Danger: Deception Ahead – 1 John 2:18-29

“Children, it is the last hour [the end of this age]; and just as you heard that the antichrist is coming [the one who will oppose Christ and attempt to replace Him], even now many antichrists (false teachers/people with attitudes that are against Christ) have appeared, which confirms our belief that it is the last hour. **19**They went out from us [seeming at first to be Christians], but they were not *really* of us [because they were not truly born again and spiritually transformed]; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but *they went out* [teaching false doctrine], so that it would be clearly shown that none of them are of us. **20**But you have an anointing from the Holy One [you have been set apart, specially gifted and prepared by the Holy Spirit], and all of you know [the truth because He teaches us, illuminates our minds, and guards us from error]. **21**I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie [nothing false, no deception] is of the truth. **22**Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed)? This is the antichrist [the enemy and antagonist of Christ], the one who denies *and* consistently refuses to acknowledge the Father and the Son. **23**Whoever denies *and* repudiates the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses *and* acknowledges the Son has the Father also. **24**As for you, let that remain in you [keeping in your hearts that message of salvation] which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning remains in you, you too will remain in the Son and in the Father [forever].

**The Promise Is Eternal Life**

**25**This is the promise which He Himself promised us—eternal life.

**26**These things I have written to you with reference to those who are trying to deceive you [seducing you and leading you away from the truth and sound doctrine]. **27**As for you, the anointing [the special gift, the preparation] which you received from Him remains [permanently] in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you. But just as His anointing teaches you [giving you insight through the presence of the Holy Spirit] about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as His anointing has taught you, [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+jOHN+2%3A18-29&version=AMP#fen-AMP-30578a)]you must remain in Him [being rooted in Him, knit to Him].

**28**Now, little children (believers, dear ones), remain in Him [with unwavering faith], so that when He appears [at His return], we may have [perfect] confidence and not be ashamed and shrink away from Him at His coming. **29**If you know that He is *absolutely* righteous, you know [for certain] that everyone who practices righteousness [doing what is right and conforming to God’s will] has been born of Him.

There are many antichrists. Anyone who does not confess Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord is anti-Christ, there is no middle ground. You cannot be neutral regarding Jesus. “You’re either with me or you are against me.” In [1 Corinthians 16:22](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Cor%2016.22), Paul said, “If you don’t love the Lord Jesus Christ, you’re cursed.” So either you are a lover of Christ or cursed and, again, there is no middle ground.

Now, John knows that some antichrists infiltrate the church. They come into the church because, obviously, this is Satan’s approach. He is a deceiver. He is a liar. He wants to mingle himself among those people who are being given the truth, being taught the truth, who are hearing the truth. And he wants to work his work of deception among those, you might say, who are nearing the understanding of the gospel. There are antichrists all over the globe. As I said, anybody not with Christ is anti-Christ.

Those that are most dangerous are those that are cloaked as if they were Christians, as those who are wolves in sheep’s clothing, those who are false teachers and not just in the broad category of false teachers but those who are false teachers disguised as true teachers in the church. They come into the church, it becomes difficult for some unwitting or some childlike Christians or some untaught Christians, it becomes difficult for them to sort them out, to separate them, to avoid them. John wants us to make those distinctions clear, to know the true Christian from the antichrist. And so he provides here a contrast.

There are a lot of contrasts throughout this book, as we already know. There are doctrinal tests that define true Christians. It is the view of sin and the view of Christ that is defining. There are moral tests that define true Christians. It is their obedience to the Word of God and their love for God, for others, and the fact that they don’t love the world that marks them. So true Christians are marked morally, they’re marked in terms of their theology and their doctrine, and in this particular section, the emphasis is on the doctrine of Christ. True Christians embrace, love, serve Christ, those who do not are termed antichrists.

Now, let me just take you back to verse 19, flow through and read this to you again. “They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us. But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.

“Whoever denies the Son doesn’t have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life. These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.

“And as for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you. You have no need for anyone to teach you, but as His anointing teaches you about all things and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.”

This is typical Johannine prose. It is not the logical, sequential pattern of the apostle Paul or even Peter. John has his own style and he moves in circles and weaves back and forth through the same themes, and so we have been looking at this passage and finding that while we can consider it and extract its truths, in order to sort of create some kind of outline and some kind of sequence, we have to jump around a little bit. But the bottom line is distinguishing Christians from antichrists.

Now, we know that it is the last hour, verse 18 says, because the last hour, you remember, is defined as the time when Messiah comes. And because so many people hate Jesus Christ, because so many in the world reject Jesus Christ, the Jesus Christ, the true Jesus Christ of Scripture, because there is such hostility against Him even in our own country - all this effort to remove Christianity from the schools has nothing to do with anything constitutional, it has nothing to do with the separation of church and state, it has everything to do with a hatred of the gospel.

This immense animosity toward Jesus is proof enough that He is the Messiah and proof enough that indeed it is the last hour, that is the hour, the last hour, the last era of human history, which is marked by the coming of Messiah. Now, in this last era when Messiah comes, many will hate Him. Many will be anti-Christ and some of them will infiltrate the church. And John tells the believers and us that you can identify them, first of all, because they depart from the fellowship. Where the church is true to sound doctrine, where it is true to the gospel and true to the Word of God, they depart. Verse 19, “They went out from us.” They left. Their defection is proof of their hypocrisy. The attitude is what “the spirit” means here, the attitude, the antichrist attitude is everywhere in the world. And it is manifest in a wrong view of Jesus Christ. [Second John 7](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/2%20John%207), “Many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.”

So how can you tell a true Christian from an antichrist? A true Christian is not deceived. They may doubt, they may question, they may be temporarily led astray, they may be enticed in their spiritual infancy or instability. But a true believer will not abandon the truth. There may be a time of testing, there may be a time of wandering, there may be a time of questioning and doubting - doubt is not denial - so true Christians are not deceived. First of all, because you have an anointing - that is to say, God has placed His hand upon you, a hand of special favor and you all know - there isn’t anything you don’t know necessary to salvation. There isn’t any secret knowledge. There isn’t any elevated knowledge. There isn’t any transcendent knowledge. There aren’t any mysteries, there aren’t any hidden acrostics in the text. There aren’t any secrets tucked behind the letters in the white spaces, there isn’t any magic. You all know.

