

## Discernment via Truth Tests

***John 18:37 "For this reason I was born, and for this reason I came into the world – to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."***

***1 Peter 1:22-23 "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever..."***

### **1. Correspondence Test – Truth corresponds to reality**

- **Principle:** Something is true if it matches the way things really are.
- **Biblical Anchor:** “*God is love*” (1 John 4:8).
- **Implication for the Church:** If we confess this truth, it must be visible in the lived reality of our fellowship. Unity that is only theoretical or confined to statements of faith fails the test.
- **Application:** Examine whether our relationships bear fruit in **love, peace, and mutual care** (John 13:35; Gal. 5:22).

### **2. Correlation (Coherence) Test – Truth fits with other truths**

- **Principle:** Something is true if it harmonizes with the whole counsel of God.
- **Biblical Anchor:** “*By grace you have been saved*” (Eph. 2:8–10) and “*Faith without works is dead*” (James 2:17).
- **Implication for the Church:** Doctrines and practices cannot be isolated; they must be read in light of the larger biblical narrative. False dichotomies arise when we pit truths against one another.
- **Application:** Maintain balance: truth and love, grace and accountability, liberty and holiness (Eph. 4:15; Acts 20:27).

### **Diagnosing Division in the Church**

- **Root Issue:** Divisions (doctrinal, relational, practical) often trace back to untested or even false presuppositions.
- **Problem:** Assumptions are often left unexamined against God’s Word and the fruit that those assumptions produce.
- **Example:** “Unity means uniformity” vs. “Unity means ignoring truth”, both are faulty starting points in discerning truth.

### **Train for Maturity in Discernment**

1. **Recognize assumptions** – Become aware of cultural, personal, or theological biases.
2. **Test ideas against Scripture and observable fruit** – (Matt. 7:16; Acts 17:11).
3. **Ensure coherence with the whole counsel of God** – (2 Tim. 3:16–17; Acts 20:27).

### **Outcomes of Practicing Truth Tests**

- **Resolving disagreements** by appealing to Scripture and fruit, not personalities or preferences.
- **Strengthening Unity / Promoting Humility** through shared submission to God’s truth.