

A SCRIPTURE TESTING CHECKLIST

Learning to test teaching with confidence, not fear

This checklist is designed to teach a process of discernment, not to deliver final verdicts. Faithful testing is often patient and ongoing. Clarity grows over time as believers remain rooted in God's Word and trust His faithfulness.

CLARIFY THE TEACHING

Before evaluating a teaching, make sure you understand what is actually being said.

Ask:

- What is the main claim being made?
- Is this presented as essential doctrine, wise counsel, or personal opinion?
- What question is this teaching trying to answer?
- Are any key terms left undefined or assumed?

Discernment begins with understanding, not reaction.

GO TO SCRIPTURE FIRST

Resist the urge to seek opinions before opening the Bible.

Ask:

- What passages of Scripture speak directly to this topic?
- Are verses being quoted, or only referenced?
- Am I reading Scripture itself, or just hearing it summarized?

God's Word is the authority; all teaching must serve it, not replace it.

READ IN CONTEXT

Avoid evaluating teaching based on isolated verses.

Ask:

- What comes before and after this passage?
- What is the purpose of this book of the Bible?
- Who was the original audience, and what situation were they facing?

Context protects against misunderstanding and misuse.

COMPARE WITH THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF SCRIPTURE

Scripture interprets Scripture.

Ask:

- Does this teaching align with the broader message of the Bible?
- Does it elevate one theme while minimizing others?
- Does it reflect the character of God revealed in Jesus Christ?

Faithful teaching will harmonize with the whole story of redemption.

EXAMINE THE FRUIT (Matthew 7:16)

Jesus taught that teaching is known by its fruit.

Ask:

- Does this teaching promote humility, repentance, and obedience to Christ?
- Does it deepen love for God and for others?
- Does it encourage trust in Christ's reign and grace, or fear and pressure?

Fruit often takes time to see. Be patient and honest.

CONSIDER THE POSTURE IT PRODUCES

Look beyond content to formation.

Ask:

- Does this teaching encourage faithful living?
- Does it foster peace, hope, and endurance?
- Does it draw me closer to Christ, or make me anxious, suspicious, or proud?

Sound teaching forms Christlike character.

SEEK WISE COUNSEL

God designed discernment to grow within community.

Ask:

- Have I discussed this teaching with a mature believer, pastor, or elder?
- Am I open to correction if I have misunderstood?
- Am I remaining rooted in the body of Christ, or becoming isolated?

Discernment grows best in fellowship.

REST IN GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

You do not discern alone.

Remember:

- Jesus Christ is reigning as King.
- God is faithful to preserve His people.
- Growth in discernment is a process, not a test to pass or fail.

Holding fast to truth is an act of trust, not fear.

A GENTLE REMINDER

This checklist, and any tool that uses it, is meant to assist evaluation, not replace it. The Word of God remains the final authority. Faithful discernment continues through reading Scripture in context, prayer, and wise counsel under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.