

How to Tell When a Thing Is From God

by A.W. Tozer

To determine if a thing is from God, check it against the rule: how does it affect your attitude toward and your relation to God, Christ, the scriptures, yourself, and other Christians?

Duration: 49:19

Scripture: Matthew 22:37-39, John 14:21, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 6:14, 1 Thessalonians 5:21, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 1 John 4:1

Topics: "Will Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of testing whether something is from God or not. He references two Bible verses, 1 Thessalonians 5:21 and 1 John 4, which encourage believers to prove all things and try the spirits. The speaker shares a spiritual treasure that was given to him, which helps discern whether something is from God or not. He emphasizes the need for believers to be discerning and not easily accepting everything they hear, especially when it comes to their spiritual lives.

Transcript

I do not intend even to give an invitation. I want to do something else. I want to set a little capsule on what has been accomplished during this week, and I want to tell you something which you can take home with you, if you will remember it.

Try to remember it. Take it home with you, and then everything and anything that God may have done, or you like you may have received, or any blessing that might have come your way, will be preserved and disciplined and sanctified. I am going to talk to you about how to tell when a thing is from God or not.

Here are two tapes. One is 1 Thessalonians 5 21. It says, prove all things, and hold fast to that which is good.

And in 1 John 4 it says, Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God. Now, this is a little spiritual treasure which God has given me. Some gave it to me some years back, and I want to share it with you.

God gave it to me as a rule to tell how, whether a doctrine is from him or not, whether a blessing that I may receive, or an emotional experience I may have, or a miracle I may think I see, or anything else, is of God or not. And some Christians, of course, can't profit by this for the simple reason that they are satisfied. They have had no new experiences, and they're not going to have any if they can help it, and they have no

crises, no epochs, no advances.

They never circle and fly higher. They're satisfied to beat their wings fast and buzz around low. They're not going up there where there's any danger, so they cannot wish it was over.

But you that are seekers after God, who are troubled and concerned about your spiritual life, this message is for you. I hope that's all of you here tonight, that you are seekers after God's best things, that you're ready to hear anyone who offers help. There are some people who are troubled.

They're really troubled in their spiritual lives, and they read the bible, but that doesn't seem to help them. They don't seem to be able to find themselves. They're troubled, and they're ready to hear anyone, and that is one danger.

I don't like to see anybody too willing to accept things. I like to have them do what the Bereans did, examine the scriptures to see if these things be so. I never trust a man who gets converted too easily, or too easily, I should say, if I want to maintain my reputation as knowing the English language from a hole in the wall.

But if a man gets converted too easily, the chances are you can unconvert him just as easily. If you can stampede him into the kingdom, you can stampede him out. I like to see a man just a little bit stubborn and hard to deal with, and then when he gets in, he's just as stubborn and hard to deal with by the enemy.

That was Paul. Paul was a stubborn man, and he wasn't easy to convert, but when he got converted it was a tremendous thing, and he never went back. Now some, I say, are eager, and they're looking after some new things.

And of course on the radio you'll hear everybody and his brother John lecturing, and talking, and giving messages. Well, that's right, it's all right, the radio is a good medium of communication. But you have to use your head and your heart, and you have to find out whether what this fellow is talking about is right or not.

Just the fact that he gets up there and talks fast and sounds pious doesn't mean one thing in the world the devil can come as an angel of life. So you've got to learn to know an angel of life from an angel of God. You have to learn to know pseudo-truth from truth.

Well, there are those, I say, who are willing to take up with new doctrines, and there are those who are willing to seek new experiences if somebody else comes along and demonstrates they've had one. And there are always those who are easily moved by miracles. I have never been.

I've seen God do some miracles. Miracles are near miracles, I think, in my time, but I have never been much convinced by miracles. If they will not believe Moses and the prophet, and the apostles, and our Lord, they would not believe even if a man rose from the dead.

So miracles are secondary proofs of anything, and yet miracles move some people tremendously. And if somebody can come along and do a miracle, they just believe anything. Well, now I want to give you a rule divided into about seven parts, but this will be a brief sermon, I hope.

Here is the rule. How does this affect my attitude toward and my relation to the following? Now, anything, whatever doctrine I begin to get interested in, whatever new fad, new religious fad comes my way,

whatever religious experience I may seem to be having, or have had, check it. You dare to check it.

