Testing Everything Against God’s Word

Doreen Virtue on Spiritual Discernment, Yoga, and Jesus Calling

Doreen Virtue | Thursday, October 15, 2026 | Host: Donna Leland

Program Summary

On this Thursday edition of Mark & Friends, Donna Leland welcomes back author, podcaster, and former New Age teacher Doreen Virtue. Drawing on her personal history and Christian conversion, Doreen warns listeners about spiritual influences she believes can enter Christian life through seemingly familiar practices and resources. The first part of their conversation concerns yoga, its Hindu connections, and whether exercise practices can be separated from religious meaning. Doreen explains why she personally stopped practicing yoga and now chooses Pilates and ordinary stretching. The conversation then turns to Sarah Young’s devotional Jesus Calling, its first-person presentation of words attributed to Jesus, and Doreen’s concerns about discernment, Scripture, and spiritual authority. Donna closes by previewing a second conversation next Thursday about the Enneagram and other New Age topics. The episode encourages listeners to test teachings carefully against Scripture while treating the guest’s historical and theological allegations as her own assessments, not independently established facts.

Key Takeaways

• Scripture should be the primary standard for evaluating spiritual teaching and devotional practices.

• Doreen Virtue describes how her Christian conversion led her to reassess practices from her years in New Age spirituality.

• Doreen believes yoga carries Hindu religious associations even when practiced for fitness; Christians differ in their assessment of secular yoga.

• The discussion raises questions about religious meaning, intention, conscience, and the effect of one’s example on other believers.

• Donna and Doreen connect their concerns with biblical warnings about idolatry and participation in worship.

• The guest recommends ordinary stretching and Pilates as alternatives she personally prefers.

• Doreen questions first-person devotional language that speaks as though Jesus Himself is addressing the reader.

• Claims about Sarah Young’s intentions, inspiration, and changes between editions should be understood as Doreen’s criticisms rather than established motives.

• Devotional books can be evaluated by comparing their claims and cited verses with the biblical text itself.

• Discernment can be exercised with conviction, humility, accuracy, and care toward people who reach different conclusions.

Scripture References

• 2 Corinthians 6:16

• 1 Corinthians 8:1–13

• 1 Corinthians 10:14–33

• 2 Corinthians 11:14–15

• Exodus 20:3–5

• 1 John 4:1

• Acts 17:11

• 2 Timothy 3:16–17

• 1 Thessalonians 5:21–22

Quote of the Day

“Do yourself a favor and open up those verses … and compare.” — Doreen Virtue

Broadcast Notes

Donna introduces Doreen as a returning guest, author, podcaster, and former New Age teacher. Doreen explains that she practiced yoga for more than twenty years and stopped after her conversion. She argues that poses have religious significance and compares the practice with idolatry; these are her interpretations, and yoga traditions and secular fitness practices vary. Donna invokes 2 Corinthians 6:16. Doreen mentions her book Yoga and Spiritual Warfare and contrasts yoga with her preferred Pilates routine. After a music transition identified in the transcript as Steven Curtis Chapman, Donna asks about Sarah Young and Jesus Calling. Doreen objects to the devotional’s first-person voice and claims it reflects New Age influences. She discusses editions and the book God Calling, then urges readers to compare devotional statements with the biblical references supplied. The transcript includes serious assertions about Young’s spiritual practices and intentions; they are attributed to Doreen, not presented as verified biographical facts. Donna previews next Thursday’s Part Two, including the Enneagram, and Friday’s James study with Pastor Mark Johnson.

❤■ Practical Applications

• Read 1 John 4:1 and ask God for discernment without fear or suspicion toward others.

• Compare one devotional passage with its cited Scripture in context.

• Distinguish a speaker’s testimony from historical claims that need independent verification.

• Consider how personal conscience and Christian liberty shape my choices.

• Ask whether a practice draws me toward worship of God or simply serves a practical purpose.

• Discuss a disagreement with another Christian respectfully rather than assuming poor motives.

• Make Scripture itself a regular part of my daily devotional time.

• Thank God for the grace of correction and the freedom to keep learning.

• When recommending a resource, explain both its strengths and any concerns fairly.

• Pray for wisdom to speak truth with gentleness and love.

Today's Challenge

For seven days, practice biblical discernment. Read a short passage of Scripture each day and examine one idea you hear in a sermon, devotional, podcast, or conversation. Ask: What does the passage actually say? What is interpretation or personal testimony? What needs verification? Then discuss one finding with someone in a spirit of humility and love.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for Your Word and for the wisdom You offer when I seek You. Teach me to recognize what is true and to test the teachings I encounter with care. Guard me from spiritual confusion, but also from pride, fear, or harsh judgment toward people who understand a practice differently. Help me listen closely, check what I hear against Scripture, and be honest about what I know and what I do not know. Keep Jesus at the center of my worship, reading, conversations, and choices. Give me a heart that loves truth and loves people. In Jesus' name, Amen.

