

Trust but Verify

Ronald Reagan's quote, "Trust, but verify," is a powerful reminder of skepticism's role in trust. Trust should never be blind or unquestioning but always accompanied by a healthy dose of suspicion and the need for verification and evidence. This emphasis not only encourages us to question and seek evidence but also empowers us to take control of the information we choose to trust. As one of my teachers wisely said, "Question the answers." This approach puts the power in our hands, making us responsible for our beliefs and actions.

Our era demands personal research and verification of everything we hear. We can no longer afford to carelessly trust anyone, as the people we once had confidence in have let us down. I saw a video in which the beloved Walter Cronkite arrogantly stated he was proud to be at Satan's right hand. The mainstream media (MSM) has revealed its true colors, and viewers have left in record numbers. Once highly-rated news outlets are struggling to maintain an audience. Independent broadcasters Joe Rogan and Tucker Carlson have larger audiences than these struggling networks. Should we trust them?

Even alternative internet news sources, which claim to be accurate in their reports, should be subject to our analysis. It's not enough to casually switch our trust from one source to another. We must remain vigilant and verify what they say. The necessity of this practice is paramount in our information-saturated world.

There are biblical precedents for verifying what we are told. In Acts 17:10-13 (NKJV), the Bereans came to believe the gospel because they searched the Old Testament scriptures to verify what Paul had told them. Listen to the text:

¹⁰ Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. ¹¹ These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness and searched the Scriptures daily *to find out* whether these things were so. ¹² Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men.

Jesus himself is unafraid of us verifying who He is. Unlike the corrupt leaders of our day, Jesus WANTS us to investigate Him in as much detail as we wish. He has nothing to hide. He IS who He says He is. Thomas was away from the group when the disciples encountered Jesus after the resurrection. When they told him about it, Thomas refused to believe blindly. He determined to verify before he would commit. He said, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe" (John 20:25, NKJV). Jesus willingly gave him that opportunity eight days later.

There is a tragic story in 1 Kings 13 in which God sent a young prophet to Israel's King Jeroboam while he was burning incense to a false god. The man of God predicted the altar's destruction and the coming of Judah's king, Josiah. God withered Jeroboam's hand and restored it through the prophet's prayer. Jeroboam offered the young man refreshments and a reward. The man refused, stating:

⁸ "If you were to give me half your house, I would not go in with you, nor would I eat bread nor drink water in this place. ⁹ For so it was commanded me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'You shall not eat bread, nor drink water, nor return by the same way you came.' " ¹⁰ So he went another way and did not return by the way he came to Bethel.

An older prophet heard of the events and intercepted the young man. He invited him home. At first, the young prophet refused and told him the same thing he had said to the king. However, the old prophet convinced him to stay with him. Verse 18 reads, "¹⁸ He said to him, 'I too *am* a prophet as you *are*, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water.' " [*the writer adds,*] (He was lying to him.)"

The young prophet trusted the old prophet and did not verify what he said. As a result, he never returned home but was killed on the way.

Things would have turned out differently if ...:

- The young prophet had asked God instead of believing the smooth-talking old man.
- The young prophet had immediately and firmly declined since God had not spoken to Him.
- The young prophet had kept going home as the final part of his mission.

I wonder what criteria the patriots used to determine reliability during our War for Independence. The King made threats and promises. Some feared and believed him and fell into line. Others chose to trust resistant voices and the patriot correspondence committees.

They counted on their neighbors because they knew their hearts and saw the integrity of their actions. They believed their leaders because they put everything on the line for independence under God, their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor. They were not aloof from the common man but walked with him in the struggle. One depended on the other. Does this remind you of anyone today?

The government has attacked the free speech of some of the podcasters I listen to. They speak against the MSM narrative, and the regime has tried to silence them. Thankfully, they can move to new platforms and keep their messages alive. While we still need to verify what these patriot podcasters say, these men and women deserve our attention. They are researching and presenting their findings at great risk. Some are facing arrest and jail time on unconstitutional charges. It is up to us to decide if they are truthful or not.

Jesus challenged a group of Jewish religious leaders one day as they debated Him with harsh criticisms regarding His legitimacy. Please notice that Jesus was not meek and mild and didn't roll over to their intimidation. Read through John 8 and try to imagine the tone He used. Here is verse 44 (NKJV):

You are of *your* father, the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it.

The current government and its mainstream media supporters have a reputation for dishonesty. Whose side do you think they are on with their lies? In contrast, God's way is the way of truth. Jesus stated that He is the truth (John 14:6) and that by studying the scriptures, we can know the truth and be set free (John 8:32). When we trust and verify, we choose the path of Jesus and truth over the deceptions of power-hungry individuals aligned with evil.

Keep The Light of *Verifying Trust* Burning!
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