

THE



“The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2)

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TEST ALL THINGS

There are millions and millions of people who follow different religions such as Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism. Even within those who believe in Jesus Christ, there are many different denominations and sects with different doctrinal teachings and practices. What are you going to believe? What are you going to accept? Many people accept the religion or church of their parents and follow what has been passed down to them. Others go where they feel comfortable or where there is a good preacher or where they have good programs for the family. But heed the admonition in 1 John 4:1: *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try [test] the spirits whether they*

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are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” Since many false prophets have gone out into the world, you must not believe every spirit but test each to see if they are of God. “*Prove [Test] all things; hold fast that which is good*” (1 The. 5:21). There has to be a standard against which you can test the beliefs, teachings, and practices of a church. That standard is the words of Jesus and His inspired apostles whose words are recorded in the Bible. Test the different doctrines by the word of God.

Another test that can be applied is to inspect the fruit of the prophet or teacher.

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.
(Mat. 7:15-20)

A person may look like someone you can trust, but if their fruit or actions are bad, then you can confidently reject their teachings as well.

Look at what the Apostle Peter wrote in 2 Peter 2:1-3:

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

Even in the times of the apostles there were false teachers who held to heresies. One such group was the Gnostics; part of their belief was that Jesus did not come in the flesh. The Apostle John wrote about them in 2 John 7: *“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.”* If there were heresies in the first century, it should not surprise you that there are many heresies in the modern churches that call themselves Christian. Based upon the writings of the early Christians in the second and third century, some of the doctrines taught by modern churches today were considered heresies by those early Christians. The Apostle Peter taught that some of the heretics were motivated by covetousness. In other words, the false teachers were motivated by worldly possessions or money. Some of that is true today. But there are also many very sincere individuals who are following false practices and false doctrines today. What should you do? *“Prove [Test] all things; hold fast that which is good”* (1 The. 5:21). Test the different doctrines by the word of God.

The Apostle Paul described a major heresy that was to come.

Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 The. 2:9-12)

I am convinced the same principle applies to today. If you do not have a love of the truth, God will allow you to be deluded to accept false teachings.

The Apostle Paul admonished Timothy to hold on to sound doctrine.

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. (2 Tim. 4:2-4)

Those with “*itching ears*” are those who find teachers who tell them what they want to hear. I trust that you do not have “*itching ears*”. Love the truth and test all teachings by the word of God. Follow sound doctrine.

My encouragement to you is to love the truth and “*prove [test] all things; hold fast that which is good*” (1 The. 5:21).

ED ANDERSON
(Sierra Vista, AZ)

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. How many rivers did the river in Eden split into once it left the garden?
2. What did Rahab hide the two spies under?
3. In the parable of the good father, if a son asks for an egg, what would the good father not give him?
4. Who did Paul take with him on his first missionary journey?
5. Who was Paul referring to when he said, “The Lord give mercy unto the house of _____; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain”?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH...

THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication intended to encourage all men everywhere to become laborers into God’s harvest (Luke 10:2). This paper is mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address, address changes and all correspondence to:

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YOU MAY HAVE THE JOY-BELLS

1. You may have the joy-bells ringing in your heart,
And a peace that from you never will depart;
Walk the straight and narrow way,
Live for Jesus ev'ry day,
He will keep the joy-bells ringing in your heart.

2. Love of Jesus in its fullness you may know,
And this love to those around you sweetly show;
Words of kindness always say,
Deeds of mercy do each day,
Then He'll keep the joy-bells ringing in your heart.

3. You will meet with trials as you journey home;
Grace suffic'ent He will give to overcome;
Tho' unseen by mortal eye,
He is with you ever nigh,
And He'll keep the joy-bells ringing in your heart.

4. Let your life speak well of Jesus ev'ry day;
Own His right to ev'ry service you can pay;
Sinners you can help to win
If your life is pure and clean,
And you keep the joy-bells ringing in your heart.

Chorus:

Joy-bells ringing in your heart,
(Ringing in your heart,)
Joy-bells ringing in your heart;
(You may have the joy-bells)
Take the Savior here below
with you ev'rywhere you go.
He will keep the joy-bells ringing in your heart.

