

Hebrews 13:9 Diverse and Strange Teachings

Since 2000, approximately 30 million Americans who formerly attended church and prayed regularly have left their faith in Christ. This constitutes about one out of every ten Americans, many of whom did not anticipate abandoning their faith but came under ungodly influence ranging from subtle shifts in orthodox teaching to the elevation of personal experience and fulfillment and rejection of the concepts of sin and judgment with either temporal or everlasting consequences.

It is true that we, as Christians, are not called to novelty but clarity...rooted in Scripture.

Hebrews 13:9: “Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace”

- **Grammatical Usage:** “**led away**” or in the Greek, “parapheresthe” meaning, “remove; take away”; “**diverse**” or “poikilos” meaning, “many”; “**strange**” or “xenais” meaning, “novel; peculiar”; “**grace**” or “charity” meaning, “divine influence”.
- **Literal Interpretation:** Do not be removed, swept off your feet, by various peculiar teachings. Spiritual stability depends on the divine influence of God.
- **Contextual/Comparison:** God keeps His Word: God continually uses His Word. The Bible repeatedly warns believers to be vigilant against teachings that deviate from God’s revealed truth. The overarching principle is that spiritual nourishment and salvation come through God’s grace and the work of Christ, and ministry of the Holy Spirit - not through external rules, rituals, unbiblical exhortations or human philosophies.

1. Apply What “Strange” or “Diverse” Teachings Mean

- Greek Terms (**Hebrews 13:9**): “**Diverse**” (*poikilos*) refers to varied doctrines, while “**strange**” (*xenais*) denotes foreign, unfamiliar, or non-apostolic teachings.
- These are teachings not aligned with Christ, the gospel, or the principles of Scripture, often self-serving or legalistic (e.g., ritualistic diet laws or man-made frameworks for salvation).

2. Principles of Biblical Discernment

- Anchor in Scripture: All truth originates in God’s Word (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**). Compare any teaching to the Bible in its entirety, considering context and the continuity of God’s message.
- Test the Spirits: Assess teachings and their claimed origin (**1 John 4:1**). True doctrine glorifies God, affirms Christ’s sufficiency, and does not add works or rituals to salvation.
- Observe Fruit: Teachings are evaluated by the transformation they produce (**Matthew 7:16-20**). Humility, obedience, spiritual growth indicate alignment with God’s truth; pride, greed or confusion indicate error.

- Rely on the Holy Spirit: God equips believers with discernment (**1 Corinthians 2:14-16; John 16:13**). Pray for wisdom to identify error and understand sound doctrine.
3. Common Indicators of Strange Teachings
- Legalistic or ritualistic focus (foods, ceremonial acts, austerities) instead of God's grace.
 - Contradiction of Christ and the Gospel: Any teaching that diminishes His work on the cross (**Hebrews 13:8, Galatians 2:16**).
 - Elevation of human authority: Teachings promoting man over God's Word or focusing on self-improvement rather than faith in Christ.
 - Secret or novelty claims: Hidden knowledge, personal visions, 'new revelations' outside Scripture should be tested and verified with Scripture.
4. Methods of Discernment
- Scriptural Comparison: Examine against the Bible (**Acts 17:11**, Bereans).
 - Context Analysis: Evaluate whether teachings are consistent with Christ's eternal message and apostolic authority.
 - Consult Mature Believers: Seek guidance from pastors, theologians, and mature Christians (**Proverbs 15:22**).
 - Evaluate Practical Outcomes: Consider whether the teaching draws people closer to God or distracts from Him.
 - Prayerfully Discern: Ask the Holy Spirit for insight, understanding, & conviction.
5. Practical Application
- Avoid preoccupation with nonessential rituals/human traditions (**Hebrews 13:9; Romans 14:1-23**).
 - Focus on grace-centered faith rather than rules or superstition.
 - Educate oneself in Scripture to identify & reject heresies or teachings that deviate from gospel truth.
 - Keep the goal of spiritual maturity and obedience central, rather than novelty or human wisdom.

Summary

To discern strange or diverse teachings:

- Know the truth of God's Word deeply.
- Compare all teachings to Scripture.
- Test the motives, fruit, and conformity to Christ.
- Depend on the Holy Spirit, prayer, and guidance of mature believers.
- Stay grounded in God's grace, not external rituals or human philosophies.

By remaining rooted in **Christ, Scripture, and grace**, believers can effectively recognize false teachings, resist deception, grow in spiritual stability and fulfill their calling... to be greeted by our Savior and rewarded for our faithfulness.

➤ **Conclusion:** Am I committed to fulfilling my calling by staying right and true?