

## 1 John 2:24-29

### “Discerning Deception”

The basic warning John was sounding in the previous passage? The dangers & deceptions of living in the last hour. He spoke not only of the A.C. (w/a capital “A”) who is coming (the literal, physical deceiver, that man of sin who will serve as a political, economic & spiritual figure head who will lead the world in rebellion against God & try in vain to make war w/J.C.). – But there are also *many* “antichrists” (w/a lower case “a”) who are in the world even now who seek to lead people astray through paths offering alternatives to Christ, or substitutes to Christ, or even *imitations* of, what we might call *counterfeit Christs*.

& John is seeking to sharpen our awareness, our alertness to the various & sundry obstacles that can impede & stifle our relationship w/the Lord. & Though he spoke of deceptions & deceivers for which we’re to be on high alert, I trust that you’re aware of the fact that spiritual deceivers aren’t the only danger to your relationship/fellowship w/God. *It could be work associates, or people you hang around, even the inclinations of your own heart that seek to lead you astray & away from Jesus. – The point is plain enough, there are things in/around your life that will seek to draw you away from God... & You & me, we must be on guard.*

In our present passage, John is going to place another tool in our belt that will aid us in preserving our relationship, maintaining our tight knit fellowship with God.

### Vs 24

John says, “Therefore”. & As you well know, any time we see the word “therefore” we need to stop & consider what it’s “there for” ☺. It’s often a word upon which a door swings taking us from a principle into something practical. “In light of what we just read, the principle that we just learned, this is the practical step that we should take.” *We’ve been given an **observation** (dangers, deceptions, obstacles that can keep us from either forming or maintaining a strong relationship, close knit fellowship w/God). Now, it’s time for the **application**. We transition from observation to **application**. “Here’s what we **see** (dangers, deceptions, hurdles & hindrances), here’s what we’re to **do**.”*

\* John says, “Here’s how we protect ourselves against the spirit of antichrist, those things that would lead us astray or otherwise encourage us to drift away from God... Stay close to that core message of Christianity that you’ve heard from the beginning.” He’s exhorting them to remain true to that fundamental, foundational apostolic teaching that they’ve had & that they received from the very beginning of their relationship w/God. \*

Now, not everyone has had the privilege of solid doctrine, solid expositional teaching from their early formative Christian years. Sometimes people get swept up in some weird group, or out of balance extreme that can in some ways actually work against them. But John knew that wasn't the case w/these people so he could simply call them back to that which they'd learned from the beginning of their walk w/God.

\* But even at that, *anytime* someone is saved, it always happens the same way. It's by God's grace through simple faith in J.C. Of course they may go immediately off into some weird thing after that, but salvation only happens one way. So, even in that there's a sense in which we can all be called back to the fundamental principles of the gospel. – Paul (in writing to the Galatians) put it like this, *"I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed."*<sup>1</sup>

Paul warns the Galatians of the danger, of the *disaster* of chasing after some new doctrine, some different gospel (which in fact isn't another gospel because there's only one)! We're to continue in that which we heard/learned from the *beginning*. Don't drift from the simplicity & the power of that message! It will safeguard you from being led astray... \* To the Corinthians he said, *"But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."*<sup>2</sup>

\* You see, the danger lies in the desire that we have for something new. It seems by nature (as human beings) we're almost always attracted to *new* things. We tend to associate "new" w/the idea of "better".

But hear me when I say, the best way to combat being led astray by the untrue is to stay away from teachings that are *new*... Perhaps you've heard it before, if it's true it's not new & if it's new it's not true... When it comes to the truth of the word of God, let that abide in you which you heard *from the beginning*.

& This can be a real challenge for people. We're tempted to be tossed to & fro, carried about by every wind of doctrine. Some new revelation. The "Spirit" is doing *this* over here, or *that* over there & we're tempted to chase after those things.

