DISCOVERING HOPE SERIES

BOOKLET 13

HOW DO I KNOW TRUTH FROM ERROR?

Biblical Principles for Recognizing Truth, Avoiding Deception, and Following God's Word

1 JOHN 4:1

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God..."

DON'T FOLLOW EVERY VOICE—
LEARN HOW TO TEST WHAT YOU HEAR BY THE WORD OF GOD.

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WELCOME TO THE

DISCOVERING HOPE SERIES

Real Questions. Biblical Answers. Lasting Hope.

Life raises questions that are not always easy to answer.

Why am I here?, Does God really exist? , Can I trust the Bible?, Why does God allow suffering?, Can my life really change? Is there hope when I feel trapped, broken, or uncertain about the future?

The **Discovering Hope Series** was created to help people explore questions like these through the truth of God's Word.

You need not be a Bible scholar or have all the answers.

And you do not need to have everything in your life figured out before you begin.

Each booklet focuses on a different question, struggle, or biblical truth and is designed to help you discover what the Bible actually says.

As you read, take your time.

Consider the Scriptures for yourself.

Ask questions, Pray.

And most importantly, allow God to speak to your heart through His Word.

The Bible is more than a book of religious teachings. It reveals a God who loves us, seeks us, and desires to transform our lives.

Whatever brought you to this booklet, we hope it becomes one more step in your journey toward discovering the hope that can only be found in Jesus Christ.

There is hope. There are answers.

And God may be closer than you think.

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How Do I Know Truth From Error?

Introduction

We live in a world overflowing with information, opinions, and religious voices. Every day people encounter conflicting teachings about God, salvation, morality, and spiritual truth.

Jesus warned that deception would increase in the last days.

The question is not whether false teaching exists.

The question is:

How can we recognize it?

Fortunately, God has not left His people without guidance.

The Bible provides clear tests that help us distinguish truth from error.

1. Test Everything By Scripture

Acts 17:11

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

The Bereans did not blindly accept teaching simply because it came from a respected preacher.

They compared every message to Scripture.

Truth welcomes examination.

Error often discourages it.

Principle:

Never ask:

"What does this preacher say?"

First ask:
"What does the Bible say?"

2. The Apostles Teachings Were Personally Endorsed by Jesus

One of the greatest safeguards against deception is recognizing whom Jesus Himself authorized to teach His church.

Jesus did not leave the world to discover truth through countless competing voices. He personally chose and trained His apostles, entrusting them with His doctrine and authority.

John 17:20

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;"

Notice that Jesus said future believers would come to faith **through the word of the apostles**. The church was not built upon human opinions but upon the message delivered by those whom Christ personally appointed.

The apostles became the authoritative witnesses of Christ's life, death, resurrection, and teachings.

Ephesians 2:20

"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;"

The foundation has already been laid. Every doctrine, teaching, and spiritual experience must be measured against the apostolic message preserved in Scripture.

This is why John wrote:

1 John 4:6

"We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error."
When John said **"heareth us,"** he was speaking of the apostolic witness. One of the clearest ways to distinguish truth from error is to ask:
Does this teaching agree with what the apostles taught?
If a doctrine contradicts the apostles, it cannot be from God, no matter how popular, persuasive, or miraculous it may appear.
Principle:

The Spirit of Truth always agrees with the Apostles of Jesus Christ.
Since Jesus endorsed the apostles, and the apostles delivered the faith once given to the saints, believers today can safely test every teaching by the apostolic doctrine found in Scripture.

3. Does It Exalt Jesus Christ?
1 John 4:1-3

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God..."
False teaching often shifts attention away from Christ.
Truth consistently magnifies Jesus.

4. Does It Produce Godly Fruit?
Matthew 7:15-20

"Ye shall know them by their fruits."
A teaching may sound impressive, but what does it produce?

Does it produce:

- Holiness?
- Humility?
- Love?
- Faithfulness?

Or does it produce:

- Pride?
- Division?
- Worldliness?
- Rebellion?

Truth bears good fruit.

5. Does It Agree With the Whole Counsel of God?

One isolated verse can be twisted.

2 Timothy 3:16

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God..."

Truth harmonizes with the entire Bible.

Error often depends upon:

- Isolated verses
- Ignoring context

Selective interpretation

6. Does It Lead People Toward Obedience?

John 14:15

"If ye love me, keep my commandments."

Many teachings promise blessings while avoiding obedience.

Biblical truth calls people to follow God, not

merely admire Him.

7. Beware of New Revelations
Galatians 1:8

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you... let him be accursed."
God's truth does not need updating.
Every "new revelation" must be tested by Scripture.

8. Consider the Source
Hebrews 13:7

"Remember them which have the rule over you..."
God places spiritual leadership in our lives for protection.
A random internet teacher knows nothing about your soul.
A godly pastor watches for your spiritual well-being.

9. Pray For Discernment
James 1:5

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God..."
Discernment is not merely intellectual.
It is spiritual.
The Holy Ghost helps believers recognize truth.

Questions To Ask Before Accepting Any Teaching

- Is it biblical?
- Is it a gray area, one that is uncertain?

- Is it supported by multiple scriptures?
- Does it exalt Jesus?
- Does it produce godly fruit?
- Does it agree with the gospel?
- Does it encourage obedience?
- Does it align with sound pastoral leadership?

If the answer is no, proceed with caution.

Conclusion

Truth has nothing to fear from examination.
God never asks His people to follow blindly.
He invites us to search the Scriptures, seek wisdom, and walk in the light of His Word.

John 8:31-32

"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."