**Test All Things**

*1 Thessalonians 5:19-22*

**Introduction**

1. Paul told the Thessalonians to ***“test all things”*** – **1 Thessalonians 5:19-22**
2. We live in a world that offers endless choices each day, but we are tasked with making the right ones.
3. The divine purpose of life makes these daily choices even weightier (**cf. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14**).
4. However, God has not left His creatures without witness to Himself, and access to His will. We have been given the means and method to administer tests and make the right choice. Yet, some still refuse the good.
5. It is important that we remove ourselves as a viable standard and instead entrust ourselves to God’s infallible standard to guide our every move.
6. Standards and Their Results
7. **Test** – *dokimazō* – “(1) to test, examine, prove, scrutinise (to see whether a thing is genuine or not), as metals; (2) to recognise as genuine after examination, to approve, deem worthy” (THAYER)
   1. LXX – ***“As silver and gold are tried in a furnace, so are choice hearts with the Lord.” (Proverbs 17:3***, ***“tried”*** – *dokimazō*)
   2. “The ore is not thrown into the fining pot…except in the expectation and belief that, whatever of dross may be found mingled with it, yet it is not all dross, but that some good metal, and better now than before, will come forth from the fiery trial.” (R.C. Trench)
   3. **Where fire determines genuineness of a precious metal because the dross cannot withstand the flame, an objective standard determines whether something is true or false, good or evil.**
8. The Standard of God’s Word
   1. **1 Thessalonians 5:19-22** – Paul exhorts the brethren to consistently hear God’s revelation and administer tests not only to determine what is a revelation of God, but what is good or evil based on the revelation.
      1. **Spirit** – possibly metonymy for spiritual gifts – **cf. 1 Corinthians 13:8-10** – revelation and confirmation, once revealed and confirmed, a reliable standard (**cf. 1 John 4:1-3**). (For us – **cf. Jude 3**).
      2. **Prophecies** – inspired revelation of God in native language (cf. tongues) – (**cf. 1 Corinthians 14:1-2** – the best of gifts that was not as desirable to some.)
      3. **The Spirit revealed word of God** (the ultimate consideration of “Spirit” and “prophecies” in the text) – **1 Corinthians 2:12-13; 14:36-38** – spoken through inspired men – Paul’s written word checked even the usage of the spiritual gifts by virtue of its reception from Christ.
   2. **2 Timothy 3:16-17** (*theopneustos*); **2 Peter 1:19-21** (*pherō*, passive) – this standard, being inspired of God, is supremely trustworthy and profitable.
      1. It ***“thoroughly equips.”***
      2. It is ***“a light which shines in a dark place.”***
9. The Standard of the Human Mind
   1. The isolated human mind devoid of external revelation is incapable of administering a reliable test – ***“A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; He rages against all wise judgment.” (Proverbs 18:1)***
      1. As Jesus said – **John 11:9-10** – to walk under the cover of night where there is no external source of light is to stumble because the light is not in a man.
   2. Example of the Gentiles addressed by Paul – **Romans 1:28**
      1. ***“they did not like”*** – *ouk* (not) *edokimasan* (they did like)
      2. Form of *dokimazō* (**cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:21** – ***“test”***) – they put God to the test and did not approve of Him.
         1. They did not approve of Him to ***“retain God in their knowledge (epignōsis).”***
         2. **(v. 18)** – suppressed truth in unrighteousness.
         3. **(vv. 22-23)** – exchanged the glory of God for images, of corruptible man and creature at that.
         4. **(v. 24)** – this, in effort to follow their own desires to which God gave the up.
      3. ***“debased”*** – *adokimon* – the negative of *dokimazō* – “not standing the test, not approved” (THAYER)
         1. They failed God under the test they administered – He was unapproved by them.
         2. So, He allowed them to operate according to their unapproved mind – as it had rejected God, and His true standard.
         3. **They rejected God based on THEIR standard, and God gave them up to THEIR standard – *a standard which was incapable of leading them to reach proper conclusions.***
      4. Results – ***“to do those things which are not fitting”***
         1. **Fitting** – *kathēkō* – “strictly extend to, reach to; hence be fit or suitable” (ALGNT)
         2. Extend/reach to what? Fitting according to what? – **Romans 3:23** – the glory of God as one created in His image (**cf. Genesis 1:26**).
10. **1 Thessalonians 5:19-22** – God is calling His people through the apostle’s pen to rely on His standard (to the exclusion of all others) to prove whether something is true or false, good or evil.
    1. **Ephesians 5:17-18** – understand His will by being filled with the Spirit’s word. (**cf. Colossians 3:16**).
