

THE BOOK OF FIRST JOHN

GBC EQUIPPING HOUR | FEBRUARY 28, 2021



Spiritual Discernment – 1 John 4:1-6

PURPOSE: To know how to make the church sustainable for future generations with *orthodox* agape love.

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³ and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. ⁴ Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

⁵ They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶ We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

- 1 John 4:1-6 (ESV)

I. **Question #1: How Would An Unchurched Person Take This Passage?**

A. Intellectually? Logically? (Left-Brain Thinkers)

B. Relationally and Emotionally? (Right-Brain Thinkers)

II. Question #2: How Does This Passage Harmonize with Agape Love?

- A. Would We Approach False Teachers the Same Way We Would Anyone?
- B. Are All False Teachers Alike?
- C. Are False Teachers to be Recipients of Agape Love?

III. Two Kinds of Heretical Movements

- A. Adding to Christ's Words and Testimony and Person
- Saying Jesus has more written revelation for us, beyond the sixty-six books of the Bible.
 - Saying Jesus and Satan are brothers.
 - Saying "I am Christ's Apostle."
- B. Subtracting from Christ's Words and Testimony and Person
- Saying Jesus was only a man -not God; or oppositely, saying Jesus was only Spirit and not human.
 - Saying Jesus already came back in his Second Coming (albeit not in a literal in-person earthly arrival).
 - Saying the New Testament Apostles -Jesus' primary ambassadors- don't have the Lord's Authority.

IV. Two Main Ways to Counter False Teachers

A. Staying True to our Union with Christ (Confession of Faith)

- “Test” the teacher: Are there any aspects of his or her teaching whereby he/she shows apprehension about something that Jesus taught? Or the spirit of Jesus’ teaching?
- “Test” the teacher: Are there any aspects of his or her teaching whereby he/she contradicts something that Jesus taught? Or the spirit of Jesus’ teaching?
- 1 John 4:1-3a puts the Christian in a place whereby he/she really has to think things through. *Biblical thinking is the best.* (That’s why we have Equipping Hour).
- The *cancel-culture* and *groupie-culture* approach to conflict has made it difficult for people to really think things through...
- The final “group” we identify with is the church, which is filled with Christ’s Spirit (By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error – 1 John 4:6b, with 2:20).

B. Being Watchful for Increasing Worldliness (Sanctification)

- False teachers are known for being imposters (“antichrist” of v. 3b can mean “imposter-messiah”). This means they don’t have a problem occasionally telling a white lie or half-truth to gain a follower.
- False teachers are known for putting up a fight. After refuting them so many times you truly feel like an “overcomer” (1 John 4:4).
- False teachers speak the language of the unbelieving world (1 John 4:5). They often avoid calling sin sin because to do so would disrupt their private addictions.

V. How the Bible Overall Addresses False Teachers

“Got Questions” link: <https://www.gotquestions.org/false-teachers.html>

“For further study, review those books of the Bible that were written specifically to combat false teaching within the church: Galatians, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, and Jude. It is often difficult to spot a false teacher/false prophet. Satan masquerades as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14), and his ministers masquerade as servants of righteousness (2 Corinthians 11:15). Only by being thoroughly familiar with the truth will we be able to recognize a counterfeit.”

The Book of First John Course Outline:

- January 3 - Introduction
- January 10 - Authentic Christian Fellowship / 1 John 1:1-4
- January 17 - The Confession & The Walk / 1 John 1:5-2:2
- January 24 - Triumph of Light over Darkness / 1 John 2:3-11
- January 31 - Rallying the Troops / 1 John 2:12-17
- February 7 - The Congregational Anointing / 1 John 2:18-27
- February 14 - Know Your Roots / 1 John 2:28-3:10
- February 21 - Practical Agape Love / 1 John 3:11-24
- February 28 - Spiritual Discernment / 1 John 4:1-6
- March 7 - Perfected Agape Love / 1 John 4:7-5:4
- March 14 - Orthodox Christology / 1 John 5:5-12
- March 21 - Peace (and War) unto Eternity / 1 John 5:13-21
- March 28 - Conclusion