

## Beware

When I was a young boy, I was amazed at how I could make baby birds open their mouths just by shaking their nest. Many times, I think about how Christians can be so open that they allow anything to enter their minds. Just recently I got an email from one of our partners. The email was sent to warn us about a book called, "Conversations with God". The author pretends that he is God and answers questions for kids and teens. To say the least, this man isn't God and he doesn't answer questions the way God would answer them. This author promotes filth and humanism. We need to beware that everything that looks religious isn't Christian.

John wrote in 1 John 4:1, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world." (NASU) In the times that we live in there are many different voices in the world, but only one spirit is the Spirit of God. The other spirits have one objective and that is to destroy what the Holy Spirit is saying. These spirits do this by filling our minds with all kinds of thoughts and teachings. We as believers must remain on our guard that we don't allow these thoughts to enter our minds. Don't be gullible! Examine everything!

In this article, I want to give you some ideas that will help you examine what you hear. One of the flags that should go up is when a person isn't willing to be examined. If a person tells you to just believe something they said and to not examine it, a flag should go up in your mind. We are told many times to examine what we hear, so, the first test is to see if these people are open to examination. You shouldn't buy a used car without a thorough examination. In the same way, you should not believe anything without examining it.

How do you do a thorough examination? First, know the truth. The Word of God is true. There isn't one error in the Word of God. I have been told that one of the ways a bank will teach its cashiers how to determine a counterfeit bill is to get them very accustomed to handling the real bills. The more we study the Word, the more we will be able to know what isn't real. That is one reason why we should be spending personal time in Bible study. Devotionals are great, but they can't take the place of reading and studying the Word. Reading books, listening to teaching and going to church are great, but they are never meant to take the place of your personal study of the Word. One of the best ways of not being deceived is to be knowledgeable of the Word. Then, if someone says something, you will know whether it is true or not, based on your knowledge of the Word. Hebrews 5:14 says, "But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil." (NASU) The author of Hebrews is talking about knowing God's Word. He tells us that those who practice the Word will be able to discern good and evil. You practice the Word by using it to examine what you hear. Get out your sword, which is the Word of God, and start using it to discern good and evil.

Another way to know what is right is by asking this question, "What does it say about Jesus?" Every cult limits who Jesus is. In John 4:2, we find the test that John gives. He said, "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;" (NASU) John calls the Jesus, the Christ. The name "Christ" means the Anointed One. Does the teaching that you are hearing admit that Jesus was the Anointed One of God? In other words, does it say that Jesus is God? The second criteria that John gives us is does it confess that Jesus was the Christ that came in the flesh. If these two criteria aren't met, then don't listen to what is being said. Many false religions will confess one or the other, but none of them will confess both criteria.

There is one more thing. Does what you are hearing edify you in your relationship with God? There is a lot of teaching going on under the guise of being Christian, but it is not from God. Some have said, "But it edifies me." The question is does it build you up in your relationship to God or does it just

build you up? Beware of where the teaching is building. Does it build your pride and self confidence? Then it isn't building you in your relationship to God. The Word says God is opposed to the proud. (James 4:6) So ask yourself this question. Does it help build my relationship with God? There is teaching that destroys faith. Does it build your relationship with God? No! Then don't listen to it. There is teaching that leaves you feeling condemned and controlled. Does it build your relationship with God? No, so don't listen to it.

It is time that Christians start examining what they are being taught. I pray that this article has helped you do just that. God bless you as you test the spirits to see if they are from God.