



Pray

How does the Spirit of God lead us to pray?

How does the knowledge of Christ impact the way we pray?

How can this passage impact the way you pray for others who are deceived by false teachers?

How does this passage move you to praise God?



Testing the Spirits | 1 John 4:1-6

Study Guide 11 for sermon on 03/14/2021



Introduction

Origin – Can I know the root of the word? Sure thing. It comes from the Latin “*origo*” or from “*orior*” which means beginning or source. How about a *definition*? One way to define it is: a point at which something comes into existence or from which it is derived.

Now, how does this relate to 1 John? John writes about origins as he emphasizes what is from God. From the beginning of the letter to now in chapter 4, John emphasizes what is from God and what is from the world. The origin of John’s message is from God. John writes, “By this you know the **Spirit of God**: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is **from God**.” The message from God about Jesus is the true message that protects the church, differentiates the church from the world, and fills our speech to the world.



Overview

False teachers are not to be taken lightly. To call out false teachers is neither fun nor popular, but it is biblical and critical. As we have learned, the greatest danger is often not from outside the church but from within. Test the spirits, know the Spirit of truth, and walk by the Spirit.

Structure:

- I. How to discern truth from deception (vv. 1-3, 6c)
- II. Those from God have conquered the world (v. 4)
- III. Those from the world speak their own message (v. 5)
- IV. Those from God speak His message and some will listen (v. 6)



Engage

- 1. What is meant by “the world” in verse 1 of this passage?
- 2. How can Christians effectively engage the world without surrendering their convictions?
- 3. Why do you think false prophets are still a problem in the church? How can we properly identify them?
- 4. Why is the question “Who is Jesus?” at the heart of Christianity? How does this question help us wade through religion in a pluralistic society?
- 5. What does it mean to confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (verse 2)? How can we identify false ideas about Jesus?

6. In verse 3, we read of the spirit of the antichrist (like earlier in 1 John). It means against Christ. John says you heard he was coming (and he is), and he (through his devilish spirits) is now already in the world. He was active in John’s day, he is active in our day, and he will remain active until the day that Jesus comes again. How does verse 3 highlight the importance of knowing who Jesus is?

7. In what way is the Spirit inside the Christian greater than the spirit who is in the world (verse 4)? How can it be true that Christians have already conquered evil spirits?

8. In verse 5, John makes it clear that false teachers are dangerous. How so? **Extra Credit:** How does this verse and passage relate to 2 Peter 2 (especially 2:20)?

9. Considering the weight of this passage, when is it appropriate to call out false teachers?

Verse to Meditate On:

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see if they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. – 1 John 4:1