to press on to victory and to raise up to live at God's highest will for their lives.

Often the Word is delivered in love but these days, those who do are often ridiculed as narrow-minded critical and judgmental or negative. It is none of this. What it is not is **politically** correct. We need to know the difference between **sound** doctrine and unhealthy teaching.

**2 Timothy 4:3**

The Holy Spirit does not indicate how many will be pulled in the wrong direction. The word **they** indicates that it will be many. Many will have no tolerance or appetite for sound doctrine. The word 'sound' portrays something that is **wholesome**, healthy and that produces a healthy state of being. It is prophesied that people would actually develop a distaste for sound doctrine. They will gather teachers that will cater to their lusts. That word actually refers to desires or the **whims** of the times. They will heap up large numbers of teachers who will pander to the preferences and demands of the majority.

Paul goes on to warn that people will **stray** from the truth and shall turn to fables.

**2 Timothy 4:4 (NKJV & AMP)** Basically this will be newly styled teaching that does not resemble anything like the authentic message of the Bible. It will be **entertaining** and incorrect.

**1 Timothy 1:4-6 (NKJV & NLT)** The Holy Spirit makes it clear that newly fashioned teachers with restyled messages will produce an astonishing mixture of truth mingled with error that will entertain and seductively lead people to an inaccurate version of Christianity.

Here is how we keep our head on straight. **2 Timothy 4:5 (NKJV, AMP, NLT)**

- ❖ Be **clear** headed - calm, cool, collected. Keep your wits about you. Be alert and watchful. Know what is going on and don't allow it to get you ruffled or take you by surprise. Be sound in your thinking.
- ❖ **Endure** hardship. When we keep our head on straight while so many are going astray, we are going to face opposition and resistance. We are to press on despite the evil, the emotional suffering, the disappointments or mental hardness of what we are doing.
- ❖ Do the work of an **evangelist**. The earliest use of this word in the Greek actually was used to depict a medium of the spirit world. Or one who channeled the voice of the Spirit world into the world of the living. Today we often think of an evangelist who has the gift of soul-winning. This isn't even a thing. Soul-winning is a Commission given to all Christians. Paul used this word intentionally to urge all Christians to do all they can to be the **clearest** channel of God's voice that they can be. We are not to speak for or of ourselves, but to yield ourselves to God's spirit so that His Word will flow through us in the purest way possible.
- ❖ We need to faithfully fulfill our **ministry**. What is ministry? It is the duties that God has given us to **serve** Him and people.

While there will be those who stray from the truth in the last days there will be another group: those who will hold fast to the timeless Word of truth regardless of the consequences or the opposition. They will **faithfully** be committed to the truth of God's Word.

Let's be those people.