

Do We Possess Spiritual Discernment?

Study Outline – Grace Bible Chapel

1st John Study - emphasis on 1st John 4:1-6

Sunday – September 7th, 2025

CONTEXT: John continues providing us a self-test directed at giving us assurance of our salvation (1 John 5:13). Spiritual discernment is the issue in this portion of our self-examination. Those in Christ possess an overcoming ability to separate out false voices claiming to give God's truth but instead are misleading. The Christian must always be analyzing what he is hearing and apply only that which is beneficial. This is critical because the spirit of deception and evil is at work in the world and has even moved into the church. There is a clear delineation between truth and falsehood. Those who accept and appreciate worldly philosophies are of the world and not of Christ. All who migrate toward and listen to God through an accurate presentation of His truth pass the test and show themselves to be of God. This study exemplifies the extreme importance of discernment and how discernment is one of the key characteristics of those who know God.

Outline of 1st John (underlined portion is the immediate context)

- I. The Reality of Fellowship with Christ (1:5-2:29)
- B. The Characteristics of Fellowship (1st John 3:1-3:24)
 - a. Practicing Moral Excellence (1st John 3:1-10)
 - b. Practicing Love (1st John 3:10b-24)
 - c. Practicing Fellowship (1st John 4:1-21)
 1. Caution against deception (4:1-5)

Key Words & times used

- spirit (8)
- world (3)
- every (3)
- listens (3)
- false
- overcomes

Introduction:

1. Caution against deception (4:1-5)

- Command to test (4:1a)
- Careful scrutiny (4:1b)
- Constant examination (4:2-3)
- Capability to overcome (4:4-5)

2. Consistent means of discernment (4:6)

Closing: