

1 John - Truth and Lies

Icebreaker: Recall a time when you were caught in a lie. What happened and how did it turn out?

Don't believe everything you hear...

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. (1 John 4:1) – How might you identify some false prophets in our world. What might be some of those messages?

‡ **Most spiritual “fake news” comes in the form of half-truths** – “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them.” (Matthew 7:15-16a)

John offers two critical truth tests amidst a world of spiritual deceit...

- **Test #1 – Do you believe in Jesus’ true identity?** – “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.” (1 John 4:2-3)

No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made Him known. (John 1:18) How have you either 1) been deceived about the true identity of Christ or 2) seen how the world falsely portrays the identity of Jesus Christ.

- **Test #2 – Do you heed the Bible’s true authority?** – “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. 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.” (1 John 4:4-6a)

For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.”

(2 Tim. 4:3-4) – How has our world turned their ears away from the truth? How do you find yourself personally lured away from the truth?

‡ **You can’t defend what you don’t understand** – “What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus.” (2 Tim. 1:13) – **What part(s) of Christianity would you like to seek a deeper understanding and what are some ways to go about getting that understanding (mentor, library card, trip to a Bible museum, etc.)?**

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This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood. (1 John 4:6b)