In fact, you're under orders to check it. Check it by asking, how does this affect my attitude toward and my relation to these? The following. First, God.

That new doctrine that has come my way by some fellow who perspired and thought unctuously. All right, now he's got his doctrine. What does that doctrine do for God? Does it make God great or small? Does it make God necessary or less necessary? Does it put God where he belongs and bring glory to him, and does it humble me and show me how little I am and how great God is? Or does it obscure God and draw a veil across the face of God? Whatever makes God less, or less important, or less wonderful, or less glorious, or less mighty, that isn't of God, because the whole purpose of God in redemption, in sending the scripture in the first place, and in redeeming men, is that he might be glorified among men.

The glory of God is the health of the universe, and wherever God is not glorified, that part of universe is sick. Hell is sick because God is not glorified there. Heaven is abounding in glorious health because God is glorified there.

Earth is halfway in between sick and well because only some glorify God and the rest don't. The glory of God is the health of the universe, and the sound of the anthems of praise to God Almighty is the music of the sphere. And, therefore, any doctrine, any faith or emphasis of doctrine, any experience that I may seem to have, any miracle that I may seem to have seen, if it doesn't make God big and keep him big, and make God indispensable and wonderful, then put it away and dare to stand and say, I'll have nothing to do with anything that diminishes God.

Then, Christ. How does it affect my attitude toward and my relation to Christ? Because Christ is who he is, and what he is, he is and always will be indispensable, and he is and always will be necessary to the point where I must have him. And any teaching, any experience, any fellowship, any activity that makes Christ less necessary to me can't be of God.

Now, you've had experiences. You've gone to the altar, you've prayed, and you've been blessed, and you've heard teachings and emphases given here, and you've heard them given by men with their breath in their nostrils. The fact that Dr. Brown said, it doesn't make it true.

The fact that I said, it doesn't make it true. The fact that George Klein, who I want to oppose, said, it doesn't make it true. The fact that your Bible teachers have said, it doesn't make it true.

We can be mistaken. You've got to test us as well as everybody else, and search the scriptures and know, has our teaching made Christ more wonderful to you? Is Jesus Christ bigger and grander and sweeter and more indispensable beautiful now in your life than he was before? If he is, you have every good reason to believe you've been hearing from God. If he's less glorious, and you've become attached to men, then he isn't.

The teaching you've had is bad, or at least it's been given in a bad way. Any teaching, any experience that comes to you that makes Jesus Christ any less necessary, I say and repeat, is not of God, because Jesus Christ is absolutely necessary. He is the divine imperative.

He is the one without which we cannot live. We must have him, and we must be in him and he in us. If it is of God, your dependence upon Christ will increase, and Christ will become sweeter and more wonderful all the time.

Now, I don't say he will become sweeter every day, I don't say that he will become sweeter as the days go by. We sing that song, and I don't believe it half the time I hear it, I don't believe it most of the time that I hear it. The same old deacon will come, and he's the same old deacon, and every second Sunday morning for 20 years he'll sing sweeter as the years go by.

And he's the same sour, salty, stubborn, old guy that he was before, only a little balder, that's all, and a little more wrinkles. Just the same mean old Christian that he was 20 years ago. And you tell me that Jesus is sweeter as the years go by? No, see that man is not moving along.

Let's not sing it if we don't mean it. I'd rather sit as mute as the harp on tarred walls, the poet wrote about, and never croak an amen than to the light of God in the people. But if he is more glorious every day, why, it's no harm in saying so, and I believe in coming out and saying so.

I believe that we ought to practice again boosting our preachers a little bit. Some of you Christians that have sat and looked at your pastor, your young pastor, with cold level eyes for the last two or three years, and you're beginning to pray the Lord will move him, if you had boosted him a little with an occasional friendly amen, he might have been a better preacher than he is now. He would have been a better preacher.

A congregation can make a preacher, don't forget that. A congregation can take a young fellow just out of Nyack or Simpson, and first thing you know he's preaching over his own head. He's doing better than he thought he should do.

Why? Because he's being boosted from the congregation. But the sermon tasters will kill any preacher that don't care who he is. The sermon tasters, particularly the old boys that heard Simpson, the ones that say, I heard A.B. Simpson in my day.

Well, A.B. Simpson has gone to be with his Lord, and he's left his work in hands that are not as big as his, and voices to voices that are not as eloquent. But he's dead, and we're alive, and we've got to do the best we can. And so the young fellows that come to be pastors of your church, maybe he isn't as deep as you say.