It also could be translated, “You know all.” Well, let’s do that, you all know all that is necessary to be known for salvation. The word anointing refers to an anointing oil, chrisma. Chrisma is the Greek word. It’s only used twice in the New Testament, both times here, once in verse 20, and once in verse 27. It’s really a word for ointment. And in this text, it refers to the Holy Spirit. You have an anointing, all right, you have the touch of God. You have, as it were, the ointment of God on you, and that ointment is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has taken up residency in you.

Second Corinthians 1, verse 21, says, “Now, He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God.” We were anointed by God and what was the anointing? “He gave us the Spirit in our hearts.” [Second Corinthians 1:21](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/2%20Cor%201.21) and [22](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Second%20Corinthians%201.22). The anointing from God was the giving of the Spirit. You’re not lacking anything. You’re not on the short end of divine privilege and power. You have the Holy Spirit. You remember Jesus said, “After the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you shall receive power.”

And who gave us the Holy Spirit? Verse 20, “You have an anointing from the Holy One.” Who is the Holy One? Well, it’s Christ.

These are straight forward and profound verses that tells us of a danger that is in the church and is an even greater in the church today – false teachers. There are men and women who come into the church and pose themselves as spiritual leaders/teachers. They are given prominence because they give a very good first impression – know how to speak – extraordinary people skills - know how to gather a group around them and use that for selfish reasons – they sound spiritual and they sound religious – use Christian vocabulary yet they have different definitions for those words – they deny the virgin birth – turn on Christian TV and see how often you hear teaching on the virgin birth – they deny the sinless life of Christ – they deny the substitutionary sin-bearing death of Christ on the Cross – deny the trinity – deny deity of Christ, of the Holy Spirit – they deny the gospel – they deny that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone – masters at stroking your ego – masters at telling you what you want to hear – they make a living telling you what you want to hear – In the first century church they were known as gnostics.

As John writes at the end of the first century – there has been time for the true gospel to have spread through Asia Minor as well as into Europe and wherever the truth goes, the devil sets up shop. As the truth expands and the kingdom of God advances, you will find heretical teaching. John addresses that here…there is no greater danger to any church than for there to be false doctrine and false teaching – it’s the foundation ..the high ground…because what you believe determines how you live, if you are right with God, if you are in the kingdom of heaven or not. John devotes this section (18-27) …picking it back up in Chapter 4.

It really matters where you go to Church – who you listen to – what you read – and what you allow into your mind and into your heart. Because many times poison has sugar on it….falling for the sugar while swallowing the poison.

**Verse 18 – The Danger**

“children” – term of endearment and because they have been born again…kindred spirit. “it is the last hour” means the last period of redemption history – period between the first and second coming of Christ. To this point it’s been extended 2,000 year. Throughout the NT, it refers to the entirety of this present age.

“just as you have heard” ..you’ve already been taught this, you know this. This topic has already been addressed…not only the Christ is coming, but the anti-christ is coming. The first time in the bible the term ‘anti-christ’ is used ..it is used only 4 times in the NT and it is used 3 times in 1 John. 1 John 2:22, 1 John 4:3, 2 John 7

“anti” – means in place of – the idea is he will pose himself as the Messiah – the Deliverer – not necessarily in a religious way but in a geopolitical way that he will be the great man at the end of this age delivering the world out of its problems. It also means “in opposition to” in opposition to Christ and His kingdom – and it means “the opposite of” he will be the opposite of Christ in every way. He will be a world figure who will utterly oppose Christ and Christian values and doctrine and teaching. He will lead the world in an anti-Christian agenda. The son of destruction – 2 Thess 2:3 / 2 Thess 2:8 – the lawless one – the beast out of the sea Reve. 3 / the prince who is to come Daniel 26 – it all reveals aspects of this one figure – he will be dark, depraved, devilish, deceptive, defiant, domineering – and whatever takes place, his coming will be closely associated with the coming of Christ. He will be the one where God will set the stage of the world scene for him to step into and assume power. Rev. talks about one man controlling the entire global economy. With bar codes and all that we have now we can see how one man can control all buying and selling of everyone in the world. We can see the stage being set. It’s in some ways coming together before our very eyes. There will be this final anti-christ – 2 Thess 2:3 ‘let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come until the apostacy comes first…’ and apostacy is a falling away from Christian doctrine. There will be multitudes in and among churches that will depart from the faith. There will be a remnant that will remain in true churches. Other churches will continue to drift from the truth – you will have apostate churches that deny the essentials of the faith. We have more churches like that than sound churches. The apostacy comes first before the return of Christ. The man of lawlessness is revealed – the son of destruction – who opposes and exalts himself before every so called god of worship and takes his seat in the temple of God displaying himself as God. Do you not remember that when I was with you, I was telling you these things…

This is what John is alluding to – you know these things, you’ve already been taught them.

The mystery of lawlessness is already at work - ….then that lawless one will be revealed. (2 Thess 2:…) Verse 9 – he is in accordance in the activity of satan with all power, signs, and false wonders and all deception of wickedness for those who perish. Verse 11-12 – God will send upon them (those seduced by this lawless one) a diluting influence so they will believe what is false. God will harden their hearts and give them a double blindness of mind – they have crossed the line with God.

