

## Recognizing the Spirit

### 1 John 3:24 – 4:1-6

Online Sermon:

[http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page\\_id=3567](http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567)

We live in a world where truth is illusive and the fabrication of an individual's mind. In rejecting any concept of absolute truth, one is tempted to swim amongst the masses in a sea of never ending, culturally influenced, divergent beliefs. For example, in a survey it was found that 52 % of Canadians agree that official government accounts cannot be trusted, 20 %



believe the 911 attacks were an inside job, 16 % say the U.S. election was stolen from Donald Trump, 11 % say the moon landing was faked, 42 % say that most news is false, 13 % say climate change is a hoax and 10

% say Ukraine was full of Nazis and Russia invaded to protect her people.<sup>1</sup> While some or all of these statistics might seem ridiculous most of agree that each person has the right to choose what is truth! While most Christians are defenders of freedom of speech, should we not also be concerned how this world influences our belief in the absolute truth of the Bible? For

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from Faith Today, September/October issue, p. 12.

instance, should we not be concerned that only 40% of Evangelicals believe the Bible is the word of God and should be taken literally, while 51% believe it is inspired by God but not to be taken literally, and 8% believe it is merely fables? Christians live in a world that is not their home and yet many of them listen too and live by the false teachings of a world of depraved minds (Romans 1:28) that either view and/or live their lives as if the cross of our Lord is mere foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:18)! There are so many religions today within proximity to one another that often Christian beliefs inside the church have become nothing more than a plethora of many religions!

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*Though we will be accused of being narrow minded bigots are we not as Christians to boldly state that Jesus is the only way, truth, and only means of getting close to God?*

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If we are to be true lights unto the nations by knowing and living the absolute truth concerning God, then we simply must find a way to reject all falsehoods that come from this world! The following sermon in reviewing John 3:24, 4:1-6 will describe how to test the spirits and discern what is true from what is falsehood.

## Proof of Salvation

**“The one who keeps God’s commands lives in Him, and He in them. And this is how we know that He lives in us: we know it by the Spirit He gave us.” (23)**

Before one dare test the spirits of others one must first discern one’s own position before God! Even though righteousness is “not defined by the absence of sin”<sup>2</sup> the angel masquerading as light (2 Corinthians 11:14) often points out the mots in our eyes as evidence that we have not passed from



death to life. To discern assurance of our salvation John states we are to look for “evidence of the Holy Spirit’s working within our lives.”<sup>3</sup> Since the

“cross is foolishness to those who are perishing” (1 Corinthians 1:18), the primary test of being born again is the belief that

Christ has come in the flesh,<sup>4</sup> atoned for one’s sins and is the only way to be adopted into God’s family (John 14:6).

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*Those who relegate Jesus to a mere prophet, a righteous man, or outright reject Him as God’s one and only Son, have not passed from death to life and remain prisoners of sin, destined to eternally burn in the lake of hell (Revelation 20:13-15)!*

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“The virtues of the Christian life cannot be lived apart from a relationship with God, a relationship defined and sustained by Jesus Christ”<sup>5</sup> This brings us to the second evidence one is saved, the desire and ability to obey God’s commands. Believers know they have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit<sup>6</sup> and are indeed children of God because the promised Spirit of Truth (John 14:16-17)<sup>7</sup> enables them to no longer see His commands as burdensome but as the means of pleasing He who dwells within them. John is not teaching that salvation is obtained through works but that living the word through experience is evidence one is saved.<sup>8</sup> The third evidence one is part of God’s

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<sup>2</sup> Gary W. Derickson, [First, Second, and Third John](#), ed. H. Wayne House, W. Hall Harris III, and Andrew W. Pitts, *Evangelical Exegetical Commentary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 380.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel L. Akin, [Exalting Jesus in 1,2,3 John](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), 1 Jn 3:24.

<sup>4</sup> James Montgomery Boice, [The Epistles of John: An Expositional Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 104.

<sup>5</sup> Gary M. Burge, [Letters of John](#), *The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 165.

<sup>6</sup> John R. W. Stott, [The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 19, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 151–152.

<sup>7</sup> Gary W. Derickson, [First, Second, and Third John](#), ed. H. Wayne House, W. Hall Harris III, and Andrew W. Pitts, *Evangelical Exegetical Commentary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 378.