But if he were as deep as you ought to be, you'd put up with him a while and pray him through and love him. And if you could find one little squeak to appreciate you, go tell him so. He'd go home feeling good and say, well, if that dear old brother believes my sermons are always good, Lord, then I'm improving a little.

You could help the man. And your superintendent wouldn't have to be playing checkers all the time. He'd be playing checkers playing here, Reverend so-and-so's here, and Reverend so-and-so's here, and he plays checkers.

He jumps over so-and-so and gets the so-and-so, and he plays checkers all the time. That's a district superintendent's heartache that one fellow is in Mule Ear Junction, and he's there two years. And the people don't pray for him.

They don't say amen. They don't trust him. They don't love him.

They sit there and wonder about J.D. Williams or somebody they heard century years ago, half a century ago. And they were great men, but they're gone. God's taken them and crowned them up yonder and said,

you've worked enough.

Come up and rest. These young fellows have taken over. So they've got to get that fellow from Mule Ear Junction and take him over here to Osceola Mill, and put him down there.

And so the poorer fellow has to play checkers, and boy, he gets underpaid. If I had that job, I'd rent \$40,000 a year in a big car. That isn't part of the sermon at all, and it isn't in the notes, but I wanted to get that out of my system.

Well, Jesus Christ our Lord is indispensable. He is preeminent above all, and any experience, any interpretation of scripture that doesn't make him big and great and wonderful, it isn't of God. For God wants to make his Son glorious, and the Son wants to make the Father glorious, and the Holy Ghost wants to make the Father and the Son glorious.

And so anything that comes to you, if an archangel with a wingspread of 40 feet and shining like a neon sign were to come down here and stand among these great Douglas firs and tell me that he'd just seen a miracle on me to come, I'd want chapter and verse. I'd want to know, I want to know he was from God. I'm not running after any will o' the whip.

Of course, I've bothered a lot of people. They wonder why I don't get all worked up about them when they come steaming in. I'm not going to get worked over a man with his breath in his nostrils.

Here's my book, here are my two knees, and I'm still able to bend them. And when I get so old and rheumatic I can't bend them, I can stand up and pray. God Almighty hears his people pray, and see, I have a line open to him.

When people tell me that the Lord told them to tell me something, I say, well, my line is open to God, why didn't he tell me? And I reject it, unless it obviously makes God wonderful and makes Jesus Christ beautiful, and then I'll give it in the earth. But that doesn't happen very often. Well, then, this new experience, this new interpretation, this new picture, this new emphasis, how does this affect my attitude toward and my relation to the scriptures? Are they more or less precious to me? A woman told me, I was trying to think where that was, it might have been in Toronto, and she said, it might have been here, I doubt it though, but I think it was in Toronto.

She came to me and said, Mr. Tozer, I'd like to ask you a question. I said, I'm troubled. I said, what? She said, troubled? She said, well, our pastor.

She said, I belong to a church, and she said, the pastor, he's developed, and he's gone ahead and gone forward, and he's gone so fast that he tells us that God's given him new revelations that are not in the scriptures, and that he wants us to divest our minds of all that we've learned, and follow him, and that we'll be sinning if we don't follow him, that the scriptures, he's got revelation that's beyond the scriptures. Now, I told her in a nice scholarly way, but the sum of what I told her was to tell him to go get lost, and go back to the word of God. No man will ever be able, I trust, to persuade me to follow him unless he follows the scriptures.

Here's the book, here's the book, to the law and to the testimony. If they speak not according to the law, it's because there's no truth in them. He that hath thus the dream, let him tell his dream, but he that hath the word, let him speak my word faithfully.

You can always check with the word, brother. If this new experience doesn't make you read the word more, it's not of God. If it doesn't make you meditate on the truth more, it's not of God.

And I don't care how good you feel. If you feel so good, you can feel brand new, as the camp meeting song used to have it. You're still not being blessed of God.

If you say, is it possible to get an emotional experience that isn't of God, I should say so. Entirely possible to get emotional experiences that are not of God. But I believe that true experiences carry an emotional overtone, and for that reason I have no objection whatever to emotions, as I've tried to tell you.