About Today's Speaker

Doreen Virtue is an author and podcaster who previously taught and wrote extensively about New Age spirituality. She describes leaving those teachings after becoming a Christian and now speaks publicly about her conversion, biblical discernment, and spiritual practices she believes Christians should avoid. This interview presents her personal testimony and views about yoga and devotional literature.

About Today's Host

Donna Leland regularly serves as Thursday guest host of Mark & Friends on Great News Media. Through warm conversations with authors and ministry guests, she seeks to encourage listeners to grow in biblical understanding and their relationship with Jesus.

Proofread Broadcast Transcript

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We're glad you're here. We're glad you're here. Fellowship is sweeter, knowing you're near.

It's so good to see you. We hope that it's clear. Everyone loves you.

We're glad you're here. Welcome to Mark & Friends. I'm your host, Donna Leland.

And today I have the pleasure of talking once again to Doreen Virtue. Doreen is an author, as well as a podcaster, and a former New Age teacher. And so she has got a wide scope of all things New Age.

And she's going to open our eyes today to some of the distraction that the Enemy is placing even within the Church. Thank you so much, Doreen, for joining us on Mark & Friends. Hi, Donna.

It's great to be with you. Hello, everyone. I just love following you, and you just put out great content on Facebook.

And so I had to have you back on, because you are going to hit on some hot spots. And, you know, the Church seems to be sometimes so willing to accept some of these pretty much pagan practices that have been handed down throughout the centuries, and now have been kind of cleaned up and put some lipstick on, and seems to be acceptable within some Christian communities. So let's start out with a real hot spot.

Tell us, Doreen, about yoga. Yeah, yoga is not just stretching. It's not just exercise.

I've heard all the arguments. I argued them because I did yoga almost every day for over 20 years before God opened my eyes and saved me. And that's when I threw away my yoga mats.

I still stretch every day, but I do Pilates without any yoga moves. So yoga, in the ancient Eastern language that it's rooted in, called Sanskrit, yoga means yoke, and it specifically means to yoke with the Hindu, what they call their creator God, either Shiva or Brahma. They've got a false counterfeit trinity.

And the poses, if you look at the ancient Hindu manuscripts, because a lot of times people argue, well, yoga is from Hinduism, and Hinduism is older than Christianity. And they want to argue that that makes it valid somehow, but that doesn't make any sense biblically, because we can look at what Abraham was saved out of, the polytheism of Ur. So being older does not make it more legitimate.

But what we can see is that the Hindu manuscripts ascribe each yoga pose as honoring and trying to mimic with your body one of their 330 million deities that Hinduism have. And they're all aspects of Shiva, according to Hindus I've interviewed. And so you're using your body, I think, like a graven image.

And again, I did yoga, and you'll do the Krishna pose, or you'll do the boat pose, or sun salutations. And there's one pose in particular that should raise a red flag to any professing Christian, and that is the warrior poses. In Sanskrit, they're called Virabhadrasana, one, two, and three.

And they're not a natural stretch. This is why your instructor would come over and correct your pose. I mean, it's making your body like a triangle.

But when you look at the ancient Hindu manuscripts, this warrior Virabhadrasana pose is making your body to glorify this mythical warrior who was involved with great violence in Hindu mythology. And so you're glorifying this Hindu deity through the warrior pose that even so-called Christian yoga classes offer up. Because so-called holy yoga or Christian yoga or praise moves, they still involve all of these yoga poses.

And people say, Whoa, whoa, whoa, God knows my heart. I have Christian liberty. I'm listening to worship music.

I'm not thinking about Hindu deities. Well, let's just take a look at the Ten Commandments. Of course, we're not saved by law.

We're not saved by works. We're saved by God's grace and mercy. And once we're saved, given a new heart, we desire to please God.

And these Ten Commandments give us God's benchmark. And so first one, of course, thou shalt have no other gods before me. And when we're doing yoga, we're involved with a form of pagan worship of false deities, other gods.

Second commandment, thou shalt have no graven images that you worship. And it's making your body into a graven image. I know it's not the same as like a concrete statue.

But pray for the Holy Spirit's leading on this if you're involved with yoga. Because I was immediately convicted when I was saved. And then the more I researched this and talked to people who were saved out of Hinduism, I found that people who are Hindu, they can't even fathom why a Christian would want to be involved with this.