<sup>1</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Ga 1:6-9]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>2</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). [2 Co 11:3]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

& Ladies & Gentlemen, these kinds of things will only continue to accelerate & escalate in these last days to which we've been called. Paul told Timothy, *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry."*<sup>3</sup>

I'm just telling you, there are some crazy thoughts out there. Especially in this "woke" culture that has crept into our society & it's infiltrated so much "ministry". People preaching all kinds of crazy, even blasphemous things, teaching others that the Bible doesn't mean what it says, that God is essentially ok w/every kind of sin under the sun. "I'm ok, you're ok, we can all lead reprobate lives of unbridled unrepentant depravity & God's good w/it." But guess what? That's not true. – How did Paul tell Timothy to combat the dangers of that deception? He said, *"Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching."*<sup>4</sup> You've got to stay true to the straightforward, simple message of the word of God. (Well pleased to only teach what the Bible says, nothing new).

"Let that abide in you which you have heard from the beginning." Stay the course. \* & Family we find this exhortation over & over again throughout our N.T. In the book of Colossians we read it like this, *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another..."*<sup>5</sup> In Hebrews it reads like this, *Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.*<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps you haven't taken aim to maintain your environment over the past year or years. It's a new year, a new beginning. A new opportunity. Start today.

Let the word of God *abide* in you, "live" in you, "dwell" in you. It goes beyond simply *knowing* God's word. It's *living in* & *living out* God's word.

Don't be deceived here. John isn't saying, "If you know God's word, you know God." You can have an intellectual knowledge of the word of God. People can quote Ch & Vs, entire sections of scripture & still not know the Lord. But if God's word *lives* in you, then *God* lives in you. – "If what you heard from the beginning *abides* in you, you will also abide in the Son & in the Father." – Jesus said that like this, *"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."*<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). [2 Ti 4:3-5]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>4</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). [2 Ti 4:2]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>5</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Col 3:16]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>6</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Heb 2:1-2]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>7</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Jn 14:23]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

& This is what it's all about. A living, *abiding* relationship w/God through J.C. This principle of *abiding* is repeated again & again throughout the N.T.

& We're gonna move on, but you need to understand that abiding in this sense of the word isn't a passive thing, it's an active thing. It's not like ore abiding in the earth. Just... there it is. There is an active intent, a purposed discipline, an "earnest heed to the things we've heard", involved in abiding in Christ, lest (remember Hebrews 2) we "drift".

But I don't want to leave you w/the idea that this is all a one-way street. Jn 15, as we abide in Him, He abides in us. He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it, but we must abide in Him.

### Vs 25

Follow the flow here. If what you've heard from the beginning abides in you, \* if God's word is living in you & you're abiding (living) in the Son & in the Father, (you in Him & Him in you) there's a promise attached to that (to you) by God (who cannot lie) – eternal life.

I suppose it begs the question. What *is* eternal life? I think it's a subject worth discussing for just a minute. Because I would say that the knee jerk response of the vast majority of people if asked, "What is eternal life?" would be something to the effect of "immortality." It means, "You live forever." – But you need to understand that "eternal life" & "immortality" are two very different things. Of course, the idea of immortality is *contained* w/in eternal life, but every human being who's ever lived has immortality (in the sense that every soul will last forever in eternity). Some will be in heaven, some will be in hell, but God has granted *every* soul immortality. So, eternal life doesn't simply speak of existing forever, it speaks of a *kind* of life, a *quality* of life that exists in the Eternal One Himself that He imparts/imputes *to* & shares *w/you*.

Sometimes people have the misguided notion that eternal life is what we enter into when we die. That's not true. It's something you lay hold of here & now by faith in J.C. Listen, if you don't have eternal life *now*, you won't get it when you die. It's too late at that *point*. That's why the promise is so important to us *right now*, & God *does* promise it to us "if" (conditional clause) His word abides in you & you abide in Him... I'm wanting you to see how instrumental His word is to our *salvation*, our *sanctification*, our on going & growing relationship & fellowship w/God.