I believe the Lord's people ought to be the happiest, most radiant people in the world, and I believe they ought not to hesitate to speak right out and say amen when they feel like it, if they feel like it, if it's not just a habit. If it's a habit, of course, it's just so much dry wood. Well, what do these experiences, how do they affect my attitude toward the scriptures? And then, how do they affect my attitude toward myself? Whatever comes from God diminishes myself, and glorifies God, and makes me less and less self-confident.

Whatever comes from God humbles me. Whatever comes from God makes the flesh intolerable, but if it comes from the flesh, why it pops up, and makes us feel superior, and makes us look down on other Christians. You ever meet these Christians with their nose elevated at a 45 degree angle from the plane, and from the level field, and they smile down at you from their imperial heights, and say, you do not understand me brother, just pray about it, then they'll go away looking like Saint Francis.

But all they had was a bad taste of pride. It was just pride grown bad, grown, cancerous. No, no.

If it's of God, it always humbles you. If it's of God, it makes you appreciate your fellow Christians that much the more, and it makes you appreciate the humblest, poorest Christian in the whole congregation, and makes you love that Christian. Well, self anyhow pops up, and makes us look down on other people, and makes us feel pity for them, and smile down on them.

Never put yourself on a pedestal, brother. In you there dwells no good thing, I don't care who you are, or how many degrees you have, nor anything that you might say, or have justly said about you. In you there dwells no good thing, and any experience that is of God, any doctrine that is of God, certainly humbles my flesh, and brings me down lowly before him, and makes him great, and makes me little.

And then how does this, how do these experiences, or how do these new doctrines, or emphases, or whatever they may be, how do they affect my relation to other Christians? Are other Christians dearer to me, or less dear to me? Are we gone to them, or are we the opposite? Whatever brings separation in spirit from others of God's can't possibly be of God. Now, you would say, do you not believe in separation? Yes, I believe that if your pastor is teaching that the bible isn't the word of God, Christ isn't the son of God, that the scriptures are not to be trusted, that they're only partly true, and if the new birth is an old-fashioned idea that the blood doesn't cleanse, I say the thing for you to do, separate yourself. I wouldn't give one dime to support the lazy preacher who reads books written by liberals, and then tries to preach into the congregation.

He couldn't get one dime of my money. I wouldn't give him a Lincoln penny, not even the dull old one, not one. But if the fellow loves God, I'm going to fellowship with him.

I can't possibly. Now, you may not want me back after I've said this, but I'm coming, God wills. Anyhow, but I can't possibly take the position that the Alliance people have it made.

Brethren, we don't have it made at all. Some of us Alliance preachers can well sit at the feet of the denomination. That is, some brethren in the denomination.

Not the big old liberal denomination, but there are saints. I was in a Presbyterian church over in a city in New York here not so long ago. Well, you know what that Presbyterian preacher said to me? Oh, he said, I got home late last night, and I slept in till six o'clock.

He said, I'm so sorry about that. He slept in till six o'clock. How many of you Alliance preachers get up and get on your prayer bones by six o'clock in the morning? You can learn from that Presbyterian preacher.

I've met a lot of them. I know a Methodist preacher. I don't know how many, but I know this one anyhow.

This Methodist preacher, he's blessed of God, and so blessed this young fellow. They've put him down as far as he can get because he certainly does pour on the gospel and shuffle him off into a corner, God bless him. But I can learn from that bright-faced young man.

I can learn from people, and I want to learn from people. And I don't want to ever get that hide-bound, died-in-the-world conviction that we Alliance people have it made, and that when the Lord comes, he'll take us in the first installment and come back for the Methodists, and the Presbyterians, and the free Methodists, and the rest of them you'll know. No, no, my brethren, we're all one in Christ Jesus.

All one. And I didn't know till this afternoon, and I was with him all of last year, and all of this year, 22 days, and I didn't know till tonight, just before supper, that he was a free Methodist. Now that's what I like, a man that doesn't go around telling about we, us, and our, and our marvelous denomination, and our beautiful movement.

Oh brother, don't forget this, God will let a movement die, and he'll throw it on the fire if it doesn't keep close to the blood, and close to the truth, and close to God. And if it doesn't keep Christ in it, and keep right, and keep morally sound, and doctrinally sound, he'll let that movement die, and he'll let the Alliance die, unless we keep it alive by prayer, and heart-searching, and good preaching, and walking with God. So don't you ever think for a minute that there are Christians inferior to you, because they don't belong to your group.

