

Protect Yourself From Misinformation

This article was copied in its entirety from JW.org. My added comments are in blue.

Today, you have access to more information than ever, including the kind that can help you stay safe and healthy. But in your search, you need to beware of misinformation, such as:

- **Misleading news**
- **False reports**
- **Conspiracy theories**

For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the secretary-general of the United Nations warned of a dangerous epidemic of misinformation. “Harmful health advice and snake-oil solutions are proliferating,” he stated. “Falsehoods are filling the airwaves. Wild conspiracy theories are infecting the Internet. Hatred is going viral, stigmatizing and vilifying people and groups.”

Does it not bother you that the Governing Body (GB) so often turn to the United Nations (UN) as their source for reliable information? The UN is the image of the wild beast in Revelation. *"It misleads those who dwell on the earth."* (Re 13:14) Why would you put any trust in what it says?

Of course, misinformation is not new. However, the Bible foretold that in our day, “wicked men and impostors [would] advance from bad to worse, misleading and being misled.” (2 Timothy 3:1, 13)

(2 Timothy 3:12) In fact, all those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted.

And who are being *"persecuted"*? Those who are *"desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus"* by warning you about those *"imposters"* who have been misled and are in turn misleading the other sheep in Christ's fold. (see my article "Leaven")

And the Internet now allows us to receive—and unintentionally spread—false news more easily and quickly than ever. As a result, our email, social media, and news feeds can become filled with distorted facts and half-truths.

How can you protect yourself from misleading information and conspiracy theories? Consider some Bible principles that can help.

- **Do not believe everything you see or hear**

What the Bible says: “The naive person believes every word, but the shrewd one ponders each step.”—Proverbs 14:15.

We can easily be deceived if we are not careful. Consider, for example, captioned images or brief videos that are widely spread online, especially through social media. Such items, commonly called memes, are often meant to be humorous. However, images and video clips can easily be altered or taken out of context. People can even create videos of real people doing or saying things they never did or said.

Is this referring to the video of Anthony Morris who drove out of town on a Sunday morning to covertly buy a good quantity of expensive liquor?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HR4oBqrQ1UY>

“Most of the misinformation researchers encounter on social platforms features media that manipulates context, like memes.”—Axios Media.

Ask yourself: ‘Is the content legitimate news or just a meme?’

- **Evaluate the source and content**

What the Bible says: “Make sure of all things.”—1 Thessalonians 5:21.

Before believing or forwarding a story, even one that is popular or repeated in the news, verify that it is true. How?

Evaluate the reliability of the **source**. News media companies and other organizations may slant a story because of their commercial or political bias.

The CIVID and "vaccine" propaganda and lies were spread by every mainstream news source, as were their attacks on those who told the truth. Those journalists were being obedient to the ones who fund them.

Compare what you see in one news outlet with other sources.

Very good advice!

At times, friends may inadvertently pass on misinformation through email messages or social media posts. Therefore, do not trust a news item unless you can check the original source.

Not only should you check to make sure that the original source was accurately quoted, but that the original source can be trusted.

Make sure that the **content** is current and accurate. Look for dates, verifiable facts, and strong evidence to support what is being said. Be especially cautious if complex information seems to be oversimplified or if the report is designed to evoke an emotional reaction.

“Fact-checking now is probably becoming as important as hand washing.”—Sridhar Dharmapuri, a Senior Food Safety and Nutrition Officer for the U.N.

Ask yourself: ‘Does this news report blur the line between fact and opinion or present only one side of the story?’

You should also ask yourself who stands to benefit from the information, the public, or large corporations?

- **Be guided by facts, not personal preferences**

What the Bible says: “Whoever trusts in his own heart is stupid.”—Proverbs 28:26.

We tend to trust information that confirms what we want to believe.

That goes for our religious beliefs too. Are we trusting a religious organization because we have misplaced the love we have for God and His Son? (see my article "The Governing Body")

And Internet companies often customize our news and social media feeds to offer us information based on our interests and browsing history. However, what we like to hear is not always what we need to hear.

“People are capable of being thoughtful and rational, but our wishes, hopes, fears, and motivations often tip the scales to make us more likely to accept something as true if it supports what we want to believe.”—Peter Ditto, social psychologist.

So true!

Ask yourself: ‘Do I trust this information just because it is what I want to believe?’

That is such a very good question to ask yourself!

- **Stop the spread of misinformation**

What the Bible says: “You must not spread a report that is not true.”—Exodus 23:1.

Have you been the victim of untrue misinformation? (see my articles on "COVID-19")

Remember that the information you share with others has the power to affect their thoughts and actions. Even if you unintentionally pass on wrong information, the consequences can be harmful.

