

sermon notes

Pastor Tony Caffey, Verse By Verse Fellowship
Nov 8, 2023 | "Test the spirits" | 1 John 4:1-6

In this fallen world, Christians need to discern...

- 1) _____ from _____ (4:1)
- 2) the Spirit of _____ from the spirit of the _____ (4:2-3)
- 3) _____ from _____ (4:4-6)
 - a. You, the _____, are overcomers
 - b. They, the _____, are worldly
 - c. We, the _____ of sound doctrine, are trustworthy

Questions for Further Application of God's Word:

1. When are Christians told, "Do not believe?" Isn't our whole religious system based on belief? Interact with the following statement from John Stott: "Unbelief ('do not believe every spirit') can be as much a mark of spiritual maturity as belief. We should avoid both extremes, the superstition which believes everything and suspicion which believes nothing."
2. Are there false teachers and false prophets in our world today? How do you know? Were there false teachers and false prophets in John's day? What kinds of things were the false teachers teaching in John's day?
3. How do we recognize a false teacher and false teaching? What is the test that John gives in 4:2-3? Is this the only way to test for false teaching? Is John's statement in 4:2-3 limited to his cultural context?
4. What is the hypostatic union (look this term up if you have to)? How does John affirm the hypostatic union in this passage? Is Jesus fully God? Is Jesus fully human? Was he always fully human? Will he always be fully human in the future?
5. What's the difference between discernment and paranoia? How do we discern false teaching (antichrists!) in our world without letting it degenerate into fearmongering or paranoia? Should we be afraid of certain 'spirits' in our world? Should we be concerned?
6. How do you discern the Holy Spirit's prompting/conviction/leading in your life? What are some things that the Holy Spirit leads us to do? What are some things that the Holy Spirit convicts us of? What are some things that the Holy Spirit never prompts us to do?

Advanced Question: Who is the "we" of 1 John 4:6? Isn't John prideful to say, "We are from God?" John writes, "Whoever knows God listens to us." How do we listen to John and the "us" of 1 John 4:6?