

1 John 4

1. Verses 1-6 urge the Christian to use discernment because “many false prophets have gone out into the world.”
 - a. The repeated use of the word “spirit” here shows that demons work through men to spread their lies. What kind of men do demons use to do this? See Philippians 3:18–19, 1 Timothy 4:1–2, 2 Timothy 3:1–5, Titus 1:10–16, 2 Peter 2:2–3.
 - b. False teachers disguise themselves “as apostles of Christ” and with “sheep’s clothing” (2 Corinthians 11:13; Matthew 7:15). If you were a false teacher, what kinds of things would you do to convince Christians to trust you?
 - c. Based on this passage and 2 Timothy 3:6–7, what kind of person is most likely to fall prey to false teaching? What can you do to avoid being such a person?
 - d. If you heard something concerning from a teacher and were unsure if it was right or wrong, what should you do? How would you “test the spirits”?
2. Verses 7-14 call us to love one another based on the knowledge of God’s love for us.
 - a. Summarize John’s argument in these verses for why every single Christian must necessarily be a person of love.
 - b. Verse 10 tells us that God loved us before we began to love Him. How should this truth influence how we relate to other Christians?
3. Verses 15-21 provide additional tests of saving faith.
 - a. Based on this passage, what beliefs and actions indicate that a person is genuinely saved?
 - b. What is the difference between good, godly fear (1 Peter 2:17) and the bad kind of fear mentioned in verse 18?
 - c. What is the antidote to the kind of fear referred to in verse 18?