<sup>8</sup> Gary W. Derickson, [First, Second, and Third John](#), ed. H. Wayne House, W. Hall Harris III, and Andrew W. Pitts, *Evangelical Exegetical Commentary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 378–379.

family is the divine ability to love our brother and sisters (1 John 4:13-21; Galatians 5:16).<sup>9</sup> “Love is the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) and so love among Christians is one way the Holy Spirit testifies of His reality in our lives.”<sup>10</sup> The final evidence of salvation comes from the Holy Spirit Himself! When the mottos in our eyes makes one doubt whether or not one is truly in the vine, rely on the testimony of the Spirit who testifies with our spirit that we are truly God’s children (Romans 8:16).<sup>11</sup> If one still sees the cross as foolishness, has no desire and cannot obey God’s commands, does not love their fellow brothers and sisters and the Spirit is silent about one’s salvation then it is likely that one is not saved!

**Reflection:** Do you often wonder if you are saved or not? Have you applied the above tests to your life, and do you know beyond a doubt that you are indeed saved?

### Watching for False Prophets

**“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (4:1)**

<sup>9</sup> Daniel L. Akin, [Exalting Jesus in 1,2,3 John](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), 1 Jn 3:24.

<sup>10</sup> John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> David Jackman, [The Message of John’s Letters: Living in the Love of God](#), The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 108.

<sup>12</sup> James Montgomery Boice, [The Epistles of John: An Expositional Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 107.

John begins by emphasizing the need to test the spirits to discern which ones are false prophets.<sup>12</sup> Ever since the Garden of Eden Satan has masqueraded himself as an angel of



light (2 Corinthians 11:14) and spreading lies about God to the people of this world.<sup>13</sup> Knowing that people often associate secret knowledge with power, Satan is able to “sell,” contained within mostly truth, profound

lies that significantly distort God’s identity and our relationship with Him. In the Greco-Roman culture at the time of writing of this passage, for instance, the “proliferation of personal dream revelations, oracles and their interpretation, magic and astronomy”<sup>14</sup> ran so rampant that God’s truth was being counterfeited even by “Jewish mystics claiming special revelations!”<sup>15</sup> Not even “the disciple Jesus loved” was immune to the rampant falsehoods that had permeated his church. Due

<sup>13</sup> James Montgomery Boice, [The Epistles of John: An Expositional Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 107.

<sup>14</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, [Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Hebrews to Revelation](#), vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 200.

<sup>15</sup> Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 1 Jn 4:1.

to their denial of the incarnation of Christ (2:18-19, 22),<sup>16</sup> their supposed Spirit-inspired special revelations that went beyond what they had received from the beginning,<sup>17</sup> profound mystical experiences,<sup>18</sup> their “claim be without sin” (1:8, 10), “disobedient living,” and their hatred towards their fellow brothers and sisters (2:4, 9; 4:20),<sup>19</sup> a schism formed in John’s church<sup>20</sup> to which John now addresses!

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*To those in the church who remained faithful and true John told them not to take as truth every doctrine that their itching ears might want to hear. Even if a teacher’s doctrine is backed by the appearance of miracles, test their “knowledge” to see if it indeed comes from God or is the mere byproduct of “unseen powers”!*<sup>21</sup>

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While believing in false teaching does not affect your salvation,<sup>22</sup> John states the testing of the spirits is imperative

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<sup>16</sup> Douglas J. Moo, [“The Letters and Revelation,”](#) in *NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 2263.

<sup>17</sup> Colin G. Kruse, [The Letters of John](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos, 2000), 27.

<sup>18</sup> [Letters of John | Summary, Authorship, & Facts | Britannica](#)

<sup>19</sup> Gary W. Derickson, [First, Second, and Third John](#), ed. H. Wayne House, W. Hall Harris III, and Andrew W. Pitts, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 13.

<sup>20</sup> James Montgomery Boice, [The Epistles of John: An Expositional Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 106.

for it does affect one’s relationship with God who is pure truth and often affects how believers relate to one another!<sup>23</sup>

**Reflection:** Since there is but one way to get to heaven does that mean that those who don’t believe in Christ are going to hell, even if they have lived a good life and state they believe in God? What are some of the ways that a born-again believer can spot the “wolf” when they tend to be masqueraded in sheep’s clothing (Matthew 7:15)?<sup>24</sup> Lets turn to John’s teaching to answer to this critical question.

## Litmus Test #1: Denying the Incarnation

**“This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.” (2-3)**

<sup>21</sup> David L. Turner, [“1–3 John, Jude,”](#) in *The Baker Illustrated Bible Background Commentary*, ed. J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2020), 1288.

<sup>22</sup> Tony Evans, [“Recognizing the Spirit,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Jn 4:1–6.

<sup>23</sup> Tony Evans, [“Recognizing the Spirit,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Jn 4:1–6.

<sup>24</sup> Daniel L. Akin, [Exalting Jesus in 1,2,3 John](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), 1 Jn 4:1–6.

