

News Story Summary

Billy Graham was recently asked the question, “Why do people get involved in cults? I’ve read recently about celebrities who get involved in strange religious groups, and I can’t understand what makes them do it.” Dr. Graham’s answer can be summarized this way: God has placed within each of us a hunger in our hearts for Him. Many people seek to fill that void with other things such as pleasure, fame, money, sex, drugs, or alcohol. Other people seek to fill it by turning to false philosophies or religions. These things may temporarily seem to meet their needs, but ultimately they discover that they are just as empty as they have ever been. Sadly, they sometimes realize they have almost destroyed their lives by their actions. The truth is that only God can satisfy our inner hunger as we allow Him to transform our hearts and lives. Dr. Graham warns Christians not to be deceived by anyone who tries to lead us down the wrong road. We should avoid this temptation by keeping Christ at the center of our lives.

(For more on this story, search the Internet using the phrase “Billy Graham: Cults are no substitute for Christ.”)

Focus Attention

Relay the story above. Ask: Why are cults dangerous? Do you have anything to add to Dr. Graham’s opinion as to why people choose to become involved with these types of religious groups?

Explain that today’s scripture tells us that there were people who sought to deceive Christians in the early days of Christianity, just as there are today. The good news is that they (and we) do not have to be deceived! Challenge the group to look for the tests John gives for determining if a teachers is telling the truth or not.

Challenge

Invite the group to review John’s plan for discernment from today’s scripture. Invite them to identify similarities between this plan and the advice Dr. Graham gave on this subject. Encourage them to review the plan daily this week in order to internalize it and to be prepared when the day comes that someone tries to deceive them.