Rev. 13 – global powers unites and give their power to this beast – verse 4

Now, go back to 1 John 2:18 – that’s who John is referring to in Verse 18 –

“even now” - there were already “many’ …a multiplication of many anti-christs who had risen. They were the false teachers and deceivers of that day. Chapter 4 verse 1 – there is a spirit behind every teacher that is driving what they are teaching. There will either be the Holy Spirit behind every true regenerated teacher of the Word of God OR there will be a different spirit behind the unconverted teacher. So you need to test every spirit. Not every spirit behind every teacher is who is empowering and energizing that teacher to be far more brilliant than they really are – there is a supernatural element to their ministry or to their teaching (whether be it for good or for evil) that far exceeds their own intellect – and far exceeds their abilities to articulate their message. BECAUSE many false prophets have gone out into the world. These false prophets are identified in verse 3 as those who have the spirit of anti-christ. So, the bible never uses the word “many” when it relates to true preachers, it reserves the word “many” when it refers to false prophets. And I think a case could be made that there will be more false prophets than true prophets and that only enhances the deception to seduce religious people being pulled away from the truth. The ‘numbers’ will be with the false prophets. The ‘remnant’ that will be with the true preachers and teachers of the Word. The warning HAS TO BE SOUNDED! Truth rarely is with the majority. Truth always lines up with the minority. And you can follow the last 2000 of church history and see that. It was certainly true in the days of Christ.

Verse 18 – The false prophets have risen from within the church – the went out ‘from among us.” The danger is never what happens outside the church as it relates to the purity and strength of the church – the greatest danger is from within. False doctrine within the church that causes the foundation of the church to crumble. Follow main line denominations – the downfall of denominations that started out sound in the faith and just within a couple of generations there began to be termites in the temple that began to eat away at the infrastructure of sound doctrine until you know you have transgender people in the pulpit – lesbians as pastors – denial of virgin birth – we can see today the reality of this in the first century. Within the professing church, these false teachers in pulpits, in seminaries, in classrooms, in bible colleges, in print, in media, they are devastating to the spread of the gospel. God uses them for His own glory in that they suck out false believers out of true churches to go follow their heresy…in a strange way, they are like vacumme cleaners sucking out unbelievers to follow them and leaving behind a stronger church.

Jesus said in Matt 7:15 – beware of the ravenous wolves…they are not who they appear to be. They sound so good. They talk about Christ, Christianity, the will of God… Mark 13:22 – false Christs and false prophets will arise and show signs and wonders to lead astray even the elect. They are that good with their slight of hand! They are that good! Mark 13:23 – but take heed! I have told you everything in advance! It’s as though He is saying to the early disciples, “How many times do I need to tell you this …that everything religious is not of God.” In fact Rev 2 Jesus addressed one of the 7 churches as a synagogue of Satan. That is where Satan has set up his base of operation…right there in your own church. And you keep giving to it.

Verse 18 – ‘from this we know that it is the last hour’ – ‘this’ refers to the increase of false teachers and false christ’s. They will continue to spawn off heresy. That’s the danger and the danger is here today.

You tell me the most bizarre thing you want to believe and I can find you a church within 5 minutes of where I am sitting. This present danger is still with us.

**Verse 19 - The Defection**

These false teachers are really good at fleecing the flock and then they leave. They want money, and they want a following. They want a platform. They go into churches and suck that out and then they leave and take that with them.

“The many” in verse 18 is the “they “ in verse 19. They were in the church and set up their operation and all the gullible leaders let them come in and took the pulpit, took the classrooms, etc. They departed and defected from the fellowship because they have accomplished their mission. “they were not of us” means they were not believers. They were not of sound doctrine – were not of the same faith – they used the church. Verse 19 – “for if they had been of us…”

1 Tim 4:1 – the invisible war of demon spirits to get into the church – Paul writes the spirit explicitly says (it is crystal clear) that in later times some will fall away from the faith and give attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons. So in the church, in many churches, there will be deceitful spirits that are lying spirits – twist the Word of God – they teach doctrines of demons. They are a mouth piece for hell itself. Satan spoke through Peter and Jesus said, ‘get behind me satan.” How much more so unconverted teachers.

**2 Doctrines**

1. The Doctrine of the perseverance of the saints – a true believer will persevere in their pursuit of holiness – not only is it impossible for a true believer to lose their salvation – but the perseverance of the saints means a true believer will persevere in their pursuit of holiness, and will persevere in obedience to the Lord and persevere in following Christ. With some today, some would say a true believer can just live like the devil…even for long extended periods of time. No! This doctrine means of the perseverance of the saints means if you are a true believer you will know them by their fruit. There is going to be the evidence of a changed life. And that changed life will be marked by humility, obedience and love for the brethren. If these false teachers were truly converted, they would have persevered ..but it was all just a good first impression. Rev. 13:10 – Rev. 14:12 – this is in reference to the time of the great tribulation. During that massive assault upon Christians, true believers will persevere through the flames of affliction. They will bail out. It used to be popular and successful to be a Christian, but now it brings a laser upon my forehead. Argument is – true saints will persevere during times of being assaulted. Those who fall away give evidence they were never saved.

The faith that fizzles before the finish had a flaw from the first.

John Macarthur says “Truth and time go hand in hand. Given enough time, true colors will come out.”

1. **The Doctrine of the Visible and Invisible Church** – within the visible church, there will always be the invisible church – which are those true believers known only to the Lord. Every church has tares among the wheat. Matt 13

There will false professors of Christ among true possessors of Christ. Matt 7

There will always be a Judas among the 12 – John 6

The Roman Catholic said, salvation is in ‘the church.’ Wykliffe said no, there is a visible church where people gather. Within the visible church is the true church – the invisible church…the elect of God. Those ordained for salvation from before the foundation of the world. The elect comprise the true church – the others are church attenders. John is teaching the clear distinction between the visible church and the invisible church. Hell will be filled with people who profess Christ – Heaven will be filled with the elect who possessed Christ in their heart.

**The Discernment**

**1 John 2:20-21** -

“but you” – sharp contrast with the anti-christ … he is now addressing the children of verse 18 – true believers. ‘The Holy One’ refers to Jesus Christ – and ‘the anointing’ refers to the ministry of the Holy Spirit who indwells all true believers….refers to the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit to - His work to illumine minds of believers in order to see and understand sound doctrine…And when they hear false doctrine, it’s as though a smoke alarm goes off and they go wait a minute, wait a minute…things aren’t sitting quite right. The Holy Spirit has been given to every believer to give them discernment, to sort out what is true and what is false. They may not have gone to seminary, but if they are a believer they can smell a rat. They know when something doesn’t quite square because the Holy Spirit is sounding an alarm…blowing a trump inside of them. And so all true believers have this anointing from the Holy Spirit. Messiah means “The Anointed One” He would come in the fullness of the power of the Holy Spirit and He enabled Christ to teach the truth with perfection and refute His enemies. Christ means ‘the Anointed One.’ All true believers are all anointed ones in this sense. This is the true anointing – the invisible presence of the Holy Spirit who becomes the primary in every believer – every Christian needs a primary teacher and secondary teachers. The Primary Teacher is the Holy Spirit – the second teachers are those God has given to the church to rightly divide the word of truth (2 Tim 2:15) and help make the Word clear.

