

ASSURANCE: How to Know That You Have Eternal Life

Lesson Eight • 1John 4:1-6

Detecting Spiritual Deceivers

We Live in an Age of Deception and Deceivers

In an age of false teachers and false teaching, true believers must learn to **DISCERN** spiritual **deception**.

These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. 1John 2:18-27

True believers must also learn to **DETECT** spiritual **deceivers**.

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world." 1John 4:1-6

Detecting Spiritual Deceivers

1. We Live in Dangerously DECEPTIVE Times.

We Are Living in Dangerous Times Filled with Much Deception and Many Deceivers.

"But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come." 2Timothy 3:1-9

*Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now **many antichrists have come**, by which we know that it is the last hour. 1John 2:18*

*Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because **many false prophets have gone out into the world**. 1John 4:1*

*For **many deceivers have gone out into the world** who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. 2John 1:7*

The Clear and Present Danger of...

- Deceptive **inspiration** by false **SPIRITS**. (4:1, 3-4)
- Deceptive **instruction** by false **TEACHERS**. (4:1, 5)
- Deceptive **influence** by false **BELIEVERS**. (4:5-6)

Why Is This Deception Becoming More Difficult to Discern?

- Denominational labels have lost their **SIGNIFICANCE**.
- Doctrinal teaching has lost its **IMPORTANCE**.
- Determining ministry success by faithfulness has lost its **PROMINENCE**.
- Discerning between truth and error has lost its **ACCEPTANCE**.

2. Deceptive Times Call for a Discerning TEST of Those Who Teach.

Test the **CONTENT** of those who teach!

"By this you know..." (vv. 1-3)

Test #1 *What Is Their STANDARD?* (v. 6)

What Is the Truth?

- The Bible is the absolute standard without error.
- The Bible is to be joyfully **OBEYED**.

What Are the Consequences of Distorting or Denying This?

Test #2 *Who Is Their SAVIOR?* (vv. 2-3)

What Is the Truth?

- Jesus is fully **GOD** and He is fully **MAN**.

What Are the Consequences of Distorting or Denying This?

Test #3 *What Do They Say I Must Do to Be SAVED?* (v. 4; 5:1, 4-5)

What Is the Truth?

- Faith alone saves, but saving faith is never **ALONE**.

What Are the Consequences of Distorting or Denying This?

3. Deceptive Times Call for a Discerning HEART in Those Who Listen.

Test the **CHARACTER** of those who listen!

"By this we know..." (vv. 4-6)

Who Is Able to Discern Between Truth and Error?

- Those who are truly **BORN AGAIN!** (vv. 1, 4)
- Those who are true **BIBLE BELIEVERS!** (vv. 5-6)
- Those who are God's **BELOVED CHILDREN!** (v. 1)

Do We Pass the Test as a Church? Do You Pass the Test as a Christ Follower?

Is God's Standard Your Standard? *The Inspired 66 Books of the Bible?*

Is God's Savior Your Savior? *Jesus the Christ Come in the Flesh?*

Is God's Salvation Your Salvation? *The Free Gift of an Obedient Faith?*

If so, then you have overcome deception and are able to discern between the spirit of truth and the spirit error! You will be able to detect false teachers from true teachers of sound doctrine.