The first test of discerning the spirits is whether a person's teaching points to the truth concerning Christ coming in the flesh. Like in John's time we live in a society that prides itself on tolerating a sea of never-ending opinions and views and anyone standing on a "narrow" set of beliefs as being "bigoted and intolerant."<sup>25</sup> "No matter how charming, how plausible, how eloquent"<sup>26</sup> the teaching might be or how many miraculous signs the teacher might provide (Deuteronomy 13:1-5)<sup>27</sup> if the person refuses to point to the incarnation of Christ as the only way to God or dare suggest one is to follow multiple gods then such revelation is to be rejected for it does not come from God but the Devil!<sup>28</sup> In response to the Docetists who saw Jesus as



a phantom or ghostly spirit who only appeared to be human,<sup>29</sup> to the Mormons who teach God is one of a pantheon of gods,<sup>30</sup> to the Jehovah Witnesses who teach Jesus was a created being and not deity,<sup>31</sup> to the Muslims who say Jesus was a great prophet but not the Son of God,<sup>32</sup> to the Hindus who believe reunion with Brama is life's goal attained by good deeds, knowledge and passionate devotion,<sup>33</sup> John says their messages comes from the spirit of the antichrist!

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*No one can pass from spiritual death and be born into God's family without believing in the atoning sacrifice of God's one and only Son Jesus!*<sup>34</sup>

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He who preexisted the beginning (John 1:1), born incarnate from the virgin Mary and the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:26-38), who of the very nature of God (Philippians 2:6) took upon Himself the role of the suffering servant (Isaiah 53) and in doing so became

<sup>25</sup> David L. Allen, [1-3 John: Fellowship in God's Family](#), ed. R. Kent Hughes, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 180.

<sup>26</sup> James Montgomery Boice, [The Epistles of John: An Expositional Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 109.

<sup>27</sup> R. Alan Culpepper, "[1 John, 2 John, 3 John](#)," in *John's Gospel, Hebrews-Revelation*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, First Edition., The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary (Colorado Springs, CO; Paris, ON; Eastbourne: David C Cook, 2005), 182.

<sup>28</sup> Daniel L. Akin, [Exalting Jesus in 1,2,3 John](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), 1 Jn 4:2-3.

<sup>29</sup> Daniel L. Akin, [Exalting Jesus in 1,2,3 John](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), 1 Jn 4:2-3.

<sup>30</sup> David L. Allen, [1-3 John: Fellowship in God's Family](#), ed. R. Kent Hughes, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 179.

<sup>31</sup> David L. Allen, [1-3 John: Fellowship in God's Family](#), ed. R. Kent Hughes, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 179.

<sup>32</sup> David L. Allen, [1-3 John: Fellowship in God's Family](#), ed. R. Kent Hughes, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 180.

<sup>33</sup> Fritz Ridenour, *So What's the Difference?: A Look at 20 Worldviews, Faith and Religions and How They Compare to Christianity* (Ventura, California: Regal), 92.

<sup>34</sup> Gary W. Derickson, [First, Second, and Third John](#), ed. H. Wayne House, W. Hall Harris III, and Andrew W. Pitts, *Evangelical Exegetical Commentary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 395.

the only mediator between God and man<sup>35</sup> has the right to say in His own words, “I am the way, the truth, and the life and no one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6)!<sup>36</sup>

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*Those who outright deny Jesus before others (Matthew 10:33)<sup>37</sup> or merely state Jesus is Lord (Matthew 7:21)<sup>38</sup> without “reverence, heartfelt conviction and total submission to Him”<sup>39</sup> do not believe and therefore their words come not from God’s Spirit but from the Devil!*

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**Reflection:** Do you believe in the atoning sacrifice of Christ and therefore are assured of your own salvation? Do you hold onto the false belief that good deeds or special knowledge is the only way to get to heaven? Are you so tolerant to other religious beliefs that you hide your light under a bushel or are you willing to boldly proclaim that Jesus is the only way, truth, and life?

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<sup>35</sup> Tony Evans, [“Recognizing the Spirit,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Jn 4:1–6.

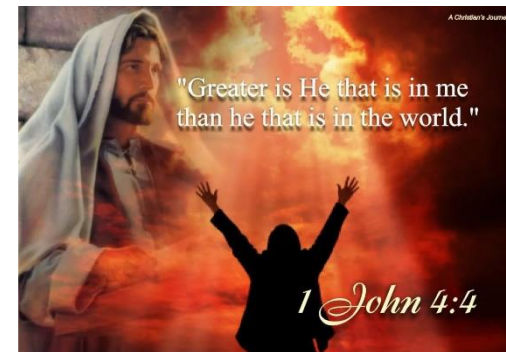
<sup>36</sup> Tony Evans, [“Recognizing the Spirit,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Jn 4:1–6.