John 14:26- ‘all things’ doesn’t refer to geometry and math…it refers to the kingdom of God – Acts 2 would bring to them supernatural illumination. They had Jesus next to them …but He would depart and be enthroned at the Majesty’s right side, He would send the Holy Spirit who will be the teacher of all things in His absence. The Holy Spirit would provide a full and rich robust teaching ministry will have in true believers. There will be a greater revelation of the truth that would build upon and out of the Old Testament…because there is greater truth given in the 27 books of the New Testament.

John 16:13 – No matter how good a human teacher is, he is not good enough to guide you in all truth – you need the Holy Spirit inside of you. John 6:45 – every true believer will be taught of God.

Matthew 16:17 – only the Father revealed this to you. Once you are born again (regenerated) and then converted all in the same milla-second, it’s because your eyes have been opened by the Holy Spirit and given illumination and enlightenment to see the truth of the gospel. The moment you walk through that narrow gate, the Holy Spirit now resides inside you and you become a faculty of one – He is your resident truth teacher.

1 John 2:20 – (v. 27) - ‘the anointing” was in the past…when you entered the kingdom of heaven.

“and you all know” – that is powerful!!! “You will know all” and ‘all’ refers to the essentials truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ – the person and work of Christ. You will know these things that are necessary in order to be a Christian. There is a small body of truth that you must know in order to be saved and in order to be a true Christian…the holy spirit will give you that knowledge and you will know.

You need both – light and sight.

You need the Holy Spirit to give you both – to give you the light of illumination and you have to be given eyes to see. Before conversion we were spiritually blind. John 3:3 – “he cannot see the kingdom of heaven.”

You are given both light and sight when you are born again. It is those who are not the true believers who fall for the lies of these false teachers – these anti-christs. But you have no need for anyone to teach you because you have ‘the anointing of the Holy Spirit.’

It really does matter who you listen to. What you allow inside your mind – what a man thinks in his heart, so is he. You need true and accurate thoughts of God that square with sound doctrine.

If you want to look for satan, look for him first in the pulpit. – quoted theologian S. Lewis Johnson 2nd half of the last century

Lawson – “I’d even say, look for him in seminary where he is producing the preachers who will be in the pulpit. It is the faulty seminaries that are putting men in the pulpit.”

How would you suggest how we discern if who we are listening to is sound…

Titus 2:1 – you need to know sound doctrine - theology – which are the basic truths taught in the bible about God, Christ, HS, angels, satan, demons, man sin, salvation, church, last things, bible itself.

You need a doctrinal statement – London Baptist Confession –

MacArthur Study Bible - Doctrinal Statement

Are you being given the full counsel of God? Or are you being given a series of applications? The sermon series is titled “how to” OR are you being given the richness of the truth of doctrine? Is what I am hearing, does it square with these time tested doctrinal statements? Or is there a departure or teaching against these doctrinal statements? That’s why in the reformation there came to be knowns as catechisms….question and answer teaching sound doctrine….they sang hymns were theology set to a poetic structure. Singing trinitarian theology. Westminister Confession.

You’ve got to have some statement of the truth that is laid out for you in several pages and you have read and studied it.

**The Institutes of Christian Religion** – *John Calvin* - the Catholics were persecuting the protestants. **Foundations of the Christian Faith** - *John Montgomery Boice’s* - walk through systematic theology -

**Concise Theology -** *JI Packer*

**Knowing the Truth**

**1 John 2:21-22 (NASB)**

It’s amazing that when we read the epistles in the NT, how much is compacted in just a few words. Just a thimble full of a verse opens up a universe size of truth.

Everything in the Christian life begins and ends with the truth. You cannot be saved without knowing the truth. You can’t know God without knowing the truth. You can’t follow Christ one step without knowing the truth. You can’t grow spiritually without knowing the truth. You can’t stand strong without knowing the truth. You can’t withstand temptation without knowing the truth. You can’t witness to anyone without knowing the truth. You literally can’t do anything of any eternal life without knowing the truth. The truth is THAT important. You can know the truth and not be saved, but you can’t be saved without knowing the truth.

Truth means – reality. Truth is the way things really are. Truth is whatever God says something is. Sin is whatever God says sin is. Salvation is whatever God says salvation is. Heaven and hell is whatever God says it is. The truth is that important to your Christian life. You are at a complete stand still without further installments of the truth in your Christian life. It is the engine that’s driving your Christian life. It is the steering wheel that’s guiding your Christian life.

We are not surprised when we come to these verses where John is placing such a supreme importance on these verses.

* God is the God of truth
* Jesus said I am the truth
* The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth
* The Bible is the Word of truth
* The church is the pillar and the support of truth

The truth is absolutely vital to our spiritual life – therefore, Satan’s greatest attack is against the truth. It has been that way since the beginning. Genesis Chapter 3 – the first thing he says “has God said…” a direct attack on the truth. Nothing has changed since. The devil’s strategic maneuver and assault is to infiltrate the church with lies. And to plant false teachers in the church, in TV, in seminaries, in bible colleges, in book stores….

Not everything that is spiritual is not of God. And that is the thrust in what we are looking at here and the discernment we must have.

**1 John 2:21 – The Discernment**

‘the truth’ – the truth concerning Jesus Christ, the gospel. We are always growing in the knowledge of the truth … none of us have arrived and we are always growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ. However, there is a body of essential truths that you have to know in order to be a Christian, and they are rooted and grounded in the truth of the person and work of Jesus Christ – He is the Alpha and the Omega of the gospel of Christ.