Yes, what you say can negatively affect others. (1Co 15:33)

“The No. 1 rule is to slow down, pause and ask yourself, ‘Am I sure enough about this that I should share it?’ If everybody did that, we’d see a dramatic reduction of misinformation online.”— Peter Adams, a senior vice president of the News Literacy Project.

Ask yourself: ‘Am I sharing this information because I know it is true?’

Also ask yourself "how" you know it is true. Is it merely because you were told it was true by those whom you trust?

Although this web article says to check other sources, are you free to do so?



[Box] The truth about conspiracy theories

“Conspiracy theories are playing a bigger role in people’s thinking and behavior possibly than ever,” says Shauna Bowes, a research psychologist. Here is what you need to know about conspiracy theories.

What is a conspiracy theory? A conspiracy theory is a claim that sinister and powerful groups have secretly plotted to cause a significant or tragic event.

Do those who speak out against and show real medical data of harmful effects from the so-called "vaccine" seem at all to you to be sinister and secretly plotting to cause a tragic event? Or do they seem to you to be trying to prevent a tragic event by powerful groups?

Why are they dangerous? Conspiracy theories can undermine trust in legitimate sources of information, and some can cause people to reject health or safety advice. Such theories can promote prejudice and violence against the group thought to be involved in the conspiracy.

Yes, real violence has been perpetrated against those who reveal the facts, which discredit the claims of those pushing their agenda.

Why are they so popular? Conspiracy theories increase in popularity during “periods of widespread anxiety, uncertainty, or hardship,” states the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, such as “during wars and economic depressions and in the aftermath of natural disasters like tsunamis, earthquakes, and pandemics.” At such unsettling times, people accept conspiracy theories because these theories validate what they believe or help them to understand why bad things happen.

Yes, fear is a powerful tool. Look at how it has been used by those behind the push for vaccinations.

How can the Bible help you to protect yourself from conspiracy theories? The Bible offers practical advice that can help us control worry during stressful times. It reveals what is really behind the problems that exist as well as how those problems will be solved. To learn more, watch the video *Why Study the Bible?*

The Bible can help you, but only if you follow its directions.

(Isaiah 2:22) For your own sakes, quit trusting in mere man, Who is only the breath in his nostrils. Why should he be taken into account?

That verse doesn't say to quit trusting in certain men. That verse says to quit trusting in "*man*", meaning any man. (see my article "leaven")

(Psalm 146:3, 4) Do not put your trust in princes Nor in a son of man, who cannot bring salvation.
⁴ His spirit goes out, he returns to the ground; On that very day his thoughts perish.

That verse says the same thing: "*Do not*" trust men. (see my article "Do Not")

----- end of web article -----

Consider what Gideon did when he got directions directly from God. (Jg 6:14)

(Judges 6:36-40) Then Gid'e-on said to the true God: "If you are saving Israel by means of me, just as you have promised, ³⁷ here I am laying a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece only but all the ground around it is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by means of me, just as you have promised." ³⁸ And that is how it happened. When he rose up early the next day and wrung the fleece, he squeezed off enough dew from the fleece to fill a large banquet bowl with water. ³⁹ However, Gid'e-on said to the true God: "Do not let your anger burn against me, but let me ask just once more. Let me, please, make just one more test with the fleece. Please let the fleece alone be dry while there is dew all over the ground." ⁴⁰ So that is what God did that night; only the fleece was dry, and there was dew all over the ground.

Did Gideon just obey when he got directions from God? No. He set the example for what would later be written in First John.

(1 John 4:1) Beloved ones, do not believe every inspired statement, but test the inspired statements to see whether they originate with God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Jesus warned us many times:

(Matthew 24:5) for many will come on the basis of my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many.

Note that Jesus doesn't say that they will claim to come on the basis of his name, no, but they will come on the basis of his name. But that does not make them legitimate. They will still mislead many.

Not only do they come on the basis of his name, they also perform many powerful works in his name:

(Matthew 7:22, 23) Many will say to me in that day: 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and expel demons in your name, and perform many powerful works in your name?' ²³ And then I will declare to them: **'I never knew you!'** Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness!

Those powerful works are not some sort of ungodly deeds, but are powerful works done in his name. They have the appearance of being directed and supported by Christ. (Mt 7:15) But their works are performed by men who have claimed the seat of Christ, just as the scribes and Pharisees claimed the seat of Moses. (Mt 23:2) And those works bring people not to Christ, but to themselves. (Ac 20:28-30)

For more on that, see my article "The Holy Trinity (of worship)" which covers the arrangement that God set up with Christ as mediator between mankind and Himself. (no others involved)

What do *you* think?

:^) Dave da.getmyip@gmail.com <http://da.getmyip.com/PDF/Ramblings>

Last edited 04-13-2023 (date created 04-10-2023)