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# Words of Truth

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## I Thessalonians 5:21

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After being instructed not to quench the Spirit nor to despise prophesyings, this was written: *“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good”* (I Thessalonians 5:21). This is a straightforward instruction to the saints in Thessalonica. To prove something is to: “test (literally or figuratively); by implication to approve: - allow, discern, examine, X like, (ap-) prove, try” (Strong’s # 1381). To hold fast is to: “hold down (fast), in various applications (literally or figuratively): - have, hold (fast), keep (in memory), let, X make toward, possess, retain, seize on, stay, take, withhold” (Strong’s # 2722).

So, why is it that Christians then and now should test everything? Solomon wrote: *“The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going”* (Proverbs 14:15). We should not be naive and take whatever we hear as credible. One of the Spiritual gifts that we read about Christians having in the first century (I Corinthians 12:1-11) was the ability to discern spirits (I Corinthians 12:10). We later see this instruction: *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. 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”* (I John 4:1-6).

There have long been false teachers/prophets in the world (Jeremiah 14:14 and Lamentations 2:14). Those that taught that which was false were very successful in the first century. Notice what Peter wrote: *“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”* (II Peter 2:1-3). Jesus warned of those who were false that appeared to be among the sheep (Matthew 7:15-20). In a prophetic message about the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus said: *“For there*

*shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matthew 24:24).*

The Thessalonians were not the only ones told to test all things. Notice what was written to the saints in Ephesus: *“Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Ephesians 5:6-11).*

Proving all things is not only about being cautious concerning false doctrines. We also need to stay aware that people work hard at deception in general (Psalms 28:3 and Proverbs 26:22-28). People use what are otherwise kind words to try and be deceptive (Matthew 22:15-22). There are people that put on fake appearances (Matthew 23:28). Think about all of the scams that are run in this world. These are reasons why God instructs His people not to be overly trusting. Having said all of that, once we test someone or something and find good, we should hold on.

As an example for holding fast to that which is good, consider what was written in the second letter to the Thessalonians: *“Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle” (II Thessalonians 2:15).* My point is, there is a time wherein testing comes to a fruitful conclusion. This is an important point because there are those who would stay in a perpetual state of not believing anything because they lack the ability to trust. There are those that always think someone is trying to deceive them. They remain in a state of doubt which causes them to be unstable (James 1:8). Don't be that person. One can know the truth (John 8:32). Once you inspect fruit, you can know a good person from an evil person (Luke 6:43-45).

Once we have that which is good we want to grab hold of it and not let go. Solomon wrote: *“Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding” (Proverbs 23:23).* Paul told Timothy: *“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (II Timothy 1:13).* To those that were faithful in Thyatira, Jesus said: *“But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come” (Revelation 2:24-25).* The faithful in Philadelphia were told: *“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Revelation 3:11).* Faithful Christians have to be able to hold fast till the end (Hebrews 3:1-6 and Hebrews 10:23). So, test everything. Don't be a gullible, naive person. Yet, once you know the truth and those that are in the truth; don't keep the guard up so high that you end up failing.