<sup>37</sup> Tony Evans, [“Recognizing the Spirit,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Jn 4:1–6.

## Do not Fear the False Prophets

**“You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.” (4)**

To those who fear they might unknowingly join the world and “swim in an undifferentiated ocean”<sup>40</sup> of false beliefs, John says look inward and rejoice for God’s Spirit is greater than the spirit of this world!



While one might feel woefully unprepared to discern and proclaim truth in a world that defines it allusively as situationally dependent on the person, one need not

fear the “intellectual giants”<sup>41</sup> of the god of this age for he/she is no match for God whose Spirit of Truth lives inside each believer. “Satan, the spirit of deceit, is not an equal but opposite power to God. Rather, he is the defeated enemy who

<sup>38</sup> John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

<sup>39</sup> John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

<sup>40</sup> Daniel L. Akin, [Exalting Jesus in 1,2,3 John](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), 1 Jn 4:2–3.

<sup>41</sup> James Montgomery Boice, [The Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 110.

has likewise been defeated by believers as well.”<sup>42</sup> You might wonder, “How can John say that the Christians have overcome the false prophets, when they were proving an increasing threat to the health and existence of the church?”<sup>43</sup>

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*Though Satan will make every attempt to assault and seduce God’s own with false teaching this great wolf in sheep’s clothing will not successfully “ravage and disperse”<sup>44</sup> the doctrinal beliefs of those who stand firm upon the Rock and only hear the voice of their one and true Master, the Lord (John 10:1-21)!<sup>45</sup>*

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While the contemporary reader might be tempted to see this part of John’s letter as being “somewhat theoretical and unreal,”<sup>46</sup> the same false teachings of the secessionists, i.e., their denial of the incarnation, their special Spirit-inspired special revelations, their mystical teachings, their claim to be without sin; are still being told today! Even though John does not mention it specifically, it is through the studying of God’s holy Word, a willing desire to be holy as God is holy and through

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<sup>42</sup> Gary W. Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John*, ed. H. Wayne House, W. Hall Harris III, and Andrew W. Pitts, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 406.

<sup>43</sup> David Jackman, *The Message of John’s Letters: Living in the Love of God*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 114.

<sup>44</sup> David Jackman, *The Message of John’s Letters: Living in the Love of God*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 114.

the “sovereign indwelling power of the Holy Spirit”<sup>47</sup> that one has the assurance that though I fight the battle of falsehood and indifference the victory belongs to the Lord!<sup>48</sup> Since this is true Christians are to rejoice for we can remain faithful, righteous, and true!

**Reflection:** Are you afraid to tell the world about the truth concerning Christ? Do you often worry that others will negatively influence and warp your beliefs and in doing so lead you down a path that is far from holy? Do you feel assured that the Spirit of truth will keep you from going astray?

## Litmus Test #2 – Worldly Point of View

**“They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.” (5-6)**

<sup>45</sup> David Jackman, *The Message of John’s Letters: Living in the Love of God*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 114.

<sup>46</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *The Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 110.

<sup>47</sup> Daniel L. Akin, *Exalting Jesus in 1,2,3 John* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), 1 Jn 4:4.

<sup>48</sup> Daniel L. Akin, *Exalting Jesus in 1,2,3 John* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), 1 Jn 4:4.

Since one cannot intently investigate the heart of another and correctly discern whether they are saved or not<sup>49</sup> then how does one decide if a person is a false teacher or not? “In our relativistic age, we constantly need to be reminded that



some things are always true, and others are always false.”<sup>50</sup> John discerned the secessionists as false teachers because they had abandoned what they had heard from the beginning.<sup>51</sup> Since God alone defines righteousness and truth, false prophets are defined as those who do not listen too and obey God’s holy word as given by the apostles and prophets (John 8:47).<sup>52</sup> Since “the Spirit of Christ will only manifest Himself where the confession of Christ is not being denied,”<sup>53</sup> unbelievers have

not been born again and therefore cannot “accept the authority of Jesus” over their words and deeds.<sup>54</sup> “Those who are from the Devil’s domain speak out of that worldview and with that spirit’s inclination.”<sup>55</sup> Since their words and deeds reflect their origin,<sup>56</sup> they tend to reject ideas about sin, judgment and the need to believe in and submit to a risen Savior<sup>57</sup> in favor of looking into a mirror and boldly declaring they are right to adopt the “philosophical, cultural, and theological milieu”<sup>58</sup> of living to “be right” in their own sight!