We're born physically of corruptible seed, we live, we die. But when we're "born again" spiritually, it's by *incorruptible seed* (1 Pet 2:23), through the word of God which *lives & abides forever*. \*

\*Listen, I know there's a lot of debate in the Christian community about "once saved always saved", "can I lose my salvation" & all of that. But all that controversy can be put away if we'd focus rather upon *abiding* in Christ. Abiding in Him, His word abiding in us... those are the grounds of our confidence. *The ground of your confidence isn't in the fact that you said a prayer one time at the behest of some preacher, or the fact that you were baptized when you were 10. If you're not abiding in Christ, there are no grounds for confidence. – On the other side of that coin, if you are abiding in Christ, & His word is abiding in you, you have every ground of confidence because God has given you that promise...\**

Vs 26-27

\* So, the 1<sup>st</sup> line of defense concerning the hurdles & hindrances to our relationship & fellowship w/God is to abide in Christ & let His word abide in us. – Here, John draws our attention to *another* line of defense that God has given us against the dangers of deception & that is the *anointing* that God has given us through His Holy Spirit that enables us to discern & detect error that we might continue in the truth.

*& I think we'd all agree that we need this in our lives today perhaps now more than ever before. There are active deceivers in the world who want to lead you astray. In fact, Paul told Timothy (1 Tim 4) that in the last days that deceiving spirits would be on the uprise & increase, seeking to seduce people & that they will have a measure of success causing some people to depart from the faith!*

& When you live in a culture of relativism, where there no absolutes, "speak your truth" & all of that... False doctrines abound now (it seems) more than ever! & People seem to be willing to accept just about any "truth" (which is not true), except the truth of God's Word!

*We need the anointing of God in our lives. & As a believer in J.C. you have it. It's not the "private property" of a select group of elite super saints. It's the "common property" belonging to every Christian. Every Christian is indwelt by the Spirit of God. & The Spirit of God will guide you into truth. Jesus said, "...when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth;"<sup>8</sup> \**

\* Now, what did John mean when he said, "You do not need that anyone teach you, but the same anointing teaches you concerning all things..." I suppose we should just fold up shop here & now, right? ☺ What's the point of a man like me? We don't need anyone to teach us...

<sup>8</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Jn 16:13). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

This is where context (not only in our passage currently, but throughout the entirety of the Word of God) comes in so critically. Think this through. If John meant there was no need for the office of a gifted teacher of God in our lives, then why did he even write this letter? He wrote the letter to *teach* them. In fact, which part of God's word isn't given to instruct us or teach us in some capacity?

In the book of Eph, Paul made it plain. *"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."*<sup>9</sup> In the book of Hebrews, the author writes that they had need for someone to *teach them* though they themselves should've been teachers at that time. We read that the apostles taught daily from house to house & in the temple in Acts 2:42.

Now, we could take time to develop this further, but allow me to cut to the chase. What John is saying is that it's the Person/power of the Holy Spirit in your life who enables you to comprehend/understand spiritual truth. It's not the musings & meditations of a great man who articulates so carefully & clearly. Apart from the Holy Spirit you cannot accurately/appropriately learn spiritual truth. Doesn't mean you can't memorize Ch & Vs, but that you don't know the *heart* of God that's to be applied through the *word* of God. Paul said it like this... *"But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For "who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ."*<sup>10</sup>

That's not to say that the Spirit of God won't speak to you personally, show you things specifically in your times of study, He will (absolutely). But I'm telling you, if I'm up here teaching, & God's word is resonating *in* you, making sense *to* you, coming alive *for* you, challenging/changing you... It's not because I'm so great at what I do. It's because the anointing that's w/in you, the Holy Spirit is teaching you, opening your understanding that you might comprehend His word... \*

Back in August, the Lord placed on my heart that I was to open up my social media presence in a more direct intentional way w/regard to getting out the gospel, equipping the saints & encouraging believers, so I've been doing that.

<sup>9</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Eph 4:11-12]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>10</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). [1 Co 2:14-16]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

& Man, some of the responses I get to the little videos I put out are manifest evidence that the natural man can't discern spiritual matters. People want to argue, advance their point, try to appear intelligent, but professing to be wise, they become fools. It's evident that though they think they have an airtight argument logically, they don't have a clue concerning the reality of what's taking place spiritually.

