

Prove all things

by William MacDonald

Transcript

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” (1 Th. 5:21)

Sometimes it seems that Christians are especially prone to accept passing fads and winds of doctrine. John Blanchard wrote of two tour-bus drivers who were comparing notes. When one mentioned that he had a bus full of Christians, the other said, “Really? What do they believe?” To which the first replied, “Anything I tell them!”

One minute it may be a food fad. Certain foods are denounced as poison and others are credited with almost magical properties. Or it may be a medicinal fad, claiming spectacular results for some strange weed or extract.

Christians can be gullible when it comes to financial appeals. In this country, at least, they respond readily to publicity involving orphans or anti-Communist crusades without investigating the integrity of the sponsoring agency.

Impostors have a heyday among believers. No matter how ridiculous their sob story, they are able to rake in the money.

Perhaps the problem is that we fail to distinguish between faith and gullibility. Faith believes the surest thing in the universe, that is, the Word of God. Gullibility accepts things as fact without evidence and sometimes in the face of evidence to the contrary.

God never intended His people to abandon their powers of discernment or their critical faculty. Interspersed in the Bible are such exhortations as the following:

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Th. 5:21),

“...take forth the precious from the vile” (Jer. 15:19),

“And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment” (Phil. 1:9 NASB),

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1 NASB)

The danger is especially great, of course, in connection with doctrinal fads and novelties. But in many other areas as well it is possible for Christians to get sidetracked or duped with schemes or crazes that they pursue with exaggerated zeal.

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