

**Prayer List of the Sick and Afflicted:**

Ray and Liz Sturgill are both feeling much better. Liz is receiving dialysis treatments at Spencer and home health care visits.

Sheila Wilson is home and doing better. She continues to receive chemotherapy at IU Health Martinsville and home healthcare visits.

Delores Hendrickson is back home and doing better following a brief hospitalization. Jesse Riddle had a successful procedure performed to adjust the port in his arm to allow him to receive dialysis in the future. He is suffering from soreness in his arm.

Jeff Sturgill is recovering at home from back surgery.

Bob Hawkins had another outpatient procedure for a problem with veins in his legs.

Gerald Dunn, brother of Susie Riddle, is in a health care institution in Bedford and is experiencing memory issues.

Virginia McKinney is still experiencing some balance and hip problems. She has a follow-up appointment with her cardiologist.

Karen Sproles is still confined at home and is receiving home health services. Her husband Chet broke his leg but is now back home again.

Iris Hash is feeling better and is still staying with her daughter.

John Richardson has been transferred to the Countryside Nursing Home in Avon, IN.

Terry Richardson is in rehab at The Waters in Martinsville.

Shannon Jones, daughter of Linda and Randall, is still undergoing chemotherapy.

Haven Duncan is suffering from some issues while in the Army at Ft. Benning, GA.

**Pray For Our Shut-ins:**

Gloria Hale, Karen Sproles, Iris Hash

**Pray For The Mission Works We Are Supporting:**

John Grubb (Mission work in Asia), Daniel Goshorn and family (Mission work in Peru)

**Deepest Sympathy:**

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Mike and Doris Parnell at the passing of Mike's son, Bill. A special free-will donation is being taken up in order to help Bill's wife Andrea with funeral expenses. Donations can be made between December 4<sup>th</sup>- 11<sup>th</sup>. Please make checks payable to the church.

**Monthly Pitch-in Dinner:**

Our next monthly pitch-in dinner will be held following the morning services on January 1. Following the meal, we will reconvene at 1:00 PM for an afternoon song service then will dismiss for the day.

**Men's Business Meeting:**

The next men's monthly business meeting will be Wednesday, January 4th at 5:00 PM.

**Benevolent Opportunities:**

Please bring in coffee between now and December 18th to be donated to Desert Rose, the local women's shelter.

In addition, the congregation will be assisting two local needy families during the holiday season. Sean and Christa Mathews are leading this work. Money from the church will be used to purchase clothes and gifts for these families.

**Radio Program:**

Please remember to tune in every Sunday morning at 8:00 AM to WCBK 102.3 to hear our radio program which is entitled: "Preparing For Eternity".

**God's Plan For Our Salvation:**

1. **Hearing** the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. **Believing** what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. **Repentance** (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. **Confession** (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. **Baptism** (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. **Faithful Christian Living**, after the above five steps (I Peter 2:11, 12; Rev. 2:10).

December 11, 2022

***MORGAN STREET CHURCH OF CHRIST***

**540 E. Morgan Street  
Martinsville, IN 46151  
(765) 342-6027**



**Schedule of Services:**

**Sunday**

Bible Study – 9:30 AM

Worship – 10:30 AM

Evening Service - 6:00

**Wednesday**

Bible Study – 6:00 PM

**Thursday**

Ladies Bible Study – 11:00 AM (March through October)

**Radio Program:**

“Preparing For Eternity”

Sunday Mornings 8:00 AM, WCBK 102.3 FM

**Website:**

[www.morganstreetchurchofchrist.org](http://www.morganstreetchurchofchrist.org)

Gospel Preacher – Bob Hawkins

## FIRST JOHN 4:1

Roger D. Campbell

Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits.

That is a message which grabs our attention, does it not? It was written to first-century saints who were facing the challenge of dealing with the influence that false messengers were having on the church.

In its entirety, the wording of 1 John 4:1 is: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” Let us examine the meaning and application of those words.

“Beloved” — This comes from a Greek word which means “beloved, esteemed, dear, favorite, worthy of love.” It is an endearing term, found five times in the letter that we know as “First John.” In each of those five instances, it is the beginning word of a sentence (3:2,21; 4:1,7,11). For John to address them as his “beloved” let them know that he cared about them. He has some tough language for those who cast aside the Lord’s instructions, but he loved all of them dearly.

“Do not believe every spirit” — First, we need to identify who or what these “spirits” were. In the same statement, John mentioned prophets (4:1). He went on to write about spirits confessing or not confessing Jesus (4:2,3). John said the spirits “speak” (4:5), and he noted there is a difference between “the spirit of truth” and “the spirit of error” (4:6). It is clear that when John charged the disciples not to believe every spirit, he meant do not believe every religious messenger/message. It is not uncommon for parents, perhaps on several occasions, to warn their children, “Do not believe everything you hear.” That still is sage advice. In the spiritual realm, not every spoken or printed message is good for us. There is sound doctrine — teaching that is healthy for our soul (Titus 2:1). There also are unhealthy spiritual messages. In the context of 1 John 4, John speaks of false prophets (4:1), messengers who are “not of God” (4:3). He further describes them as being “of the world” (4:5) and “the spirit of error” (4:6). Our Lord does not want any of us to be influenced by “every wind of doctrine, by the sleight [trickery] of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph. 4:14).

“Test the spirits, whether they are of God” — How can you and I know which spirits are of God? Test them. “To test/try” is from a Greek word defined as “to test, examine, prove, scrutinize (to see whether a thing is genuine or not), as metals; to recognize as genuine after examination, to approve, deem worthy.” The charge to prove/test all things employs the same Greek word in First Thessalonians 5:21. It is the word Jesus used when

speaking about a man testing his oxen (Luke 14:19). So, there is testing metals...testing animals...testing religious teachers.

Instead of believing each religious message we come across, we are to test them one by one. How? We must compare what we hear or read with the truth that God has revealed to us. God’s word is truth (John 17:17). Truth cannot contradict itself. Thus, if a message harmonizes with the revealed will/truth of God, it is true. If it clashes with the Bible, it is false. If the message is an addition to God’s word, it is a human-devised hoax. We recall that the apostle Paul warned the churches of Galatia not to receive any message which was different from the genuine Gospel he had proclaimed to them (Gal. 1:6-9).

In order for a person to be effective in testing the religious messages he encounters, he must have a good knowledge of God’s word. This is where many people are in serious trouble! They are in great danger of accepting, following, and promoting falsehoods because they do not have adequate Bible knowledge.

National and world leaders often discuss and identify what they consider to be the greatest problems facing humanity. There is one grave danger which such worldly officials never contemplate: a lousy knowledge of the Bible leads people and communities into violation of God’s will, and that has eternal consequences! If a person is convinced that going to heaven is the most important matter in his existence, he will be like the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:11). It is worth the effort! Failing to arm ourselves will not produce a happy outcome.

“Because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” As an apostle of Jesus, John could not take away man’s free will, which included the liberty to speak. The reality is, when people open their mouths to speak, many of them do not teach God’s truth. Note that John said in his day there were “false” prophets — “many” of them. Our Lord said to beware of such people who outwardly resemble sheep but inwardly are ravenous wolves (Matt. 7:15).

No, not every religious message is acceptable to God. No, not every religious messenger is a great person. We love the soul of each false messenger, but we detest their false words which deceive the gullible and lead them toward eternal torment (2 Peter 2:1,2).