There's other ways to stretch. I know that it can make your muscles toned. I know there's a social aspect.

And I spent years in yoga studios. But also the yoga studios led me to worship and become a polytheist because they all had statues of the different Hindu and Buddhist deities. And I started buying those kind of statues and actually praying to them, which I've repented for.

We have Christian liberty. Yoga is not like the meat that was redeemed in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. Yoga is more like the pagan temples that were praying pagan prayers over the meat.

And so the crux of that whole discussion about the meat where Paul says, in essence, I'm not going to eat or drink anything that could cause a brother to stumble. And what he's talking about is that the example of him eating meat that came from the pagan temple, it could confuse someone who's a weaker Christian, weak in their faith or brand new to Christianity. And it's the same with yoga.

You might say, well, hey, I'm not in any way involved with Hinduism. But what is it going to affect your neighbor who is new to Christianity who sees a yoga mat rolled under your arm? It could confuse her. It could lead her into a yoga studio where they're blasphemously chanting Aum and Namaste, which are just absolutely unbiblical, heretical chants.

They're not cool. They're not trendy. They're blasphemy.

And the kids in the schools are being guided to say those chants of Namaste and Aum, which is horrifying. I mean, I'm old enough where I remember school prayer being taken out of the schools because of the atheist Madeleine Murray O'Hare back in the 60s. And so there's Hindu prayer in schools now with these yoga classes for the kids.

So it's just a mess. It has nothing to do with yoga. I do believe stretching is natural and it's healthful.

But what I recommend is there's this piece of equipment that you can buy inexpensively secondhand on places like Facebook Marketplace. It's called a Pilates Reformer. And it's just this vertical piece of machinery.

It's less than $200 if you buy it secondhand. And you stretch on this, laying down on your back. You stretch your hips, your legs, your arms, your belly.

It's just fantastic. And there's nothing spiritual about it. There's no contorting your body to be perfectly mimicking a Hindu deity.

Amazing. You know, a meat sacrifice to idol. Basically, we're turning our body, aren't we, into the meat? We are, yeah.

It's just there's nothing to do with Christianity and everything to do with pointing people away from the true gospel. And I've looked at things like praise moves. And I'm sure the lady, she meant well, but she took all the yoga poses and just renamed them with sort of a nod to biblical.

So she took the Hindu boat pose and calls it Peter's boat. And she took the tree pose and she calls it the tree of life pose. And it's the identical pose.

And she even admitted it. She just said that there's only so many poses a human body can do. And to me, that's sloppy.

And I've interviewed former so-called Christian yoga teachers who say that, yeah, it's yoga. It's Hindu yoga. You can't Christianize paganism.

Like you can't take a Ouija board and paste Bible verses on the Ouija board and say, oh, it's a Christian Ouija board. It's the same thing with yoga. There's no such thing as Christian paganism.

There's no such thing as Christian astrology. There's even women these days arguing they're Christian witches, for heaven's sake. It's just crazy.

And same thing with Christian yoga. There's no such thing. It's an oxymoron.

I did see a video once of a Hindu priest. And he was actually mad that people were taking all of their worship poses and then just doing them in the secular environment because he recognized they're worshiping with those yoga poses. You mentioned 2 Corinthians 6.16, which just bears so much truth.

What agreement has the temple of God with idols? We are the temple of the living God. Why would we put our body into any kind of a shape that would then worship another false god? So thank you so much for really breaking that down for us. I think there's a lot for us to chew on.

There is. I actually have a free Kindle book. It's absolutely free of charge on Amazon called Yoga and Spiritual Warfare.

And it breaks down all the pushback arguments I've received over the years from people who want to argue with me that yoga's fine and why it's not fine. It goes into the historical. And it's a good apologetics resource, too.

It's called Yoga and Spiritual Warfare. Absolutely free of charge on Amazon, Kindle. Wonderful.

And this will all be in our program notes. And that will sit on our website. And people can access it anytime.

Steven Curtis Chapman on Mark & Friends. I thought that kind of went well with our theme of just going through life, going through the motions, just adopting any kind of theory or new information or new age that comes our way. We're talking with Doreen Virtue, former New Age teacher and author, but now a blood-bought child of the living God, who her main goal is to glorify God and worship Him forever.

Well, let's touch the third rail again, Doreen, because let's talk about Jesus Calling. I've got a dear friend of mine, and I have tried to speak truth concerning this, but tell us the premise of it. Who is Sarah Young? And why is this something we need to be aware of? Thank you for bringing up Jesus Calling.