Listen, it's nothing short of the anointing of the Spirit of God that enables you to learn/understand God's word in truth. Remember the disciples on the road to Eumaeus? Jesus "opened their understanding that they might comprehend His word". & I'm just telling you, if Jesus doesn't open your understanding, you'll *never* comprehend His word. It's not PhD's or degrees in theology that enables you to learn, it's the Holy Spirit who opens our understanding & teaches us concerning all things. \*

& It's ok to ask for that. I ask the Lord on the regular to open my understanding, to teach me, to lead me, to help me w/my observations, interpretations, applications... & God is faithful to meet me there & speak to my heart... Sometimes through the still small voice, other times through other teachers who I'll listen to. The Spirit will teach me through them... Either way, the Holy Spirit is the resource for knowing/understanding spiritual truth.

Let me say this as well. If you choose *not* to listen to the Holy Spirit, you're on the lookout for that new/exciting thing, you're liable to wind up in any number of goofy doctrines or under some strange teacher. The Spirit will *lead* you into all truth, but He won't *force* you into all truth. He will teach you & draw you closer to J.C. (You will abide in Him).  
Vs 28-29

You see? There it is again. Your grounds for confidence at the appearing of Christ is the "safety net" of abiding *in* Christ. BTW, we note that Jesus is coming again! He will "appear" to receive us unto Himself.

Now, couple things here quickly. #1 There will be a number of responses to the return of J.C. Some will be *afraid*, they're unsaved, they never believed upon Him or submitted their lives to Him & it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God.

\* But even among those who know Him, there will be some who are *ashamed* before Him. Why? Because they weren't found abiding *in* Him, that is, there is some sort of compromise or sin that they've been dabbling in. This isn't too unlike that which the apostle Paul spoke of in 1 Cor Ch 3. There will be those who make it to heaven, but just by the proverbial "skin of their teeth". They will suffer loss, yet they themselves will be saved.

**Close.** & It's worth thinking this through for a moment or 2. Because how fine is the line between "barely" saved & "nearly" saved? Every now & then you'll run across that person who has questions like, "Can I do "this" & still go to heaven"? The question they're entertaining is, "How much can I sin & still be saved"? *That's a very dangerous line of questioning to dabble in... What's the heart behind that question? Our motive should be, "How close to Jesus can I get? I don't want to be ashamed at His appearing..." We're to abide in Him. If we abide in Him, He will abide in us.* Again the idea is dwelling with, living in... Jesus doesn't want to be in your heart like a hotel room, just visiting now & then but no permanent residence. He wants to settle down & have His home in your heart. \*

### **Vs 29**

\* Or as we like to say, "The apple doesn't fall to far from the tree." If you're born of God (born again) there will be an *identity* & a lived out *responsibility* consistent w/who you are in Christ as God's son or daughter. We have a new nature in Christ, one consistent w/His own (because it's of His own). If someone claims to be born again, yet the practice of their lives isn't consistent w/the nature of Christ, there's something wrong there.

*My son (Isaiah), if he's heard it once, he's heard it 1,000x's. "You look just like your dad." Well, when someone is born of another, there's generally a "family resemblance". We won't "perfect" righteousness here & now, but we will "practice" righteousness. You will take after your heavenly Father... John keeps it real simple. If you don't take after your heavenly Father, you're not born of Him.*

Brings us back to the promise we have *in* Him, eternal life. If that's your need don't put it off another day, believe on the Lord J.C. & be saved. \*

### **Prayer Points:**

God we thank You for Your word. That You love us & share truth with us that we might know You, be found *in* you & stand humbly confident before You. Thank You for the resources You've given to us, teach us by Your Spirit, sharpen our discernment & help us to shine as lights in this dark world, leading others to You for the glory of Your name.

This is where if you need to turn from your sin, trust in the Lord J.C. & receive new life in Him, you don't delay, or put it off another day, you take care of it right here, right now. The only "new" thing you need, is *new life* in J.C. & He'll give it to you by His grace, through faith...