



Daily Devotionals

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1 JOHN 4:1-6 THE TEST OF TRUTH

¹ Dear friends, 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. ² This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³ but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

⁴ You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. ⁵ They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶ We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

People are quick to enlist the name of any authority in order to enhance the power of their argument or opinion. It is the same whether it is the old marketing line for tooth paste - "Recommended by 9 out of 10 dentists surveyed" - or personal spiritual advice - "The Lord gave me a word about that." The warning, "Consumer beware" is applicable in either case, only the stakes are much higher in the spiritual realm. There are many brands of tooth paste in the world and you can sample them until you find the one that works for you. However, there is only one Truth, which means every other truth-claim is false.

How can we know the Truth? As fallen human beings our thinking is so damaged by selfishness and sin that we are unable to discern what the Truth is. Likewise, the world being populated by people like us provides an environment that breeds only confusion as each person attempts to impose what he sees as the truth on all others. Today's claim is that there are limitless truths and we are to accept all comers. But a closer examination of that claim reveals that just like all the others it is being imposed as "the truth" by people who are being served by it in one way or another. Their motive might be the search for peace among nations and people on the noble end of the spectrum. But at least as prevalent, is the attempt to justify some personal attitude or behavior which up to that point has not been accepted by the world or the church. When it comes down to knowing the Truth, there is only one way - God who is the Truth reveals it to human beings.

If we are to know the Truth we must turn to God. Every truth claim must be tested against God's revelation. If it is consistent with that revelation, then it is true. When it comes to the Truth, the governing revelation is not the personal revelation, but that which is corporate or general. God has revealed himself through Scripture and supremely through the Incarnation. The "Truth" cannot contradict Scripture. Nor can it deny Jesus as the incarnation of the eternal Son of God. False teaching in the church will center on the human partner in our relationship with God, while the Truth focuses on God. The revealed Truth is that the Son became the man Jesus who died for our sins and was raised bodily from death, ascended into heaven, and therefore, is the only way of reconciliation with God - that is, eternal life. To claim anything else is to call God a liar.

Save me Lord from the siren voices of the world, even in the church, that are calling me to exchange your revealed Truth for other "truths." Fill me with your Spirit that I might discern your Truth in the midst of the confusion of this world, and be strong enough to stand firm on your Word. Protect me from the situation where I might be tempted to deny you, but stand with me to help me remain faithful if and when I am there. Amen.

Chuck+