



# The Good News

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## *Authenticity*

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Chances are, you will have to authenticate yourself at least once a day—signing a check, presenting your driver’s license/ID to verify you are who you say you are, sliding a key card to access your building at work, logging onto a network with a password known (presumably) only to you, etc. Our world is increasingly concerned with authentication because of the ease and proliferation of forgery, especially of the digital kind. Credit cards now have an additional three digits on the back of the card. Passwords are becoming pass-phrases, and where work is concerned, we are often strongly encouraged—if not outright required—to change them regularly. Why?

The reasons, while many and varied, are almost universally derived from a need to protect valuable information and/or money and other assets associated with that information. Anyone who has been victimized by identity theft can describe the misery of having to reconstruct their credit history and reputation. Companies now employ levels and techniques of cryptography that two decades ago were reserved for the most sensitive and vital of military and government secrets. They are necessary because industrial espionage can destroy a company that does not prevent the theft of trade secrets. Thus, we go to lengths to protect our identities or pay companies to watch our credit activity and alert us if there is any departure from what is normal behavior with our credit rating; the more sensitive a company’s business, the more measures they will use to authenticate their employees.

We take these measures and see these measures taken every single day to protect what is most important to our physical lives here on

earth, our identity. How rigorous are we, however, when we are authenticating the teaching of God’s Word when it involves a much, much more valuable commodity: our spiritual survival and salvation? How often do we truly test for authenticity the words of our preacher, of our class teachers, of our family, and our elders? Do we place as much importance upon inspecting the scriptures used in sermons and lessons for proper usage, context, meaning? Do we compare the cross-references for continuity/parallelism? If the answer is no, then we need to ask ourselves ‘*WHY NOT?*’ Why is this not important enough to take the measures just mentioned? Why are we content to let the study/work/presentation of another be good enough for us? Are we truly comfortable with letting someone *else* do the work of studying the scriptures? Would we give someone a signed blank check? Why would we accept the words and the teachings of anyone else without testing those words against the authority of God’s Word?

**1 John 4:1** tells us to test every spirit so that we know those who are of God and those who are not. The Bereans, in **Acts 17:11**, are used as an example of *how* to test the things taught to us and the spirits teaching us: try their words against the scriptures. All authority is from God alone; if what is taught agrees with the Word of God, then we can know those teachings to be *authentic*. To accept instruction on spiritual matters without verifying its authenticity from God is to invite destruction.