

# WORLD VIDEO BIBLE SCHOOL

## Fundamentals of the Faith

Charlie DiPalma

### **LESSON #13 — THE INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD SOUND DOCTRINE? (PART 1)**

That brings us to the final point in our study of this subject of sound doctrine. And it's very important. And this is where we must learn to apply what God says on this subject. The subject is: What is the individual Christian's responsibility concerning sound doctrine? What does God expect of you, and what does he expect of me in that area? Let's go to the Bible, the Scriptures, to answer that question.

The first passage that we'd like to look at is in the book of 1 John. 1 John, chapter 4, verse 1. "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world." God tells us, "Don't believe every spirit. Don't believe everyone who comes teaching you." We need to test the spirits. We need to examine the spirits to determine whether they are of God. That is whether they're teaching God's Word, or they're teaching some perversion of God's Word. Why is that necessary? Because he said, "Many false prophets have gone out into the world."

Just as we saw in 2 Peter chapter 2, verse 1, Peter assured us, there will be false teachers among us. We hate that. We don't want that to be the case. But unfortunately, it is. And therefore, we need to test the spirits. We need to test by using the standard that God has given us, the Word of God, the Bible. And so whatever is taught, needs to be checked against the Scriptures. You need to do that, as I teach, and other brethren teach in this class. And I need to do that, all of us need to test the spirits whether they're of God, because there are many false prophets who have gone out in the world.

Now let's look at another verse in the book of Ephesians, this time, in the fifth chapter, verses 10 and 11. Ephesians 5, verse 10 and verse 11. "Proving what is acceptable to the Lord, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." So God wants us to prove what is acceptable, not to me, not to some other man, some preacher or elders, or deacons, or whatever, but prove what is acceptable to the Lord. How am I going to do that? Well, I've got to go to His Word. I've got to make sure that I have authority from Christ (Colossians 3, verse 17), for everything that I do. So I need to prove, I need to test, to determine what is acceptable to God. That's the key question.

Then he says, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." Of course, in the Scripture, darkness is the opposite of light, and light represents God, and that which is good, that which is from Him, including His Word. So when He talks about the unfruitful works of darkness, He's talking about things that are contrary to God, opposed to God and His Word, that which is sinful.

"Fellowship" means "the joint participation in, or the sharing of things in common." So when God says, "Don't have any fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness," He's telling us, "Don't participate in those unfruitful works of darkness." Don't have anything to do with

them. You get as far away as you can from those things that are unfruitful, unproductive, inconsistent with the will of God.

But God doesn't require us to stop just at that point. There's more in verse 11. He says, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." In the New King James Version, it says, "expose them," and that's exactly what that word means. It means "to uncover, to expose to place before all others." Why would we want to do that? because of the effects of false doctrine that we've studied about. If you have a loved one who's being taught that which is false, if you really love them, you're going to expose that error, because that error will condemn their soul. And we'll talk about the kind of attitude we should have in doing that. But that's an obligation that we have to them and to the Lord. So have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them by teaching the truth, by shining the light of God's Word on the darkness of error.

Then another passage, in 1 Thessalonians, chapter 5, verses 21 and 22. 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 21 and 22. God tells us, "Test all things, hold fast what is good, abstain from every form of evil." Again, like Ephesians 5:10, God said, "Proving what is acceptable to the Lord." That's what He says at the beginning of 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 21 — "Test all things." How are we going to test those things? We're going to test them by putting the light of God's Word, shining that light on them, making sure that it is in accordance with God's will. What is our purpose in doing that? Our purpose is to distinguish between what God says is good, and what God says is evil. Because it said, "Hold fast to that which is good." You use the Scriptures, you determine what God says is good, and then you cling to that. Don't let go of it. Hold on to it as if your soul depended upon it, because it does.

Also, He says, "Abstain from every form of evil." Literally, the word translated "abstain" means, "to hold oneself away from, to get away from, to avoid." So we need to abstain from things that God says are evil, according to His Word. We're to get away from them, and keep ourselves away from those evil things.

Another passage, delineating the individual Christian's responsibility concerning sound doctrine, is found in the book of Acts. In Acts chapter 17, verse 11. Acts 17, verse 11. Here, God commends one group of people because of their attitude. Notice what He says, "These were more fair minded, or noble, than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily, to find out whether these things were so." The people then, in Berea, where God was talking about here, were more noble, were more fair minded than those in Thessalonica.

Why did God commend these people? Two reasons given. They received the Word of God, with all readiness — they were eager to know God's will. You didn't have to make them come to Bible study. You didn't have to make them study the Scriptures in their own home. They were eager, ready to learn. But they didn't stop there. He said, "And they searched the scriptures daily, to determine whether the things that were being said and done were so." That is, were in accordance with the Scriptures. So what does God want us to do? He wants you to test what is being taught in this study. He wants you to test what has being taught and practiced in the local congregation of the Lord's church where you are. Using the scriptures to determine whether it's in accordance with the Word of God.

