

What Does the Scripture Say about Testing the spirits?

There are many different spiritual teachings, beliefs, Christian sects, and experiences that a person encounters while in search for the truth—all of which claim to be things coming from God. When one first comes to know the Lord and is void of understanding of the Scriptures, one can become confused about what is true; at least until they become more grounded in the Word of God. *“Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of the mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so”* (Acts 17:11 BSB).

When we were first new believers, some tried to convince us that you must pray in tongues to receive the Holy Spirit. We also encountered experiences that seemed to be from God, but actually lead us to trust in things that did not line up with the Scriptures. Whenever man experiences something that seems unusual, miraculous, or supernatural, the tendency is to always assume that these things have to be from God. However, we need to remember that the Scriptures say that Satan appears as an angel of light; who is seeking to deceive any who will follow him and his lies. This is why the Bible warns us to test the spirits to see if these things are of God.

1 Peter 5:8–9

“Be sober-minded and alert. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in your faith and in the knowledge that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering.” BSB

1 John 4:1

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God. For many false prophets have gone out into the world.” BSB

1 Thessalonians 5:19–21

“Do not extinguish the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt, but test all things. Hold fast to what is good.” BSB

Deuteronomy 13:1–4

“If a prophet or dreamer of dreams arises among you and proclaims a sign or wonder to you, and if the sign or wonder he has spoken to you comes about, but he says, ‘Let us follow other gods (which you have not known) and let us worship them,’ you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. For the LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love Him with all your heart and with all your soul. You are to follow the LORD your God and fear Him. Keep His commandments and listen to His voice; serve Him and hold fast to Him.” BSB