“you do not know the truth’ – he’s not saying they know all the truth,… he is referring to those essential truths that are necessary to enter the kingdom of heaven.

* The holiness of God – you have sinned and fallen short of the holiness of God – wages of sin is death – you are a sinner – there is only one savior – Jesus is truly God and truly man – he preexisted his entrance into this world – he took all the sins of all who would trust him was laid on him – he shed his blood and washed away our sins – he was buried and raised the 3rd day – walked out a risen savior – sits at the right hand of God – whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved – he has been given all authority – there is no other name in heaven by which we will be saved – you commit your life to that – no amount of good works can contribute anything to the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross – because of our faith in him, we have been clothed with the perfect righteousness of Jesus – we now stand in the presence of God faultless with full acceptance in the family of God by God the Father.

Not one of those sentences can be denied. They must be fully embraced. God exists in three persons – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

“you do know it”…brought to you by human teachers but it is the Holy Spirit who has opened your eyes to see it…to discern it.

“because no lie is of the truth” – the ‘lie’ is the false gospel that was already being perpetrated.

Gnosticism – heresy – knosis – which means knowledge. These false teachers had come into the church, presenting themselves as true teachers they had the right vocabulary, using the same words, but had different meanings with those words and connected the dots a different way.

Every epistle was written to correct some heresy or some false teaching. The heresy forces a greater and more deliberate definition of the truth.

The gnostics they assaulted the person and work and terms of Jesus Christ. Denied his deity, therefore denied his virgin birth, his sinless life, his substitutionary death, his resurrection, his present enthronement at the right hand of God the Father.

Heresy (the word itself) doesn’t need to be tossed around flippantly. Every untruth is not a heresy – you may have a different understanding of church government, of the great tribulation, of baptism, and not be a heretic. You would be wrongly taught, but a heretic is someone who denies and contradicts and perverts the essentials of what is necessary to be a Christian. Here, the heretic is the gnostic false teacher. Paul deals with the gnostics heretic in Colossians – the Colossian heresy had roots of Gnosticism in it. 1 John is written later at the end of the first century, the Gnosticism had grown and multiplied and had more points of entrance into the church.

The way they know the truth is what we see in the previous verse – verse 20 – ‘you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know’ – this anointing is a metaphorical picture of the Holy Spirit in the life of one who is born again. We would not know the truth if it had not been for the Holy Spirit to turn the lights on in our mind. He is who has given us an eye-opening experience with the truth. None of us can figure this out on our own – sin had it all ‘unplugged’ and we were living in a world of darkness and it was the Holy Spirit who shined the light of truth in us. What we know of truth right now is the result of the Holy One.

Verse 27 – he repeats it….what that does not mean is that you do not need a true human teacher. We all have need of a true human teacher – (Eph. 4:11) … the reference is to the need of false teacher. We have no need to buy into their damnable lies. They are not helping you, they would be harming you.

Verse 27 – (verse 20 and 27 are bookends to this literary unit where he is talking about the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.) John 6:45 – Jesus said you are all taught of God. The only way to know the truth is to be taught of God….the “all” is referring to the elect. Those who have been given to Jesus before the foundation of the world to the Father.

**The Denial**

**1 John 2:22**

“How can we identify these false teachers?” Giving them NO access into our minds and into our lives.

Q: “Who is the liar…” – these are the false teachers who are pushing Satan’s lies. John 8:44

Behind every false teacher is a demonic force…is a satanic power - the devil himself who is pontificating doctrines of demons and seducing spirit. 1 Tim 4:1 – the liar is who is pushing and perverting the gospel and distorting sound doctrine. The liar.

A: ‘to deny’ is to reject the truth – the not acknowledge what God has said about Christ. He was the Christ means literally the anointed one. The Messiah. The One promised long ago in the old testament, the son of God and the son of Man. To deny Jesus is the Christ is to deny the person, the work, the deity, the humanity of Christ. It is to deny essential truths. At the very heart of the gospel is Jesus Christ. What is the gospel? Make a beeline to the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Who do men say that I am? (Jesus asked) Who do you say that I am? (Matthew 16)

It is critical we are crystal clear concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Savior of the World…you can have faith in the wrong object. If you are a drowning man and you put faith in a lead weight to save you, it’s only going to take you down. If you put your faith in a false Christ, it will take you down. It will take you down to hell. It is only putting your faith in the true Christ that will deliver you from the curse of sin.

Verse 22 – this is the anti-christ – “is coming” is referring to the individual at the end of the age that will have world-wide influence over the nations. “even now many anti-christs have appeared” – there will be many anti-christs in each century and in each generation who will proceed THE anti-christ – he is referring to one of the false teachers in the church in Asia Minor, who was denying and opposing the true Christ. “anti” means “in opposition to” – he is in opposition to the true Christ. Now he will talk about Jesus, Glory, Heaven…he will use all the right words, and that is where the deception lies. He means something totally different.

Verse 22- the false teacher is the one who denies the Father and the Son and their relationship. They deny the Trinity – they are co-equal and co-eternal. They both are without beginning…both are Creator of everything that exists – possess the same attributes…both are equally sovereign, omnipresent, full of mercy and grace, full of wrath, they are co-equal. But the false teacher denies this. They deny the Deity of Christ then you deny he was born of a virgin and lived a sinless life and that on the Cross he had the infinite capacity to suffer for a multitude of sins – God can not die, only a man can die and that is why Jesus was a Man.

Verse 23 – “whoever denies the Son does not have the Father.” John is very dogmatic about this. John is so emphatic that there is NO OTHER path to the Father. Cults, false religions that denies the trinity the full humanity and deity of Christ, does not have the Father. John 14:6 –

Verse 23 – the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. “confess” means to be in full agreement with – more than professing Christ with just words, but the entrusting of your life to Christ.

Affirm these are the words of Christ Himself:…these verses need to put steel in our backbone.

Matthew 10:32-33 – couldn’t’ be any clearer

Luke 9:26 – if you deny the essential truth of Jesus Christ, I will deny you before the Father. If you are ashamed of me before men, I will be ashamed of you before My Father who is in heaven.

