

The Lie Detector

1 John 4:1-6

August 9, 2015
Celebration | 8:45 am
Elevation | 10:45 am
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How can you prepare yourself to not be deceived by false teachings?

Background:

- John wrote this from Ephesus to be sent to the churches of Asia Minor somewhere in the 90s.
- Two major problems:
 1. Roman Empire and Hellenistic Culture
 2. Secessionists or pre-Gnostics leading people away from the physical reality of Jesus.

1. Don't believe everything you hear. 1 John 4:1a

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit..." 1 John 4:1a

- What does this passage mean when referring to spirits?
 - Spirits in this passage are false teachers under the influence of demons who go against the teachings of Jesus.

2. Test the spirits. 1 John 4:1b-3

"but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

1 John 4:1b

- How do we know if it's a false spirit or false teaching?
 - Does it proclaim Jesus as Lord?
 - Does it proclaim that Jesus came in the flesh?
 - Does it stay consistent with the rest of Scripture?
 - Do the teachers follow all of Scripture?
- Different lies prevalent today:
 - There is no Creator, Cults of Christianity, relativism (no absolute truth), multiple paths to God (modern-day polytheism)
 - A sin is only a sin if it hurts someone.
- Antichrist. The aim of the antichrist is to deceive people by denying the truth about Jesus Christ, and in the context of 1 John by influencing people to deny the true humanity of Jesus.
 - Satan doesn't deceive with things that aren't pleasing to the eye or to the mind.
2 Corinthians 11:14-15

3. Know the Scriptures well. 1 John 4:2a

"By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God"

1 John 4:2a

- The Bereans were the opposite of those who believed the false prophets. They are our positive example.
Acts 17:11

4. Rely on the power of God. 1 John 4:4

"Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." 1 John 4:4b

- You have overcome because Greater is He that is in you than he who is in the world.
- "He who is in the world" is Satan, the prince of this world. John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11

5. Be cautious whom you trust. 1 John 4:5-6

"By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." 1 John 4:6b

- Do not trust worldly wisdom. (v. 5)
- Trust those who have been with Jesus. (v. 6)
 - For us, this is primarily the authors of Scripture. This passage isn't about just blindly trusting your church leaders.

Digging Deeper:

New Testament passages on false prophets, false teachers, false doctrine:

- Matthew 7:15 *"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves."*
- Matthew 24:11, 24 (cf: Mark 13:22) *"Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect."*
- Acts 20:29-30 *"I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them."*
- Ephesians 4:14 *"As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming"*
- 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 *"But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil."*
- 1 Timothy 1:3b-7 *"instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith. But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions."*
- 2 Peter 2:1 *"But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves."*

LifeGroup Discussion:

1. What have you seen to be the most prevalent lies today that pull people away from the truth of Jesus? How can followers of Jesus help speak the truth with love and grace to help people who are deceived?
2. When have you personally experienced a false teaching or someone leading you away from the truth of Jesus? How did you handle it?
3. Read the New Testament passages on false prophets and teachings listed above. What have you learned from them in how to test the spirits?

Next Steps:

1. Read the Bible daily.
2. Attend a Wednesday Night Equipping Class this fall to grow in your knowledge of God's Word. To learn more about upcoming classes, visit calvarylife.org/grow
3. Take some first steps toward spiritual maturity by getting involved in a discipleship relationship with a mature Christian who will walk with you for a season to help you work through areas of spiritual maturity and growth. Learn more at calvarylife.org/discipleship