Now you think about something, if you would, please. These people were listening to inspired apostles of Christ, and prophets of Christ, men who had the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, that proved that their message was from God. And yet, the people felt the need to check what they were saying against the Old Testament Scriptures at that time, making sure that what they said about Jesus from the Old Testament was true. How much more should we check those who are teaching? Because there are no inspired apostles and prophets. There are no men speaking with the authority of miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit anymore. So we need to search the Scriptures daily, to determine whether the things are in accordance with the Scriptures.

Then let's look at another passage. This one is found in Mark's account of the gospel, in Mark the fourth chapter, and verse 24. Mark 4, verse 24. Jesus speaking, "He said to them, 'Take heed what you hear, with the same measure you use, it will be measured to you, and to you who hear more will be given.'" Notice, Jesus, admonishes us, warns us, "You take heed what you hear, what you hear, listen to what is being taught, so that you know what is being taught." And when He says, "Take heed," those words mean, that you're going to intensely, and seriously, zealously, diligently look into, examine, what is being said. That's what Jesus meant when He said, "Take heed."

Now I need to examine myself. Am I doing that? When the Bible is being preached or taught, am I taking heed intensely, seriously, diligently, zealously, looking into that, to make sure that it is what God says in His Word? So you and I need to be careful what we hear. But that's not the only thing.

Now we want to turn to Luke's account of the gospel. In Luke chapter 8, verse 18. Luke 8, verse 18. Here the Lord said, "Therefore, take heed how you hear, for whoever has, to him more will be given, and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have, will be taken from him." So Lord says, we need to not only take heed to what we hear, but also how we hear. What's he talking about? He's talking about our attitude. Our attitude towards the Word of God. Are we open and receptive to God's will? Are we careful? Are we on guard? Are we paying attention? So we need to take heed to what we hear. And we need to take heed to ourselves, how we hear. Do we have the right attitude, the right receptiveness and openness to the Word of God? And are we being careful what we hear, and how we hear?

Then in the Old Testament, a principle that we can learn from, in the book of Psalms. 119th Psalm, verse 104 will be the first verse, and then we want to look at another one. But, Psalm 119, verse 104. The Psalmist said, "Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way." Then verse 128 of the same psalm, "Therefore all your precepts concerning all things I consider to be right; I hate every false way." The psalmist speaking by the inspiration of God says that it's through the precepts of God, through the law of God, the Word of God, that you and I can get understanding. We don't need to go to any other source: not the doctrines and commandments of men, not our human feelings, not our own common sense or reasoning power by itself, but to the Word of God. And because we know it's only through that source that we have true understanding of the will of God, we must hate every false way. Now, God's not talking about hating people. We need to love people, even those who are teaching that which is wrong. We don't love the things that they teach, but we love them.

But notice, God says, “Hate every false way.” Now I need to ask myself, “Is that my attitude?” Or do I say, “Ah, it’s not important? Why do you make such an issue of doctrine?” Is that my attitude? Or is it that I hate every false way? Why? Because God hates it, and because it will destroy those who teach it, it will destroy those who believe it, and it will cause division among those who claim to be followers of the Lord. That's why it's been so important for us to determine that what we're teaching and what is being taught, is that which God defines as sound doctrine. We must hate every false way.

Then in the book of Romans, in Romans, the 16th chapter, and verse 17. Romans 16, verse 17. The inspired apostle Paul, towards the end of this epistle, bringing it to a close by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said, “Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.” Note them and avoid them. So Paul is urging us, by the command of God, by the authority of Jesus Christ, to note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine of Christ, revealed in the New Testament of Christ. What does it mean to “note them” or to “mark them”? It means "to fix one's eyes upon, to watch very carefully, to observe," because they're teaching that which is wrong. But God doesn't stop there. Not only are we to watch them very carefully, but we're to avoid them. Literally, we're to turn away from that evil. We're to reject it, and to get away as far as we can get from it. We're to shun that one, who is teaching that which is false, if we've had an opportunity to work with that brother or sister, and they refuse to repent. So God commands us — this is not some optional matter — to mark those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine of Christ, and avoid them.

Then in the book of 2 John. 2 John, verses 9 through 11, very important passage of scripture on this subject. 2 John, verses 9 through 11. “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you, and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive Him in your house, nor greet him. For he who greets him, shares in his evil deeds.” Talk about words that really ought to grab our attention, and not to say, “You pay attention to what God's saying here, this is serious business.” God said if we transgress, if we violate the doctrine of Christ, if we don't abide in the doctrine of Christ, we don't remain in that teaching. Then what? We don't have God. We don't have his fellowship. We don't have His approval. We don't have His watch care and His tender mercy upon us.

You just go through the list of blessings that are available to the faithful Christian and say, those aren't available. If I decide to transgress the doctrine of Christ, to violate it, to go beyond it, to add to or take away from it, if I choose in any way, not to remain steadfast in the doctrine of Christ, God says, I don't have Him. I don't have God.