I know it's something that is a darling of many people. I remember before I was saved, my husband and I attended a church where the woman who was in charge of the church was sending daily Jesus Calling to us all. So it's got Christian language, and this is where it gets really confusing and deceptive, is these books that try to blend New Age teachings with Christianity.

So the late Sarah Young, she actually went to seminary. She was a missionary, very involved with the Presbyterian Church, and she admitted that she got bored with the Bible. I'm paraphrasing what she said, but that was the bottom line.

She was bored with the Bible. So she decided to have a conversation with Jesus through writing, and she started to write down these messages in the first-person voicing of Jesus as if he was saying it. And then at the bottom of each page, she puts a chapter and verse number, not the actual verse, so people could check.

I mean, they can go to their Bible and check, but she just puts a chapter and verse, and it's the voicing of this so-called Jesus that she's channeling is very reminiscent of when I was in the New Age. I was also doing channeling of different entities, and one of them I thought was Jesus because I was raised in a church with the Bible, Christian science. It's not a true gospel church, but I thought I was a Christian, and I recognized that same voice with Sarah Young's Jesus.

He comes across as this kind of laid-back, you-can-do-what-you-want, just pal, like a pal slash a boyfriend in some cases. And this Jesus she channeled, it's really creepy. He asks the reader to gaze into his eyes, to be involved with breath work, to do deep breaths, all the New Age tools that were in my toolbox before God saved me.

And she also changed what he said in different printings. In the first printing, Sarah Young admitted in the preface that she, and this is the 2004 version of Jesus Calling, she admitted that she was influenced by a channeled occult book called God Calling that was transchanneled with supposed messages from God, and she called that book a treasure. And of course Christians were alarmed that she's crediting an occult book, so enough Christians complained that in the second printing that was removed.

But even more concerning, she misquoted Jesus as saying, this is the last thing I said before I ascended from earth, and it wasn't in the Bible. It wasn't what he said. She got that out of order.

So in the next printing, she conveniently changed what Jesus said supposedly to her, about this is the last thing I said before I ascended. A lot of changes in the different printings of what supposedly Jesus said. When he's the same yesterday, today, and forever, the Bible is sufficient, it's inerrant, but she's changing it like you can just mix and match what Jesus says.

And it gives women this kind of comfort that they're following Jesus when the Jesus she portrays is not the true Jesus who could save a soul. He never talks about repentance, hell, the need for salvation. He sugarcoats everything.

It's not the full gospel at all that would convict us and lead to salvation. And a lot of women, my concern is that they use a devotional like Jesus Calling instead of daily Bible study because we have, you know, a lot of women are busy and they think, well, I just have so much time, I'll just read this feel-good Jesus Calling because the Bible upsets me. Well, the Bible is supposed to upset us.

It's convicting us. It's showing us our sin and where we need to repent and pray for God to purify us and such. And that's upsetting, but it's necessary.

That's why God gave us his word. So I would say if any woman is hooked on Jesus Calling, do yourself a favor and open up those verses that Sarah Young put at the bottom of each page and compare it to what she says Jesus said, and you'll see the disparity that's not the same. They don't have anything to do with each other.

Wow. So again, just to be clear, this is called automatic writing, and it's where Sarah Young says she's been possessed by the spirit of Jesus, and now Jesus is freely flowing his thoughts in and through her. Yeah, it's something that's an occultic practice that I was involved in.

It's why I was so prolific in the New Age, because I would go into a trance and just allow whatever spirit wanted to come through me to come through me and praise God that he saved me out of that, because that is absolutely spiritually dangerous. And we know from 2 Corinthians 11, 14, and 15 that Satan appears as an angel of light and that those who are Satan's servants can appear to be workers of righteousness. And that's what I appeared in the New Age.

That's how Sarah Young and her books appear, to be workers of righteousness. But it's pointing people away from Bible study, from the true Jesus who saves, and from the true gospel. And our heart here at Great News Media is always to lift up the Lord Jesus Christ and be a light in our dark world.

Big thanks to Doreen Virtue. She continued talking, so I continued recording, and we'll hear Part 2 of what she has to say. We're going to be touching on the Enneagram, some other aspects of the New Age as well, maybe get a little bit of her testimony, since it's been a while.

That's coming up next week, Thursday, on Mark & Friends. Now, tomorrow, it's the Bible study. All of our friends joined forces in the studios and they offer up their ideas, their suggestions about how they understand the Word of God.

It is a terrific study, Pastor Mark Johnson doing a great job. So tune in tomorrow, 7.32 a.m. and p.m. It's Mark & Friends here on Great News Media. We'll see you then.