Not for one second. Other Christians are dear to me. I'm a Catholic.

You know what that means? That means a universal Christian. That means somebody that believes in the whole Church of Christ, and I'm that. I'm not a Roman Catholic, but I'm a Catholic.

That is, I believe in the Catholicity of the Church of Christ. All of these children are my brothers and sisters, and they that love the Father love these children, you know. I have a son, Bud.

His right name's Forrest. He's quite a big, short lawyer, but everybody calls him Bud. And Bud has four children, and I love those children to death.

And do you know one reason? I love one of them particularly by the name of Paul. This tape will never be heard back there in Chicago, so I'll tell you. He's eight years old, and oh, boy, is he a nice boy.

From the time he was born, I've loved that little scoundrel. He and I are pals. He's a blond, just as blond as they come.

But you know why I love him? Because he reminds me of his dad when he was that age. His father's now about 36 or 37. My wife would know exactly, but I'd guess somewhere in there.

And he just reminds me of Bud when Bud was his age. That innocent smile that looks up at you, and he may be taking you out of your eyepiece, but that easy smile, he gives you, you know, gives you loving to death. He that loves the Father loves these children, and he that loves the Heavenly Father loves all of these children.

I love them all. I love the little ladies with little black hats, and I love the men with beards, and I love the people who wear these, these uniforms, you know, that look like the postman coming to deliver mail. And I love the Salvation Army, and I love all the Lord's people, if they're the Lord's people.

I won't go along with the liberal, and the modernist, and the God denier, and the Christ denier. I can't go along with them, no matter if they call themselves Christians. But this experience, does it make you love all God's people? If it does, it's very likely to be of God.

If it makes you feel superior to them, or drives a wedge between you and them, chances are it's not of God. Then again, what does this experience, or this scripture that I think I know what it means, this new interpretation, what does it do about my attitude toward the world? Does it excuse worldliness? Does it reason that because different people have different ideas of worldliness, therefore we can't be sure? And it's old-fashioned to separate from the world? If it does, it's not of God. The truth will tend to separate us from the world, and the world's ways, and the world's values.

I think it is a lamentable and grievous thing that the average rank and file of young women in America think that to be a movie star would be to reach the final pinnacle of all possible happiness and perfection. I think that's lamentable. Why should they choose the lowest order of humanity, and follow that as an example? Tell their beautiful curves and their lovely shape, and have it photographed half-fat day and night before the camera to feed the carnal, vicious lust of men and women.

And then our lovely, pretty, sweet girls, pick them starry-eyed if they could just have their autograph, or just touch them. I saw one one time on a train. I won't give her name.

Maybe this will be heard someplace. But she ate across she and somebody else. I said it was her secretary.

Somebody pointed out, said, that's so-and-so. Well, she just looked like anybody else. I had sisters that just looked as good as she did.

She just looked ordinary, you know, just a little bitty, and then I went back to my Pullman car. After watching her eat, I went back to my Pullman car, and I opened the newspaper, and here my eyes fell upon this same woman, advertising, showing her coming to the town where we were going to put on one of her big deals. Boy, she looked as if she had had a permanent wave given her by the angel Gabriel, and had borrowed her diaphanous clothing from Gabriel.

She looked as if she had dropped from right out of heaven, the dust not off her wings yet. She was just a homely little woman, sitting there looking like any other homely little woman. But when they got through

with her, she looked like somebody else.

Then we want our young people to imitate those fooling. Meet somebody, imitate Suzanne Wesley, honey. She had 17 kids, and John Wesley was the last one.

And you can thank God on your knees for the rest of your life that John Wesley was ever born. And Charles Wesley was what, to see 16 to 15, and you can thank God all the rest of your life that he was ever born. Thank God for Monica, the mother of Augustine, if you will.

Thank God for good women, pick missionaries, and pastor's wives, and saints in your church back home, simple-hearted, joyous people with hearts that are wondrous, full of grace. Pick them, and imitate them, and you'll thank God all through eternity. You picked the right model.

Don't pick the wrong model. Well, that world, that miserable world out there, it wants us, and it gets most of us. It gets most of us.

Any doctrine that makes the world your friend is not your friend. Any doctrine that makes it easy for you to hook up with the world, and the world ways, and accept the world values, and do the way the world does, is not of God. It can't possibly be.