- Words by J. EDWARD RUARK

CONTENTMENT

Contentment is a very elusive prize which everyone seeks in this life. The ideal of contentment in this country, the so-called ‘American Dream,’ is a family with a couple of kids who have a nice house in the suburbs, a couple of cars in the garage and a good income. This is supposed to be the ‘good life.’ But in reality, it has its problems and does not bring complete contentment to those fortunate enough to experience it.

In life everyone seeks to be happy and content, but people have very different ways of trying to find contentment. I have seen some who build their lives around a career and look for satisfaction and contentment through that career. And while it is certainly possible to be happy with your job, I don’t believe that any job can make a person content with their entire life. Many doctors, lawyers, engineers and the like, put their careers before anything else in life. It often even comes before their families. So even if they achieve contentment in their professional lives, they have often made a mess of the rest of their lives in the process.

Others seek fulfillment through the amassing of money and material possessions. But this also will fail to bring satisfaction as the wise man Solomon tells us. *“He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity”* (Ecc. 5:10). Wealth cannot satisfy, because no matter how much a person gets, he always wants more. As the old saying so aptly says, “money cannot buy happiness.” It can make many things in life more enjoyable, but it cannot bring contentment.

Others seek contentment through fame and notoriety. But this also is a wasted venture. Fame only brings with it insecurity and pressure to continue your success. The more famous people in our society, professional athletes, movie and T.V. stars, and musicians, are far from being content. This is why their marriages fall apart so quickly. This is why so many

abuse alcohol and illegal drugs. Despite their success, contentment continues to elude them.

If the most successful and best educated people in our society cannot find contentment, then who can? And what chance does the average man have of finding it? Anyone can have total contentment very easily if he will only pursue it correctly. Again from the wisdom of Solomon, *“The fear of the Lord tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied”* (Pro. 19:23). He mentions absolutely nothing about what kind of job a person might have, or their financial status, or their position in society. He merely states that if a person has the fear of God in his heart he will live a satisfied life. That is a powerful statement and one that runs contrary to man’s logic.

Solomon’s father, David, said, *“I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety”* (Psa. 4:8). David was a very contented man. He had many problems throughout his life, but he never allowed them to bother him. It is as he says here, I am not going to worry about anything because God will take care of me. Isn’t that what contentment is all about, not having to worry about anything?

Christians should be the happiest, most contented people on the face of the earth. It bothers me when I see Christians who walk around with a long face all the time. And those who are constantly complaining about their problems. David said, *“Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart”* (Psa. 32:11). Being a child of God is a reason to celebrate. Every day of our lives should be lived in happiness.

The Apostle Paul understood quite well about contentment. This might seem strange considering all of the things he went through. He was imprisoned more than once, he was shipwrecked, he was beaten and left for dead, and he suffered many, many other things. Yet he said, *“I have learned, in*

GOSPEL MEETINGS

DATES	PLACE	SPEAKER
May 4 - 6	Van Lear Van Lear, KY	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
May 10 - 13	Goochtown Eubank, KY	Joe Hill (Hagerhill, KY)
May 27 - June 1	Taylor's Cross Roads Roanoke, AL	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL) & Joe Hill (Hagerhill, KY)

whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Php. 4:11).

How could Paul have possibly been content when he suffered so much? Because he knew God was with him and would watch over him. And that whatever happened to him, eventually he had an eternal home awaiting him. So what did Paul have to fear? What did he have to worry about? Paul was as content with his life as any man could ever be. He knew his life had purpose and meaning. He knew he was accomplishing something.

We should take a lesson from Paul and find contentment in our service to God. If we are truly serving God and have put our trust fully in Him, then we will be content. If you find that you are not as content as you would like to be, and that you are continually worrying about one thing or another, then you are not as close to God as you need to be. True contentment can only be found in one place in this life. And that is in a deep, meaningful relationship with God. *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"* (Heb. 13:5).

TONY WHIDDON
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