119 MINISTRIES

"The following is a direct script of a teaching that is intended to be presented via video, incorporating relevant text, slides, media, and graphics to assist in illustration, thus facilitating the presentation of the material. In some places, this may cause the written material to not flow or sound rather awkward in some places. In addition, there may be grammatical errors that are often not acceptable in literary work. We encourage the viewing of the video teachings to complement the written teaching you see below."

How to "Test Everything"

A core principle of 119 Ministries is the concept of "Test Everything."

1 Thessalonians 5:21

> Test everything; hold fast what is good.

Why do we consider that a primary focus of 119 Ministries? ...because we are not responsible for deciding what you believe in your faith...you are the one responsible. As ones who teach, we will be judged more harshly in how we may have influenced others in their faith, but in the end, what you believe comes down to you and you alone.

So often today, many are easily persuaded to believe or follow what their pastor believes, or what their congregation believes, or what some book teaches, etc.

We encourage you to not follow us. Our goal is to enable you to test yourself and your faith to the Word of God.

We do not conclude every teaching in saying "Test Everything" for no reason.

If we do not use a valid method to accurately determine what is true, then we are subject to man's opinion to form our own truth, which of course, would not be truth at all.

Because of this, we would like to offer some general guidelines to assist you in this core principle testing everything of the faith.

Test #1

The Word of God Test or The Deuteronomy 13 Test.

We actually have a teaching titled "The Deuteronomy 13 Test" which we hope would serve as a great resource for this very important test. The idea is that our Creator gave mankind the Word of God. He gave this Word containing all His instructions (the Torah) to all people who choose to align their lives in

faith to the Word of God, not just to Israel or the Jews (Leviticus 24:22). He instructed that it was wrong to add or take away from the Word of God (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32). He stated that any prophet that is a true prophet will teach according to the Word of God already given, lest he be a false prophet (Deuteronomy 13).

Thus, our faith cannot contradict these established principles in the Word of God. Also, because sin is defined as breaking the law of God (1 John 3:4), and because we understand our Messiah to have been and continues to be perfect and sinless (i.e. Hebrews 5:9), we cannot accuse our Messiah to have added to, or taken away from the law of God (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32) lest He be a false prophet as well (Deuteronomy 13). This is also true for James, Peter, Paul, or any other writings found in what we often call the Bible. All writings must be consistent with the already established Word of God.

Many traditions or Jewish interpretations of the Law of God are simply not found in the Torah or are simply misunderstandings of the Torah. It is very easy to accidently add or to take away from Torah. Quite often, it is so subtle, that it is difficult to notice.

Test #2

Contradiction Identification and Elimination

Arriving to conclusions that cause Scriptural contradictions should not be considered acceptable. Perceived contradictions should not be reduced to something acceptable by relabeling them as "Scriptural tensions" or something similar.

For example, we cannot understand the author of Hebrews to teach that the law of God was made better, when the law of God was already declared to be perfect (Psalm 19:7). So, something that is already perfect cannot be made better. Thus, something about the letter to the Hebrews must be misunderstood if it is being understood in this perspective.

Likewise, we cannot have Paul declaring the law of God to be bondage, yet the author of Psalm 119 declares the Law of God to be freedom (Psalm 119:44-45). In fact, the longest chapter in the Bible, Psalm 119, is solely dedicated to the Law of God, detailing how great, perfect, wonderful, joyful, and worthy the law of God is for God's people...not just for a time, but for forever.

That all being said, we must ensure that our theology contains no contradictions. When contradictions are found, we must reconcile them. This should not always be a quick process. Sometimes the path of least resistance is to discard everything. For example, some begin to throw out the writings of the New Testament, or Brit Hadasha. They do this, not because they should, but because they are unable to reconcile some of the things that appear to be contradictions. Thus, it is simply easier to throw it all out. Therefore, exercise caution when dealing with contradictions in your faith. It often takes work and much research to find the answers to such circumstances.

Test #3

Compare Resources

Whether we like to admit it or not, differences exist in different Bible translations, interlinears, codices and manuscripts. Do not isolate your studies to one or two resources. The more information you have access to, the more you are enabled to utilize critical thinking and see the big picture to a problem, or

find an elusive answer to a difficult issue. Do not use interlinears and concordances, such as Strong's, as Greek or Hebrew dictionaries. Strong's is great for showing how a Hebrew or Greek word was chosen by translators to be translated in the King James Version, but that is the extent of their intended purpose. They can be helpful for gaining a sense of understanding of a Greek or Hebrew word, but an actual dictionary or lexicon for Greek(i.e. Newman or Mounce) or Hebrew (i.e. Jenni-Westermann or Kohlenberger/Mounce) serves infinitely better.

Test #4

Identify Hidden Influences

People in our lives are important. What others think often becomes important to us as well. Quite often, some fundamental principles of our faith are not necessarily derived from the Word of God but people of influence. Ask yourself why you believe what you believe. Find multiple witnesses of strong support in the Scriptures. Hear the opinion of others, and respect them, but take everything back and test it to the Word of God.

Often you will find that strong Scriptural support might be lacking, or that contradictions might exists. You might find that a certain position is completely based on an argument of silence. Watch out for red herrings.

Test #5

Use Biblical Words, Biblically

The Word of God happens to consists of words. It should go without saying, but words mean things. Sadly, because of translational differences, cultural differences, linguistic evolution, metaphorical and poetic language, etc., the meaning of words and how they are being used is not always so clear.

Examine how a Hebrew or Greek word is used in the Scriptures. Read every instance or usage of a word. When examining Greek, examine the Septuagint (LXX) to see how the Hebrew culture used that Greek word compared to the Hebrew language.

It is easy to arrive at strange doctrines and ideas when we do not even know how words such as spirit, light, God (Elohim), etc. are definitively used in Scripture.

Quite often, how a word is first used in Scripture sets the precedence of how it should be understood going forward.

Test #6

Looney Logic

There are so many different types of logical errors, that it would be impossible to discuss all of them here. One of the most abused logical fallacies in Scriptural discussion is called a "red herring".

The red herring is not only a common debate tactic, it is also a logical fallacy. It is a fallacy of distraction, and is committed when a listener attempts to divert an arguer from his argument by introducing another topic. This can be one of the most frustrating, and effective, fallacies to observe.

The fallacy gets its name from fox hunting, specifically from the practice of using smoked herrings, which are red, to distract hounds from the scent of their quarry. Just as a hound may be prevented from catching a fox by distracting it with a red herring, so an arguer may be prevented from proving his point by distracting him with another issue.

Another logical fallacy is the accusation that one is on a "slippery slope".

Being on a slippery slope asserts that a relatively small first step inevitably leads to a chain of related events culminating in some significant impact or event that should not happen, thus the first step should not happen.

While this fallacy is a popular one, it is, in essence, an appeal to probability fallacy. (e.g. if person x does y then z would [probably] occur, leading to q, leading to w, leading to e.)

Logical fallacies are easy to make and occur often. They are also the type of errors that are the most convincing until the error is exposed.

Test #7

Greek Traps

Greek thinking and Hebrew thinking are two very different types of thinking. Most of the Western world thinks like a Greek. Every author of the Bible spoke in Hebrew and was raised in Hebrew culture and thinking.

This can often cause problems.

For example, there is the either/or problem. In the faith, some debates go on eternally because one position says one thing, and another position says another thing. Both assume that both positions cannot co-exist without contradiction. Quite often, debates are solved when it is realized that both positions are equally true. The next time you find yourself in an either/or debate, ask yourself if both positions could be true, and how.

We hope that some of these tactics were of some value to you.

Remember...continue to test everything.

Shalom
We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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