

“Testing the Spirits” (1 Thessalonians 5:19–22)

Big Idea: The apostle Paul instructs this church to test messages supposedly from God’s Spirit.

I. The Original Significance of These Instructions

a. What Not to Do: Disdainful Quenching of Direct Revelation (verses 19–20)

“Do Not Quench the Spirit” (2 Timothy 1:6)

“Do Not Despise Prophecies” (Numbers 11:24–29)

Clarification: The New Testament Prophet

Acts 11:27–29; 21:8–11; Eph. 2:19–21; 4:4–8, 11–12; 1 Cor. 12:27–31

2 Thess. 2:1–3a

b. What to Do: Embracing the Genuine and Rejecting the Evil (verses 21–22)

“But Test Everything” (Deut. 13:1–5; 18:15–22; 1 John 3:23–4:6; 1 Cor. 14:26–33)

“Hold Fast What Is Good” (Luke 8:15)

“Abstain from [or “Hold Away”] Every Form of Evil”

II. The Ongoing Relevance of These Instructions

a. Don’t outlaw the good in reaction to the bad.

b. Don’t disdain the Spirit’s work in reaction to the evil one’s work.

c. Discern and decide whether spiritual messages are good or evil.

d. When God’s Word speaks, receive the message.

James 1:19–25

e. When God’s Word is counterfeited, reject the counterfeit.

Revelation 2:18–23; Revelation 2:1–6