Luke 12:8-9 – what we have here is of utmost importance. At the end of John’s gospel he points out that if everything Jesus said was written down there wouldn’t be enough books to contain it. So if ANYTHING that has made its way into the canon of these 4 gospels…repeated twice is highly level importance l…..three times makes its importance off the charts. Verse 8 – ‘before the angels of God’ that would be God himself. He is saying he will make this confession of our confession before the angels of God who are in the presence of God Himself. BUT he who denies me, will be denied before the angels of God. This serious. This is who’s in and who’s out. Who is in the kingdom and who is not in the kingdom. This is of utmost importance that we know the TRUTH of Jesus Christ.

Romans 10:9 – if you want to be saved, you must confess Jesus is LORD. He is the Sovereign One and the Sovereign One of your life.

Galatians 1:8-9 The Reformation was all about the recovery of the one true saving gospel of Jesus.

Verse 8-9 – it’s important that we get it right with Christ and with the gospel. There is a zero policy about getting it wrong. Paul includes himself in this …. ‘he is to be accursed’ he is to be damned because his message is damning the souls of others. Verse 9 – Paul has said this before means he has said this repeatedly, ‘if any man’…. No matter who he is… if he is teaching you a gospel that is NOT the truth of Christ, then he is to be accursed. That’s how important it is to know the truth. That’s home important the apostles took the truth to heart.

**Actions Steps:**

1. Study the truth – you are responsible before God to know the truth. You yourself must know the truth..it’s not enough that the pastor knows the truth.
2. Sit under the truth – you need to be taught by sound teachers – not because of their personality or charisma or entertainment value –
3. Soak up the truth – absorb it…mediate on it…take notes…study it….memorize…live it…embody the truth…love it…live it…
4. Speak the truth – confess it before men…don’t ever be ashamed of the truth…shout it from the housetops…pass it on to others …bear witness of the truth or you don’t own the truth
5. Suffer for the truth – be cut off from certain relationships – it may mean paying a price – if the truth is not worth suffering for, then you don’t really have the truth. The truth energizes your soul – the truth is living and active and it is a supernatural dynamic…you are willing to make
6. Sacrifice for the truth – whatever it takes to advance the truth – it may mean you go across town or across the street – give up whatever it takes so that YOU sacrifice for the advancement of the truth

TD Jakes and Steven Furtick – it appears they are teaching the truth but both talk about modalism….is that a sign that they are not teaching the truth. Modalism is a frontal attack on the trinity – God the Father, Son and Spirit are one person – I am a father a husband and a friend…. Modalism means there are different modes the one God He took at different times…one time he was a father, one time he was the son, and one time he was the Spirit. It denies the deity of all three. True Christianity teaches that God the Father is eternal Father and God the Son shall be eternally the Son, etc…. to focus on Christ outside of the trinity the ramifications to what this means in the saving mission of Christ is absolutely enormous. It denies the deity of Christ and you have denied his sufficiency of his atonement. If that is what they are teaching they are dead wrong and they are apostates.

Gnosis – experiential knowledge of the facts

Denying the truth about Jesus – Mormons – hone in on the deity of Christ – John 1:1 –

All the truth of the bible is perfectly interwoven together intricately

* 66 books
* Over 40 authors
* Over a period of 1600 years
* On three diff. continents
* Three languages
* Most authors never met the other authors
* Some of the authors had not had privilege to read the other authors
* They all come together perfectly

Illustration – if each 50 states was to submit from their state stone a block of marble, granite, sandstone – send it on a train to Washington DC – uncrate it – all 50 of those crates contents are assembled and it is all perfectly the statue of liberty. You would have to assume that there was one master architect behind that – that would be a reasonable assumption to make – no overlap – nothing is missing …… the Bible all comes together offering ONE diagnosis to the human problem – it offers one solution to the human dilemma – it gives one way to salvation – it gives one plan for the family – it gives one standard for personal holiness – it gives one plan for the ages ---- there is intellectual a credibility that the Bible doesn’t contradict itself.

**Abiding in the Truth**

**I John 2:24-27**

When John writes, he uses words that contain volumes of meaning – it’s a challenge to get our arms around because it’s been well said that when John writes, it’s shallow enough for a baby to bathe in and deep enough for an elephant to drown in. The more you probe into these words, the deeper and more profound it comes. They are all about the necessity we have to remain in the truth of God’s Word – and the Word of God remaining in us. No one can know God apart from His Word. No one can follow Christ apart from His Word. No one can resist temptation or be strong in the faith apart from the Word. It’s possible for the Word to go in one ear and out the other. It’s possible for it to have a momentary influence. John is saying here that the Word to remain deeply rooted and entrenched in you, literally woven into the very fabric of your soul so that the Word is shaping your Christian life daily, continually.

The word “abide” is mentioned 5 times in these 4 verses - Three times in verse 24, and two times in verse 27 – and then he writes in verse 24 ‘heard’ is referring to the truth – 26 ‘ these things’ refers to the truth. It’s all about the Word of God abiding in us. The Truth abiding in us. Your Christian life will grow no further than the Word abiding in you.

**The Command**

**Verse 24** – this is for each and every believer – ‘as for you’ – “as for” is not in the original - It actually starts off “YOU” – it’s very direct to every believer – John is speaking directly – it’s in stark contrast to the false teachers and those following the false teachers – the word ‘abide’ has several meanings but here it means to ‘remain’ (verse 19) – the Word of God would make its home in our lives. Not as a guest or visitor – but the Word would move into you. You would retain it constantly. It’s in the present tense meaning every moment of every day. – in the active voice, meaning ‘you’ve got to take action’ and you can’t be passive about this. It’s in the imperative – John is commanding the believers to every step for the Word of God to abide in YOU – your mind, your heart, your soul, you innermost being. It’s not enough for it to be a ‘side part’ of your life or something you acknowledge from time to time. It is to be the engine and steering wheel of your entire life.

“heard from the beginning” – emphasis is on ‘heard’ – the truth is meant to be heard through a human voice – through preachers and teachers and there is an impact that happens when it’s accompanied by the Holy Spirit – on our own, yes, but there is octane added that gives truth penetrating power when it is heard.