    2. **Romans 12:2** – mind renewed by knowledge of God (**cf. Colossians 3:10**) to ***“prove”*** (*dokimazō*) what is God’s will (in any situation).
    3. **Isaiah 2:5-6** – then walk in that light *(****“hold fast what is good”***) rather than according to ***“eastern ways”*** (***“abstain from every form of evil”***).
11. Hold Fast What is Good and Abstain from Every Form of Evil
12. Good and Evil are Objective
    1. The fact that it can be tested by an infallible standard shows this is so.
       1. I.e. it is binary – one or the other – no third option.
    2. One may administer the test and reject the results – **Romans 1:21-23, 28** – but this does not change reality.
    3. One may relabel what they observe – **Isaiah 5:20** – but this does not change reality.
    4. One may argue that the situation or person affects the result – **Matthew 12:1-4** (refused to acknowledge David’s wrong – because its David? Because of his dire situation – fleeing from Saul?) – but this does not change reality.
    5. Regardless of what one does, they only do one of two things – **1 Thessalonians 5:21-22**
       1. **2 Corinthians 13:5** – ***“Test”*** (*dokimazō*), ***“disqualified”*** (*adokimos*) – ***“unless indeed you fail the test” (NASB)***
13. Holding Fast Involves Activity
    1. **James 1:21-27** – to evaluate myself in comparison to the standard of Christ, and to do what it says.
       1. **(v. 21**) – a disposition to not just accept God’s will, but to do it.
       2. **(v. 25)** – doing of the work.
       3. (**v. 27**) – it is not just negative, but positive. (Not merely moralistic, but regarding servitude – to God and man.) (**cf. Mark 10:45**)
       4. **I do not deceive self by ignoring, rejecting, or changing the standard.**
    2. **James 2:1-4, 8-9, 14-17** – holding the faith – i.e. holding it in regard to keeping it, activity – **(v. 3)**
       1. What I am doing is in response of faith to the faith – is it impartial.
       2. **(v. 8)** – actively doing something, fulfilling the ***“royal law.”***
       3. **(vv. 14-17)** – activity, not empty profession.
       4. **I do not remain unresponsive to the standard, but I act on it. Not only that, but I evaluate the situation, and act on it in a way that is true and entirely reflective of the standard.**
    3. **James 4:17** – providing for and seeing opportunity to do what is according to God’s will **(v. 15)** and then doing it – sins of omission.
       1. **I do not neglect the activity God calls me to by His will, and in the presentation of opportunity**. **(cf. Ephesians 5:15-16** – *Kairos*, opportunity)
    4. **Matthew 25:24-28, 44-46** – parable of talents and depiction of judgment – it was not a commission that brought judgment, but omission – **they were guilty of evil by not being faithful in what was good.**
14. Abstaining Involves Inactivity
    1. **Abstain** – avoid or have nothing to do with.
       1. To what extent – **1 John 1:5; Romans 13:14** – none at all, not even to provide for it.
    2. ***“every form”*** – *eidos* – “As commonly explained, abstain from everything that even looks like evil…**It never has the sense of semblance.** Moreover, it is impossible to abstain from everything that looks like evil.” (VINCENT)
       1. **Cf. Galatians 5:19-21** – ***“and the like”*** – i.e. all these forms, and any others that are also of the flesh.
    3. If it is ***“not fitting”*** according to God’s standard, then it must be abstained from – **Romans 1:28-31**
       1. **Romans 1:24-27** – there is a progression in the depravity of a mind and man left to his own desires.
          1. **(v. 24)** – ***“uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts”***
          2. **(v. 26)** – ***“vile passions”*** – ***“against nature”***
          3. To this the Jew was totally opposed.
       2. **Romans 1:28-31** – where we would think to see the worst of the worst is simply a list of common vices – covetousness, envy, deceit, proud, unmerciful, etc.
       3. **Romans 2:1-3** – ***“Therefore”*** – these things are ***“not fitting”*** and are a product of a mind that has rejected God, and does not stand the test (is unchecked by what is approved) – THOUGH YOU MAY NOT DO SOME – idolatry, homosexuality – YOU DO THE SAME, BECAUSE EVIL IS EVIL IN ANY FORM.
          1. **By your standard it may not be as bad, or bad at all, but by God’s standard it is the same**.
       4. **In one progression the Holy Spirit lumps all evil together – we must abstain from every form.**

**Conclusion**

1. It is essential that we accept God’s word as true and realize there is no changing it.
2. Rather than raise ourselves up against the truth, we should embrace it, and allow it to direct us to God’s glory.
3. This is done through daily consideration of God’s will in evaluating each situation we find ourselves in to make the proper choice to ***“hold fast what is good. [and] Abstain from every form of evil.”***