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*Since even unbelievers can occasionally cite “true doctrine with their lips,”<sup>59</sup> for John the true test of a person being a false prophet is their lack of obedience to the words of God by which they profess!<sup>60</sup>*

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<sup>49</sup> David Jackman, [The Message of John’s Letters: Living in the Love of God](#), The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 116.

<sup>50</sup> David Jackman, [The Message of John’s Letters: Living in the Love of God](#), The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 116.

<sup>51</sup> Colin G. Kruse, [The Letters of John](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos, 2000), 149.

<sup>52</sup> Daniel L. Akin, [Exalting Jesus in 1,2,3 John](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), 1 Jn 4:5–6.

<sup>53</sup> Tony Evans, [“Recognizing the Spirit,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Jn 4:1–6.

<sup>54</sup> John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

<sup>55</sup> Daniel L. Akin, [Exalting Jesus in 1,2,3 John](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), 1 Jn 4:5–6.

<sup>56</sup> Marvin Richardson Vincent, [Word Studies in the New Testament](#), vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1887), 356.

<sup>57</sup> David Jackman, [The Message of John’s Letters: Living in the Love of God](#), The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 115.

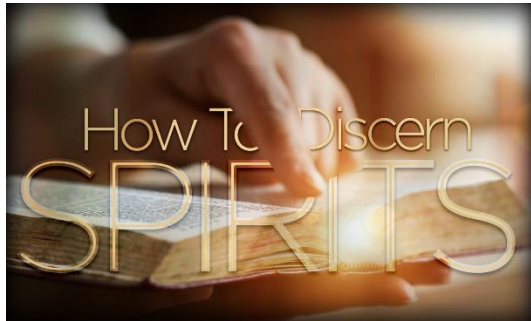
<sup>58</sup> Gary W. Derickson, [First, Second, and Third John](#), ed. H. Wayne House, W. Hall Harris III, and Andrew W. Pitts, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 409.

<sup>59</sup> John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

<sup>60</sup> John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).



Those who are from God will gladly listen and obey His word while false prophets will not! Like John we are to face the “cold, indifferent, and hostile stare of the worldling”<sup>61</sup> with the “sufficiency of Christ and the Word of God”<sup>62</sup> as his true litmus test of truth and falsehood!



**Reflection:** Do you test the spirits of those who give you advice on how you are to live your life? When someone speaks what is “new revelation” do you

test what they say with the word of God? If Caesar was alive and sent out a libelous stating all Christians were to be executed would your words and deeds convict you or have you become so much like this world that no one would know you are a believer? Have you become so paranoid of false teaching or so arrogant that you are unteachable due to your belief that the only divine words of God come from your own lips?

## Conclusion

There has and will always be tremendous pressure on the church to conform to the world’s desire to swim in a sea of

never ending, individually constructed and destructed plethora of beliefs. Though it will offend other religions and the world at large who refuse to believe in absolute truth, if the church today wants to be a true light unto the nations, then its own simply must stand firm on and boldly declare, Jesus is the only way to have a relationship with God the Father in heaven! When the Devil sends his workers masquerading as one of our own to infiltrate sound doctrine, we must be ready to discern them as having a spirit of falsehood and outright reject their teachings! Before one can test the spirits, one must first know one’s own position before God. Those who believe in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, have evidence of the Holy Spirit working in their lives by following God’s commands, loving their brothers and sisters, and His assurance they are God’s children; they are indeed saved! To remain faithful and true Christians are to test every doctrine they come in contact, even those supposedly verified by miraculous signs. The first test is conformity to the truth is the incarnation of Christ. While free speech is to be applauded anyone who has Docetic, Mormon, Jehovah Witness, Muslim, Hindu, or any other religion’s belief that denies Christ in the flesh as God’s own Son and the only way to heaven is to be seen as false teaching and are to be avoided. Even though this stance will invite persecution and the accusation of being a bigot and narrow minded we need not fear the “intellectual giants” of this age because greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world! The last test to discern

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<sup>61</sup> A.T. Robertson, [Word Pictures in the New Testament](#) (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), 1 Jn 4:6.

<sup>62</sup> David L. Allen, [1–3 John: Fellowship in God’s Family](#), ed. R. Kent Hughes, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 183.

the spirit of a teacher is their conformity to God's word. Since the Spirit of Christ will only manifest Himself where He knows the conformity of Christ is not being denied, living a holy life can only be done by those who have the Spirit of truth. Let me leave you with one final thought:

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*how can the church be lights unto the nations  
and please a holy God when they choose to swim  
in a sea of worldly beliefs which deeply offend  
the one who purchased their salvation at the  
cost of His very life?*

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