

I. You Need to Test Spiritual Teaching (4:1)

A. Do Not Believe Every Spirit, But Rather Test Them (4:1a; 1 Cor 14:12; 2 Cor 7:1; John 3:8; 2 Cor 11:4; Deut 13:1-3; 18:15-22)

B. The Reason: Because False Prophets Have Gone Out (4:1b; 2:18; 1 Tim 4:1; 2 Pet 1:19-2:1)

II. How to Test Spiritual Teaching and Its Source (4:2-3)

A. The Key Test of Christology: Do You Confess that Jesus Christ Has Come in the Flesh? (4:2-3; 2:22; 1 Cor 12:3; John 16:13-14)

B. Is This the Only Test? No (1:6, 8; 2:4, 22; 3:8; Matt 7:15-16)

III. You Are Reassured of Christ's Victory Over False Prophets (4:4-6)

A. You Have Overcome Them in Christ (4:4; 2:14; John 16:33)

B. False Prophets Are of the World (4:5)

C. We Are of God (4:6; 1 Cor 2:12-14; John 10:3-5, 25-27)

Reflection and Application Questions (for personal reflection and family conversation):

1. What does it mean to test the spirits? What spirits is John referring to?
2. How do you test the spirits? What is the standard by which they are tested?
3. How does John reassure believers in this passage?
4. How can you overcome false teachers?