‘the beginning’ refers to their first exposure to truth – when they were converted to Christ – when the Word of God was first implanted in them. 1 Peter 1

Do not be pulled away from the Word by the false teachers (verse 26) – new truth is old heresy –

\*the person who thinks and behaves as they know it all, is the person who doesn’t know anything.

**Righteous Savior, Righteous Living**

**1 John 2:28-29**

In these verses we see a fundamental principle in our sights – like produces like.

Jesus said it this way Matt 7:16 – You will know them by their fruit. Whatever the root is determines with the fruit will be. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes.

Verse 17 – every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit –

Verse 20 – you will know them by their fruits – we are to be fruit inspectors – you will know and discern where someone is in their life as it relates to the Lord by the evidence of their fruit. Not by what they say, but how they live. (verse…not everyone who says to me Lord Lord will enter heaven.

A good tree produces good fruit – a bad tree produces bad fruit.

The one who claims to know the Savior who is righteous, will live a life that is righteous. It will be backed up by the manner of your life. You can’t say I know the Lord and live an unrighteous life. If you claim to know the Lord and He is righteous, and like produces like, then you will be pursuing righteousness – not to be saved, but because you are saved. The causes: you are born of God – the effect: you will live like it.

A righteous root will produce righteous fruit. There will be by necessity a changed life IF you have been born of God. There will be new life in you because of the new Root – ‘the Root of David”

**The Responsibility**

**Verse 28** – “now” connects the previous section to this new section – ‘little children’ is a term of endearment – ‘abide in Him’ – it is in the imperative which means God is commanding us…it’s a command.

Abide in Christ …what does that mean?:

Remain – to abide in Christ means you remain in Christ - the idea is you are not darting around Christ, then pulled away by a false teacher and then pulled away in the world and then pulled in another direction. No, you remain focused on Christ. Your heart is rivetted on Christ. You look to Christ and nothing distracts you from gazing upon Him. Col 3:2 – Heb 12:2 – we must be always remaining in Christ in the sense of remaining in close fellowship with Christ – consciously and intentionally – we never fall out of Christ because we have been sealed by the Spirit – he is talking in a practical level….stay close to Christ.

Rest – rest in Christ – as a branch abides in the vine and rests in the Vine, we are to rest in Christ

Rely – rely upon Christ for everything – it’s the sufficiency of Christ…for strength, for wisdom, for peace, for joy, for endurance and perseverance, for everything. HE is your everything. Phil. 1:21 –

How do you abide in Christ?? Four practical applications:

1. Abide in Him in His Word and His Word must abide in you. Col 3:16 – we spend time in God’s Word and our mind and our heart is saturated with God’s Word
2. Abide in Him in Prayer – spend time relying on Him in prayer – bringing your heart and mind to Him, bring petitions, confess your sin, expressing your love and devotion for Him
3. Abide in Him in Worship – individually and corporately – declare His greatness, magnify His name, sing
4. Abide in Him in Church – be connected to other believers – you need their encouragement and their fellowship – you need their prayers

Job #1 is to abide in Christ – consciously and intentionally be rooted and grounded in Christ – as a branch abides in the Vine – John 15:4 “abide in me and I in you……” Verse 5 – ‘I am the Vine, you are the branches….” “apart from Me (apart from abiding in Me) you can do nothing.”

There are many distractions today that try to pull us away from abiding in Christ –

**The Reason**

**I John 2:29**

‘so that…” introduces the purpose or reason ‘why’ – ‘appear’ means to be made visible – we love Him by faith (1 Peter 1:8) – but when He appears in the sky we will see Him just as He is (1 John 3:2) – you talk about a jaw dropping heart pounding moment – suddenly, we are going to see Him! We will see Him as King of Kings and Lord of Lords!! Dazzling in His deity. Not in his humiliation mode, but in his glorification! We may have confidence when He appears…’confidence’ means to have assurance and boldness knowing our sins have been forgiven and that we have been clothed in Christ …he then adds this warning – ‘and not shrink away from Him in shame at his coming.’ Shrink and Shame are actually 1 word in its original language and the idea is to fall away in utter disgrace. To shrink in shame and dishonor. There will be two responses when Christ returns:

* Those who have confidence
* Those who will suffer shame

Those who have confidence are those who are abiding in Christ

Who shrinks away? Who are they? It is referring to those who profess to know Christ, but in reality do not possess Christ – a counterfeit Christian. They do not live abiding in Christ – that does not characterize their life – their life is characterized by NOT abiding – they have the talk but do not have the walk – we were introduced to them in Chapter 1:6 – ‘if we say….we lie and do not practice the truth.’ Verse 8…Verse 10…Chapter 2:4…. John is making this distinction between those who say they know the Lord, but they aren’t living the life that backs up what they say they believe, and the one who says and there is the evidence of a changed life. Verse 9 … to be in the darkness is to be an unbeliever. John is saying in verse 2:28 – that when Christ returns, there will be those who will have confidence – they have a lifestyle of abiding in Christ – they are truly born again. Then there are those who will shrink back in shame because the mask of their hypocrisy will be ripped off them and there will be a great separation between the foolish virgins and the wise virgins. Of the wheat and the tares.

You need to be abiding in Me if you are a true believer and have confidence at the return of Christ.

**The Reassurance**

**1 John 2:29** – ‘the he’ refers to Jesus Christ – His righteousness speaks to: 1) his absolute holiness / perfect flawless character 2) he rewards obedient service and he withholds rewards for disobedient service

For Jesus to be righteous, he always rewards exactly what is coming to His servant. If you know that he is righteous, then you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of God.

If I give you a dollar bill and you exchange it with 4 quarters, that is being righteous…doing right.

If I give you a dollar bill and you give me back 3 quarters, you are unrighteous.

He is perfectly equitable. He always rewards exactly what is coming to His servant – no less – no more.

The meaning is …He is righteous in everything He says, He does…flawless perfect.