Lastly, what is that new interpretation of scripture, or that new experience, or that new teaching? How does it affect my attitude toward my relation to sin? If it is of God, it'll make sin intolerable. The closer I come to God, the more intolerable sin becomes. Yet, I have heard of people who have had spiritual experiences where they said, well, now sin isn't sin to me anymore.

God has made me holy inside, and I can't sin, and therefore I can do these things that other people, if they did them, they'd be sin. Well, the devil certainly crawled up inside that fella before he ever started teaching that doctrine, got into his heart, sin is sin no matter who practices it. And if God will send a sinner to hell for sinning, how much more ought his children never to practice sin? We ought to be saved from sin, brethren, completely saved from sin.

And while I am not one who believes in what they would call Christian perfection, I believe that there's such a thing as being cleansed from sin and then walking in the spirit and not fulfilling the lust of the flesh. And I believe it's entirely within the right of any Christian to go to God and demand that God can make him holy and keep him from sin. Of course, he may stumble.

If he stumbles, there's a first aid kit. My little children, these things write unto you that you sin not. That's the will of God, number one.

But if any man sin, he has an advocate with the Father. That's the first aid kit. The Lord doesn't let his stumbling children die.

He picks them up, dusts them off, and finds up their wounds and stacks them all anew. So there is deliverance if we sin, but we should not be always making provision for sinning. If we make provision for sinning tomorrow, we'll be sinning tomorrow.

For if we go on our knees and say, Lord, there's nothing good in me, but I believe that thou art my keeper, my sanctifier, and that thou will keep me from sin. God will keep you from sin. Well, those are the seven tests.

Let me run over them again, because I don't want you to come after church and ask me to give you the numbers, because it takes time and people often want to talk. Well, here. First is, how does this affect my attitude toward my relation to God, Christ, the scriptures, self, other Christians, the world, and sin? And I exhort you now in closing, for these days that lie ahead after the glory of this camp, a little bit of a disfatenedness, sweet friendly fellowship, and enthusiasm that we've engendered here over these ten days.

After that's all gone and you're back to your little church, and the singing isn't as radiant as it was here, and the solo quite as good, don't get discouraged and say, well, I guess I didn't have anything. Press on. Do you love God more? Is Christ sweeter to you? Have the scriptures come alive to your love? Are you ready to trample self under your feet? Are you ready to throw your arms around all other Christians that are truly Christian? Desert the world, forsake sin, and God's done something for you, brother.

He's done something for you. Thank him with all of your heart. Seek those things which are above where Christ bid us on the right hand of God.

If the Lord's caring, we live, and things go all right, we'll be back next year. But if the Lord's come, we'll be in a better place than can be. Yes, sir, better than can be.

You know, there's a pun on that that I want you to get. The place up there is better than can be down here. And there is nothing in this wide world of God that'll be as wonderful as when we look upon his face and we see him as he is.

If talking with him here is wonderful, how much more wonderful talking to him without a veil. There is a verse or stanza in that hymn that you sang a while ago, brother Booth, it says, the king there in his beauty without a veil is seen. The king there in his beauty without a veil is seen.

We see him through a veil now, then we see him without a veil. I saw the queen of Romania, I saw Roosevelt, if that's anything, and I saw two other big shots, but oh the king there in his beauty without a veil is seen. And how it will enlighten our eyes and joy our hearts when we gaze upon it.

So cheer up, keep believing, fight the good fight with all thy might, and don't take any wooden nickels. Don't dare take anything somebody comes all excited and offers you. Check it, check it, check it, see if it meets up to the test.

If it doesn't, throw it out. You dare to do that, you dare to do anything else. Now let's pray.

Dear Lord Jesus, we thank thee for thy people, all of thy people, the good people, and the people that are struggling and stumbling, and the queer people, and the odd people, and we little know how odd we ourselves may be. And we thank thee Lord Jesus for every one of them, for the newborn babes that were just born on these grounds, and walk off to hear a child of God when he walked on, a child of sin, converted and born again. We thank thee for that child.

We thank thee Lord for these creatures, and pray thy blessing upon them now, and the superintendent, and all this district up and down the coast, of all denominations, and groups, and churches. Bless them every one by giving each one something to do. May they do it with praise, with fervor, and vigor, and humility, and love.

Blessed Brother Richard, let thine anointing be upon his head. Bless his wife. Thank thee Lord for the harmony that keeps them plugging away together through the years.

May they be greatly blessed. Blessed Brother and Sister Booth, as they go off with their singing and playing, O God, may they indeed be sheer and light in person and over the radio. Pray thee for these missionaries, every one of them Lord.

Father, times are tough, and the world is evil, and judgment's drawing nigh. We know not when this field will close, or that field will close, but when there'll be martyrs on the field. But O pray thee, give them the courage, and the nonchalance.

Let them go cheerfully and nonchalantly, careless of whether they live or die, if only they can bear the message. Bless the alliance with a wide field of service, twenty-two fields, eight hundred and thirty-five missionaries. O God, bless them every one.

And in these others of any other denominations that are here, we pray thee, let thine oil be upon their heads. May they carry back to their churches of whatever denomination. So much of glory and goodness and grace and spiritual enthusiasm, they will stir others to seek and find what they have found.

Now be with us, Lord. And then we pray thee, our Father, for safe journey for all that are traveling. Some left this afternoon, and Lord, the highways are dangerous, and some will be leaving after church.

Some will be driving home tomorrow or the next day. Father, we dare to look up now to thee and ask thee, don't let anybody get hurt. Keep everybody in perfect health.

Let not a bruise be on anybody's shin. Let there not be any harm done to anybody. And we pray thee for those who fly, our God, and ask that thou will give them safe conduct from the moment they take off till they land unto their home.

May the churches grow, and may they prosper, and may their missionary zeal be fired up, and may they learn to love thee more in each other more every day until Christ comes. This all we ask of Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us. Amen.

I do not intend even to give an invitation. I want to do something else. I want to set a little tap-sheet on what has been accomplished during this week, and I want to tell you something which you can take home with you if you will remember it.

Try to remember it. Take it home with you, and then everything and anything that God may have done, or you like you may have received, or any blessings might have come your way, will be preserved and disciplined and sanctified. I am going to talk to you about how to tell when a thing is from God or not.

There are two texts. One is 1 Thessalonians 5.21. It says, Prove all things, and hold fast to that which is good. And in 1 John 4 it says, Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God.

Now, this is a little spiritual treasure which God has given me, some gave it to me some years back, and I want to share it with you. God gave it to me as a rule to tell how whether a doctrine is from him or not, whether a blessing that I may receive, or an emotional experience I may have, or a miracle I may think I see, or anything else is of God or not. And some Christians, of course, can't profit by this for the simple reason that they are static.

They have had no new experiences, and they're not going to have any if they can help it. And they have no crises, no epochs, no advances. They never circle and fly higher.

They're satisfied to beat their wings fast and buzz around low. They're not going up there where there's any danger, so they cannot wish it was over. But you that are seekers after God, who are troubled and concerned about your spiritual life, this message is for you.

I hope that's all of you here tonight, that you are seekers after God's best things. That if you're ready to hear anyone who offers help, there are some people who are troubled. They are really troubled in their spiritual lives, and they read the bible, but that doesn't seem to help them.

They don't seem to be able to find themselves. They're troubled, and they're ready to hear anyone, and that is one danger. I don't like to see anybody too willing to accept things.

I like to have them do what the Bereans did, examine the scriptures to see if these things be so. I never trust a man who gets converted too easily, or too easily, I should say, if I want to maintain my reputation as knowing English language from a hole in the wall. But if a man gets converted too easily, the chances are you can unconvert him just as easily.

If you can stampede him into the kingdom, you can stampede him out. I like to see a man just a little bit stubborn and hard to deal with, and then when he gets in, he's just as stubborn and hard to deal with by the enemy. That was Paul.

Paul was a stubborn man, and he wasn't eager to convert, but when he got converted, it was a tremendous thing, and he never went back. Now, some, I say, are eager, and they're looking after some new things, and of course on the radio you'll hear everybody and his brother John lecturing and talking and giving messages. Well, that's right, it's all right, the radio is a good medium of communication, but you have to use your head and your heart, and you have to find out whether what this fellow is talking about is right or not.

Just the fact that he gets up there and talks fast and sounds pious doesn't mean one thing in the world the devil can come as an angel of life. So, you've got to learn to know an angel of life from an angel of God. You have to learn to know pseudo-truth from truth.

Well, there are those, I say, who are willing to take up with new doctrines, and there are those who are willing to seek new experiences if somebody else comes along and demonstrates they've had one, and there are always those who are easily moved by miracles. I have never been. I have seen God do some miracles, or near miracles, I think, in my time, but I have never been much convinced by miracles.

If they will not believe Moses and the prophets and the apostles and our Lord, they would not believe even if a man rose from the dead. So, miracles are secondary proofs of anything, and yet miracles move some people tremendously, and if somebody can come along and do a miracle they just believe anything. Well, now I want to give you a rule divided into about seven parts, but this will be a brief sermon, I hope.

Here is the rule. How does this affect my attitude toward and my relation to the following? Now, anything, whatever doctrine I begin to get interested in, whatever new religious fad comes my way, whatever religious experience I may seem to be having or have had, check it. You dare to check it.

In fact, you're under orders to check it. Check it by asking, how does this affect my attitude toward and my relation to these, the following? First, God. That new doctrine that has come my way by some fellow who perspired and sought unceasingly.

All right, now he's got his doctrine. What does that doctrine do for God? Does it make God great or small? Does it make God necessary or less necessary? Does it put God where he belongs and bring glory to him, and does it humble me and show me how little I am and how great God is? Or does it obscure God and go avail across the face of God? Whatever makes God less, or less important, or less wonderful, or less glorious, or less mighty, that isn't of God. Because the whole purpose of God in redemption, in sending the scripture in the first place, and in redeeming men, is that he might be glorified among men.

The glory of God is the health of the universe, and wherever God is not glorified, that part of the universe is sick. Hell is sick because God is not glorified there. Heaven is abounding in glorious health because God is glorified there.

Earth is halfway in between sick and well because only some glorify God and the rest don't. The glory of God is the health of the universe, and the sound of the anthems of praise to God Almighty is the music of the spirit. And therefore, any doctrine, any faith or emphasis of doctrine, any experience that I may seem to have, any miracle that I may seem to have seen, if it doesn't make God big and teach him big and make God indispensable and wonderful, then put it away and dare to stand and say, I'll have nothing to do with anything that diminishes God.

Then, Christ. How does it affect my attitude toward and my relation to Christ? Because Christ is who he is, and what he is, he is and always will be indispensable, and he is and always will be necessary to the point where I must have him. And any teaching, any experience, any fellowship, any activity that makes Christ less necessary for me can't be of God.

Now, you've had experiences. You've gone to the altar, you've prayed, and you've been blessed, and you've heard teachings and emphases given here, and you've heard them given by men with their breath in their nostrils. The fact that Dr. Brown said it doesn't make it true, the fact that it doesn't make it true, the fact that George Klanu or Waterpole said it doesn't make it true, the fact that your Bible teachers have said it doesn't make it true, we can be mistaken.

You've got to test us as well as everybody else and search the scriptures and know, has our teaching made Christ more wonderful to you? Is Jesus Christ bigger and grander and sweeter and more indispensably beautiful now in your life than he was before? If he is, you have every good reason to believe you've been hearing from God. If he's less glorious and you've become attached to men, then he isn't. The teaching you've had is bad, or at least it's been given in a bad way.

Any teaching, any experience that comes to you that makes Jesus Christ any less necessary, I say and repeat, is not of God, because Jesus Christ is absolutely necessary. He is the divine imperative. He is the one without which we can not live.

We must have him, and we must be in him and he in us. If it is of God, your dependence upon Christ will increase, and Christ will become sweeter and more wonderful all the time. Now, I don't say he will become sweeter every day.

I don't say that he will become sweeter as the days go by. We sing that song, and I don't believe it half the time I hear it. I don't believe it most of the time that I hear it.

The same old deacon will come, and he's the same old deacon, and every second Sunday morning for 20 years he'll sing sweeter as the years go by. And he's the same sour, salty, stubborn old guy that he was

before, only a little bolder, that's all, and a little more wrinkled. Just the same mean old Christian that he was 20 years ago.

And you'll tell me that Jesus is sweeter as the years go by. No, see, that man is not moving along. Let's not sing it if we don't mean it.

I'd rather sit as mute as the harp on tarred walls, what wrote about, and never croak an amen, than to than to the light of God in the people. But if he is more glorious every day, why it's no harm in saying so, and I believe in coming out and saying so. I believe that we ought to practice again boosting our preachers a little bit.

Some of you great Christians that have sat and looked

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