

Testing The Spirits:

Just because it's spiritual doesn't mean it's from God

1 John 3:24– 4:6

THE PASSAGE:

The Incredible Gift (1 John 3:24)

Mark 1:9-14; 3:22-29 & John 16:6-14/ Romans 8:9

*Genuine Christians have the same **Spirit** that **empowered** Jesus!*

The Truth About Spiritual Truth: (1 John 4:1-5)

Exodus 7:22; 2 Thessalonians 2:9 & Revelation 13:11-14/ 2 Corinthians 11:14-15

*Everything **spiritual** isn't from **God**.*

*Satan's best two decoys are **miracles** and **morality**.*

One More Way To Tell The Bogus From The Real (1 John 4:6)

1 Thessalonians 4:8

The Response question:

*Do I treat the Bible as **God's Word** or just **good advice**?*

THE BIG QUESTION: Was that GOD, a FRAUD or just LAST NIGHT'S PIZZA?

1st Always start with **the Bible**.

2 Timothy 3:16-17/ Psalm 119:105/ Romans 12:2 & Proverbs 4:18-19

*Key Question: **Does the Bible speak to this issue?***

*Good News: **You don't have to be a Bible scholar!***

2nd Listen for **the inner promptings of the Holy Spirit**.

John 14:25-26 & 16:13/ 1 Corinthians 2:11-16/ Acts 16:6-10

*Beware: **There will always be some static on the line.***

*Never Forget: **If it doesn't line up with Scripture – it's the pizza!***

3rd Pay attention to **the advice of other Christians**.

Acts 17:11/ 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22/ Numbers 22:21-35/ Deuteronomy 13:1-5 & 18:21-22

*Be Cautious: **Weigh & test everything.***

*Stay Open: **Sometimes God speaks through a donkey!***

*Remember: **The "one and done" rule.***

GROWTH GROUP HOMEWORK

For the week of February 18, 2007

QUICK REVIEW: Take a look over your sermon notes from this week and maybe even look up a few of the Scriptures that Pastor Larry mentioned. Is there any principle, illustration or point that you would like to clarify or discuss with your group?

MY STORY

1. Who do you tend to go to when you need advice? What is it about that person that draws you to them in those situations?

2. Can you describe a time when you thought God was speaking to you or when you felt an "inner prompting of the Holy Spirit"?

Can you think of any Scriptures that would help you know if this experience was from God or not?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Pastor Larry reminded us that genuine Christians have the exact same Holy Spirit that empowered Jesus. That means that as followers of Jesus we have a supernatural resource that can help us do and understand things that we never thought possible. Read the following passages and identify some of the resources that the Spirit offers.

John 14:25-27

"All this I have spoken while still with you. [26] But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. [27] Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. [NIV]

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." [NIV]

Romans 8:12-17

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation--but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. [13] For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, [14] because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. [15] For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." [16] The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit

that we are God's children. [17] Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. [NIV]

Ephesians 3:16-21

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, [17] so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, [18] may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, [19] and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. [20] Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, [21] to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. [NIV]

Where would you most like to experience the Spirit's power?

2. Pastor Larry made it clear that the Bible is an essential tool for determining what's from God and what's not. He also pointed out that how we view and respond to God's Word is one of the tests of whether or not we really know God. What do the following verses tell us about either the blessings or warnings that come with how we treat God's Word?

Joshua 1:8-9

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. [9] Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." [NIV]

Psalms 119:9-11

How can a young man keep his way pure?

By living according to your word.

[10] I seek you with all my heart;
do not let me stray from your commands.

[11] I have hidden your word in my heart
that I might not sin against you. [NIV]

James 1:22-25

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. [23] Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror [24] and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. [25] But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does. [NIV]

1 Samuel 12:14-15

If you fear the Lord and serve and obey him and do not rebel against his commands, and if both you and the king who reigns over you follow the Lord your God--good! [15] But if you do not obey the Lord, and if you rebel against his commands, his hand will be against you, as it was against your fathers. [NIV]

3. Try to imagine this situation and put yourself into this case study. You have a friend who has been sharing private information with others that may have hurt the reputation of another friend.

You sense that God is telling you to confront this friend but you're not sure. How can the following verses help you confirm if this is God speaking to you or not?

Galatians 6:1-4

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. [2] Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. [3] If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. [4] Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, [NIV]

Matthew 7:3-5

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? [4] How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? [5] You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. [NIV]

How do those two verses along with Proverbs 15:22 influence the actions you may take?

Proverbs 15:22

Plans fail for lack of counsel,
but with many advisers they succeed. [NIV]

TAKING IT HOME

1. When it comes to testing the spirits and answering "THE BIG QUESTION" is there one of the three actions that you need to pay more attention to than the others?

Is there a specific part of the Bible or biblical topic that you would like to become more familiar with?

Is there any "static" you need to get rid of so that you can hear the Holy Spirit better?

Is there any area you need to consult or seek wise counsel about?

2. Is there something that God is speaking to you about right now that you need to put to the test?