John is referring to the true believer who practices righteousness….it refers to the direction of your life, not the perfection of your life. It is the track that you are on. The narrow path. You are practicing righteousness which means ‘conformity to a standard’ – day by day, your life is being brought increasing more and more day by day into conformity with The Standard – the character of God and the commandments of God – the Character is revealed in his Son …you are becoming more and more Christ-like…more and more godly. You are being conformed to what the Word of God requires of you.

‘everyone’ means every believer – the one pursuing personal holiness – that is the 1st time in 1 John that he addresses being born again – it is mentioned here, and in chapter 3 verse 9, chapter 4 verse 7, and chapter verse 1, and chapter 5 verse 4 – and in 1 John as being “of God” or “of Him.” 1 John has more to say about the new birth than any book of the Bible – if you are born of Him who is righteous, you will be practicing righteousness. The Righteous One (Christ) produces righteous ones (CHRISTians).

Christ when he sires conception in the heart and implants his seed (sperma) and impregnates the heart and there is a delivery and the one who is born of God comes forth with new life from the heart, there is an inseparable connection between the one who sired that heart and the condition of that heart. The one born of Him, that one will have a righteous nature. A righteous inner person and there will now be the flow of a righteous life from that heart. We will still sin, but big picture is…we will be sinning less.

You can walk the aisle until the Lord comes back…be baptized…join the choir…but if there is no daily practice of righteousness in your life, there is no reality of Christ in your life. You have never been born again. How easy it is to be drawn into the religious trappings of a church, bible study.….your heart is to be impregnated by the Lord Jesus Christ and his nature to be implanted in your heart and a new life to come forth in the delivery of your regeneration, there will be a family likeness that you will bear. You will look like your faither, act like your father, talk like your father in heaven…you will slowly and progressively become more like your father in heaven.

Matt 7:21 – but he who does the will of my father in heaven. It will be the outward evidence of obedience from the heart – not from guilt but motivated by grace. The ultimate assurance of your salvation.

It’s not because you can look back at a past event –‘ is there a present in your life *now* of practicing righteousness?

Chapter 3:7 – the one who practices righteousness … the one who practices sin …. Verse 9 – no one born of God practices sin. Because his seed (his sperma) abides in him ….verse 10 – the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious. Those verses are black and white- clear and straight forward – this should bring great assurance to the salvation of your life because there is NO WAY to fake righteousness from the heart. You could be like a pharissee and tape plastic fruit to your life , but it won’t be definitely not on a day by day basis – but to wake up every morning and go to bed every night, when you see the desire and the practice of righteousness in your life, you should know GOD IS AT WORK > Only God could be doing this…I cant fake this, pump this up, conjure this up, work this up,….only God can be doing this in my life therefore surely I am born of God because every good tree produces good fruit. This should also cause us to examine ourselves. Am I abiding in Christ moment by moment OR am I actually caught up in myself, living for myself, ….

A true believer is aware that apart from Christ I can do nothing.

Christ is ready to burst onto the scene any moment, therefore I can’t procrastinate or put off discerning where I am with the Lord and take the step of active saving faith in Christ if I perceive I have been a counterfeit Christian.

Dr. Steve Lawson – “I’ve been a pastor for 35 years and I have seen 100’s of people come to Christ and 19 out of 20 were church members who thought they were Christians until they came to passages like this. There are more people in churches who are unconverted than those who are converted. The narrow path belongs to the few who find it.”

Q&A

Legalism is just a broad catch word – legalism is two things: it’s saying you have to keep the law in order to be saved. It is adding man made rules that go beyond Scripture to a person’s life saying ‘if you are a good Christian you will live by these extra rules.’ Everyone needs to examine themselves to see if they are in the faith - 2 Cor. 13:5 – that’s just soul searching…that’s just bible, that’s not legalism.

Rev. 6:…crying out, hide us, from the wrath… is that a parallel of what you are teaching – it is the beginning of the great tribulation – the enfolding of the wrath of the Lamb on the lost …those on the earth that are unbelievers hide themselves in caves from the wrath of judgements upon them from God – they both are unbelievers and both wanting to escape the presence of God.

No more no less – not everyone receives the same reward in heaven and not everyone receives the same punishment in hell – the greater sins receives greater punishment – on the other side, there will be degrees of reward from the Lord and those who have demonstrated greater faithfulness with the stewardship that has been entrusted to them, Luke 19:11 – 1 Cor 3:10-15 – these verses in 1 Cor. refers to a believer, verse 15 – it’s not going to be the same for all believers. Some receive greater recognition and some greater reward – I’m not getting your reward and God is expecting more out of others. Some had greater opp. Greater exposure…God is expecting so much more from some than others. Some are sewing in soil that is more fertile and some are sewing in soil that is rocky and hard. Some pay a greater price – die as martyrs. It’s all going to come out at the end…the widow who gave her tiny mite may be at the front of the line and the billionaire who gives to build a church could be a the end of the line. There will be this recognition in the kingdom to come. There is going to be a final 2 Cor. 5 a day we will all appear and receive the just recompense our deeds have earned – a judgement of our works as a servant to His Master. Did we fulfill our assignments in the Lord’s house – there will be an examination. Christ is coming and he has given you and me assignments and he has set them right before you and we will on that last day give an account. Did we occupy where he placed us. It’s critically important that you do what the Lord has you to do…from the heart.

On the last day you will want to hear him say Well Done Good and Faithful Servant.

Are you a fit in Christian – cultural Christian - chameleon – when you’re at church, you fit in, when you are at a party, you fit in – when you are around certain co-workers you fit in – when you are around family, you fit in –

Ephesians 2:10 – Paul’s doctrine has always been reduced to prepositional phrases ..not ‘by’ good works, but ‘for’ good works – we have discernment to the will of God to the path we are to take according to God’s will and His Word and for His glory. It’s possible to do a good work for your own glory – the motivation is critical – the motivation is to be to the standard of scripture …a servant’s heart. The smallest thing you do as a true ‘good work’ He recognizes it all. He is taking it all down. What is the will of God? It begins with discerning what are the opportunities in front of me. What are my gifts and abilities? What is the time that I have?

What is my motive?

Start where you are. Grow right where He plants you. And trust Him. Do whatever you do knowing everything you do counts for eternity.