

Deep Practice Discipleship Guide

Test the Spirits

1 John 4:1–6

Purpose of This Session

To help disciples become **grounded in Scripture**, **discerning in belief**, and **confident in their identity as children of God**, so they can faithfully test spiritual influences and stand firm in Christ.

1. Opening Reflection (5–10 minutes)

Looking Back: Last Week's Practice

- What was the spiritual practice or commitment you made last week?
- Where did you notice growth, resistance, or distraction?
- What did you learn about yourself through practicing?

(Leader note: Keep this brief but intentional. Growth is reinforced through reflection.)

2. Hearing the Word (Read the Passage Aloud)

Scripture Reading: 1 John 4:1–6 (NRSV)

Guidance

- Have one person read the passage slowly.
- Pause for 30 seconds of silence.
- Invite a second person to read it again.

Opening Question

- What word, phrase, or idea stands out to you from the passage?
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3. Understanding the Text (Biblical Knowledge)

Key Observation Questions

- What command does John give in verse 1?

- Why does John say this command is necessary?
- Who are the “false prophets” John refers to?

Teaching Insight (brief)

John assumes that:

- Spiritual voices are everywhere
- Not all spiritual voices are trustworthy
Testing the spirits is not about fear—it is about faithfulness.

Group Question

- Why do you think being *ungrounded* in Scripture makes believers vulnerable?
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4. Discerning Truth (Biblical Understanding / Theology)

False Prophets — vv.1–3

- According to John, how can we recognize the Spirit of God?
- What is denied when Jesus is not confessed as coming in the flesh?

Discussion

- Why is the identity and necessity of Jesus central to discernment?
- How does minimizing Jesus subtly reshape faith?

Key Insight:

False prophets don’t reject spirituality—they reject the need for Jesus.

Antichrist — v.5

- What does John say about the source of their message?
- Why does the world “listen” to them?

Discussion

- What are some ways the world shapes values, desires, or priorities today?
- How can following “what everyone else does” slowly form us?

Key Insight:

Antichrist doesn't always deny Jesus—it teaches us to live as if He doesn't matter.

5. Standing Firm (Biblical Application / Discipleship)

Assurance — v.4

- What does John say is already true about believers?
- Where does victory come from?

Reflection Question

- How does knowing “*the one who is in you is greater*” change how you face spiritual pressure?

Leader reminder:

John isn't trying to scare the church—he's trying to steady them.

6. Deep Practice: Testing the Spirits (15 minutes)

Practice Exercise: Discernment Filter

Ask participants to think of:

- A message they hear regularly (media, social media, advice, teaching, cultural value)

Then ask them to test it using these three questions:

1. Confession

- What does this message say (or not say) about Jesus?

2. Formation

- Does this lead me toward Christlike obedience or worldly accommodation?

3. Authority

- Is Scripture shaping how I think here—or something else?

Group Sharing (optional)

- What did you notice when you tested a message this way?

- Where was discernment easy? Where was it difficult?
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7. Commitment: Living the Counter Force (HANDS)

This Week's Deep Practice Commitment

Ask each participant to write down **one specific commitment** for the coming week. You can suggest them to consider the following areas:

1. Know the Scriptures

- Example: *Read 1 John daily this week*
- Example: *Spend 5 minutes each day in the Gospels*

2. Be Discerning

- Example: *Pause and test one message or influence each day*

3. Live as a Child of God

- Example: *Choose obedience in one area where I've been conforming*

Reminder:

This is not about doing more—it's about becoming more rooted.

8. Closing Prayer (Leader or Group)

Suggested Prayer Direction

- Thank God for His Word as a firm foundation
- Ask for wisdom to discern truth from error
- Ask for courage to live as children of God