



Date: 10-26-2025

Text: 1 John 4: 1-6 NLT

Title: Fact Check Your Faith

“When we stop testing what sounds spiritual by who it exalts — Christ or man — the results can be fatal.”

1 John 4:1-6 NLT

Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world. ² This is how we know if they have the Spirit of God: If a person claiming to be a prophet acknowledges that Jesus Christ came in a real body, that person has the Spirit of God. ³ But if someone claims to be a prophet and does not acknowledge the truth about Jesus, that person is not from God. Such a person has the spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard is coming into the world and indeed is already here.

⁴ But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world. ⁵ Those people belong to this world,

so they speak from the world's viewpoint, and the world listens to them.

⁶ But we belong to God, and those who know God listen to us. If they do not belong to God, they do not listen to us. That is how we know if someone has the Spirit of truth or the spirit of deception.

Notes:

Testing the Spirits

There is a _____ behind both the path of darkness and the path of light

Notes:

The questions to the exam:

- 1. What does someone _____ about Jesus Christ**

Notes:

- a. The Nicene creed
 - i. Jesus is the only one in kind
 - ii. He is Lord
 - iii. Eternal and not created
 - iv. One being with the Father – The God head – trinity
 - v. Creator
 - vi. The only means of salvation for humanity
 - vii. Born of the virgin Mary
 - viii. Crucified under Pontius Pilate
 - ix. Died, buried and rose on the third day
 - x. Ascended into heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father
 - xi. He will return and judge all of creation
 - xii. His kingdom will never end

2. Which system of _____ and _____ do they function in and feel most comfortable in?

Notes:

a. The World's System

1. Self at the Center

Focus: “What’s best for me?” rather than “What honors God?”

Scripture:

“They exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator.” — Romans 1:25

“Each of us has turned to his own way.” — Isaiah 53:6

Description: The world promotes self-reliance, self-promotion, self-gratification, and self-definition—placing man at the center rather than God.

2. Love of Pleasure and Comfort Over Holiness

Scripture:

“In the last days people will be lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.” — 2 Timothy 3:4 *“Their god is their belly.” — Philippians 3:19*

Description: Decisions are guided by what feels good, not what is right. Sin is justified if it brings temporary happiness or ease.

3. Pride and Independence from God

Scripture:

“The pride of life... is not from the Father but is from the world.” — 1 John 2:16

“You say, ‘I am rich; I have prospered,’ not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.” — Revelation 3:17

Description: The world measures worth by status, power, and success. Dependence on God is seen as weakness.

4. Rejection of Truth / Moral Relativism

Scripture:

“Everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.” — John 3:20 *“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil.” — Isaiah 5:20*

Description: Truth becomes subjective—“my truth.” God’s Word is treated as outdated or oppressive.

5. Chasing Material Gain

Scripture:

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth.” — Matthew 6:19–21

“You cannot serve both God and money.” — Matthew 6:24

Description: Success is measured by possessions, image, and wealth rather than obedience, integrity, and generosity.

6. Moral Compromise and Justification of Sin

Scripture:

“Because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.”

— Matthew 24:12 *“They not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.”* — Romans 1:32

Description: The world normalizes sin, rebrands it as “freedom,” and mocks holiness.

7. Living for the Moment

Scripture:

“Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” — 1 Corinthians 15:32

“The world and its desires pass away.” — 1 John 2:17

Description: There’s little thought for eternity. Impulse and instant gratification dominate decision-making.

8. Conformity Over Conviction

Scripture:

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.” — Romans 12:2

“They loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.” — John 12:43

Description: Social acceptance outweighs spiritual conviction. People adopt the culture’s values to avoid rejection.

9. Deception and Spiritual Blindness

Scripture:

“The god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers.” — 2 Corinthians 4:4 “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against... the spiritual forces of evil.” — Ephesians 6:12

Description: The world’s system operates under Satan’s deception—making darkness appear as light and bondage appear as freedom.

10. Hatred, Division, and Selfish Ambition

Scripture:

“For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.” — James 3:16 “If the world hates you, know that it has hated Me before it hated you.” — John 15:18

Description: The world thrives on rivalry, comparison, and power struggles instead of humility, unity, and service.

11. Empty Religion and Hypocrisy

Scripture:

“They have a form of godliness but deny its power.” — 2 Timothy 3:5 “This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.” — Matthew 15:8

Description: The world’s system may appear spiritual or moral, but it lacks repentance, faith, and obedience to Christ.

12. Fear and Anxiety Instead of Faith

Scripture:

“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives.” — John 14:27

“Do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or drink.” — Matthew 6:25

Description: The world trusts in circumstances and control; God’s people trust in His sovereignty and promises.

Notes:

The Kingdom of God in the Life and Teaching of Jesus

1. Servanthood over Self-Exaltation

Jesus' teaching:

"Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant." — Matthew 20:26 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." — Mark 10:45

Jesus' example:

- He washed His disciples' feet (John 13:1–17), modeling humility over pride.
- He refused Satan's offer of worldly power (Matthew 4:8–10).

Contrast: The world says, *"Climb higher; assert yourself."* Jesus says, *"Go lower; serve others."*

2. Love for Enemies and Radical Forgiveness

Jesus' teaching:

"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." — Matthew 5:44 "If you forgive others... your heavenly Father will also forgive you." — Matthew 6:14

Jesus' example:

From the cross He prayed, *"Father, forgive them."* — Luke 23:34

Contrast: The world demands retaliation and defends rights; The Kingdom extends mercy and lays down rights.

3. Humility and Dependence on God

Jesus' teaching:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." — Matthew 5:3 "Apart from Me you can do nothing." — John 15:5

Jesus' example:

He lived in complete obedience to the Father (John 5:19).
He prayed continually, modeling dependence rather than self-sufficiency (Luke 5:16).

Contrast: The world celebrates self-made strength; The Kingdom celebrates humble dependence.

4. Truth and Righteousness over Relativism

Jesus' teaching:

"Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice." — John 18:37

"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." — Matthew 6:33

Jesus' example:

He confronted hypocrisy (Matthew 23) and taught God's truth with authority.

Contrast: The world molds truth to feelings; Jesus reveals truth as absolute, freeing, and rooted in God's character (John 8:32).

5. Sacrifice and Cross-Bearing

Jesus' teaching:

"If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily." — Luke 9:23 *"Whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."* — Matthew 16:25

Jesus' example:

He willingly laid down His life for the salvation of others (John 10:18).

Contrast: The world says, *"Preserve yourself."* Jesus says, *"Lose yourself for the sake of love."*

6. Generosity and Stewardship over Materialism

Jesus' teaching:

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth... but treasures in heaven." — Matthew 6:19–20 *"You cannot serve God and money."* — Matthew 6:24

Jesus' example:

- He lived with simplicity, often dependent on the hospitality of others (Luke 8:1–3).
- He praised the widow's small but sacrificial gift (Mark 12:41–44).

Contrast: The world hoards and measures worth by possessions; The Kingdom gives freely and measures worth by generosity.

7. Purity of Heart over Outward Image

Jesus' teaching:

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." — Matthew 5:8

"First clean the inside of the cup, and then the outside also will be clean."

— Matthew 23:26

Jesus' example:

He saw through hypocrisy and honored sincerity and repentance (Luke 7:36–50).

Contrast: The world cares about appearances; Jesus looks at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7).

8. Peace and Reconciliation over Division and Hatred

Jesus' teaching:

"Blessed are the peacemakers." — Matthew 5:9 *"By this all people will*

know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." — John

13:35

Jesus' example:

- He broke cultural and social barriers—speaking with Samaritans, valuing women, eating with sinners (John 4; Luke 5:29–32).
- He reconciled humanity to God through the cross (2 Corinthians 5:18–19).

Contrast: The world divides by race, class, and politics; The Kingdom unites all in Christ.

9. Faith Over Fear

Jesus' teaching:

"Do not be anxious about your life." — Matthew 6:25 *"Fear not, little flock,*

for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." — Luke

12:32

Jesus' example:

He faced storms, opposition, and death with calm confidence in the Father (Mark 4:39; John 19:11).

Contrast: The world panics and controls; The Kingdom trusts and rests.

10. Eternal Perspective Over Temporary Gain**Jesus' teaching:**

"What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?" — Mark 8:36 *"My kingdom is not of this world."* — John 18:36

Jesus' example:

He endured the cross "for the joy set before Him" (Hebrews 12:2).

Contrast: The world obsesses over now; Jesus invites us to live for forever.

Notes:

Next Steps:

The Biblical test for false teaching

1. The _____ test

- a. What do they believe about Jesus
 - i. Galatians 1:8-9 NLT
 - ii. 1 John 4:1-3 NLT

2. The _____ test

- a. Which kingdom do they belong to
 - i. Matthew 7:15-20 NLT
 - ii. 1 John 4:5-6 NLT

3. The _____ test

- a. Do they submit to scripture especially when error is confronted
 - i. 1 Corinthians 14:37-38 NLT
 - ii. Acts 17:11 NLT

Life Group Questions:

Get to Know You

Question: Have you ever been fooled by something that looked or sounded real but turned out to be fake — maybe a knockoff brand, a viral news story, or a scam that almost got you? What made it seem believable at first, and how did you realize it wasn't the real thing?

Digging Deeper in the Bible

Read 1 John 4:1-6 and compare it with Matthew 7:15-20 and Acts 17:11.

Question: Why does God call us to *test* spiritual messages and leaders, and what are the right standards for that test? How can we know whether a message truly exalts Christ or simply echoes the world's values?

Read Romans 14:1-9 and Philippians 3:15-16.

Question: What's the difference between rejecting false teachers (1 John 4) and respecting other Christians who hold different views on secondary issues? Why is it dangerous to label someone a "false teacher" simply because they interpret a non-essential doctrine differently? How can we practice both truth and charity when we disagree?

Application

How can you personally "fact check your faith" this week? What are some messages, influences, or habits that you might need to test against God's Word and the Spirit of Truth?