



DISCERNMENT

CONVERSATION #1: FALSE TEACHING

ICEBREAKER: SOLA SCRIPTURA OR JUST VIBES

To get started, let’s see how well you know the Bible. Read each statement below and decide whether it comes directly from the Bible or only *sounds* biblical. Let’s see if you can discern what truth is and what is fiction.

- 1. Place your full confidence in the Lord, refusing to rely on your own perspective.
- 2. God helps those who help themselves.
- 3. Guard your heart carefully, because the direction of your life flows from it.
- 4. Your word provides light for my steps and clarity for the path ahead.
- 5. Listen to your gut, it knows the way to God.
- 6. Pray for big things, believe that God has blessings in store for you.
- 7. The human heart is unreliable and difficult to understand apart from God’s insight.
- 8. In the Kingdom of God, everything happens for a reason.
- 9. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.
- 10. Don’t worry about your future; God has already lined up what you need.

Statements you believe are from the Bible	Statements you believe are not in the Bible

Bible: 1, 3, 4, 7, 9 | Not in the Bible: 2, 5, 6, 8, 10

STUDY: TEST BEFORE YOU TRUST

When we’re early in our spiritual growth, it’s natural to filter everything through a simple question: “*How does this affect me?*” That instinct isn’t wrong, but it’s incomplete. At this early stage, we tend to trust voices we like, assume confidence equals truth, borrow beliefs without really testing them, and depend on leaders to do the hard thinking for us. But in order to mature, we must develop the ability to discern the difference between biblical truth and false spiritual teaching.

Discernment becomes necessary when faith begins to mature, because growth doesn’t happen by listening more - it happens when responsibility replaces reliance, and we learn to test what we’re taught for ourselves.

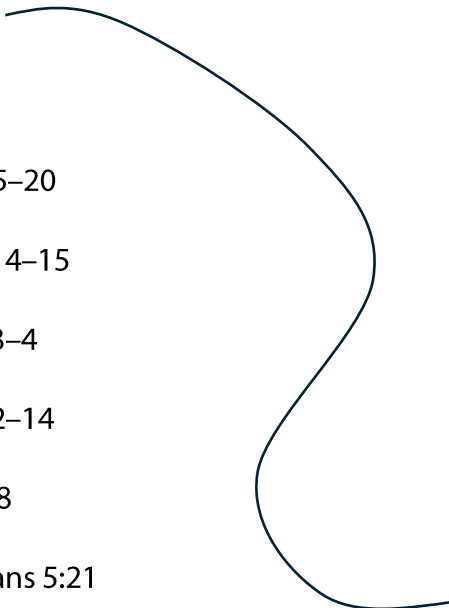
One of the most surprising figures in the New Testament is Paul. Before becoming one of the greatest missionaries in church history, Paul was one of the fiercest opponents of Jesus’ followers - arresting believers, approving executions, and actively trying to stop the movement. So, when Paul suddenly began preaching about Jesus, skepticism wasn’t just reasonable - it was necessary. Trust had to be earned. And in the book of Acts, we see the early followers of Jesus respond in a way that models real spiritual maturity. Let’s take a look.

READ ACTS 17:11

Notice the believers in Berea didn't blindly reject Paul, and they didn't blindly accept him either. They tested what he taught against Scripture. That practice - receiving teaching with openness *and* responsibility - is exactly what we must learn to do if we want our faith to keep growing.

ACTIVITY: WORD OF WARNING

For the early followers of Jesus, false teaching was one of the greatest threats to the faith, second only to Roman oppression. That's why the New Testament repeatedly warns believers to test truth and guard what they believe. To see how big of an issue this was, work through the following activity together, connecting each passage to the concern it addresses.



Acts 17:11	Actively test teachings instead of accepting them blindly.
1 John 4:1	False teachers are revealed by the results of their lives.
Matthew 7:15–20	Easily swayed by popular or persuasive ideas.
Ephesians 4:14–15	Discernment develops through practice, not passivity.
2 Timothy 4:3–4	Teaching that tells them what they want to hear.
Hebrews 5:12–14	Examine teaching carefully and hold on to what is true.
Colossians 2:8	Ideas that sound wise but pull people away from Christ.
1 Thessalonians 5:21	Receive teaching <i>and</i> verify it through Scripture.

DISCUSS:

- When have you believed something because it felt right - not because you tested it?
- What's the risk of outsourcing discernment to pastors or other leaders?
- How does testing teaching actually *honor* good leaders instead of disrespecting them?
- What keeps you from opening Scripture yourself - fear, laziness, confidence, or habit?

CHALLENGE: PUT A VERSE ON IT

This week, pay attention to one spiritual-sounding quote you hear in a sermon, podcast, social media post, or conversation. Instead of simply accepting it, take time to edit and rewrite the idea using actual Scripture rather than opinion. Look up verses that clearly express the truth being claimed and let Scripture do the speaking. This practice helps train your discernment by teaching you to recognize the difference between words that sound biblical and truth that is actually rooted in God's Word.