

A REMINDER OF THE THREE “TESTS” OF SALVATION THROUGHOUT 1 JOHN

1. The THEOLOGICAL test — Do you BELIEVE that Jesus is the Son of God (18x) and therefore, the LIGHT of the world?

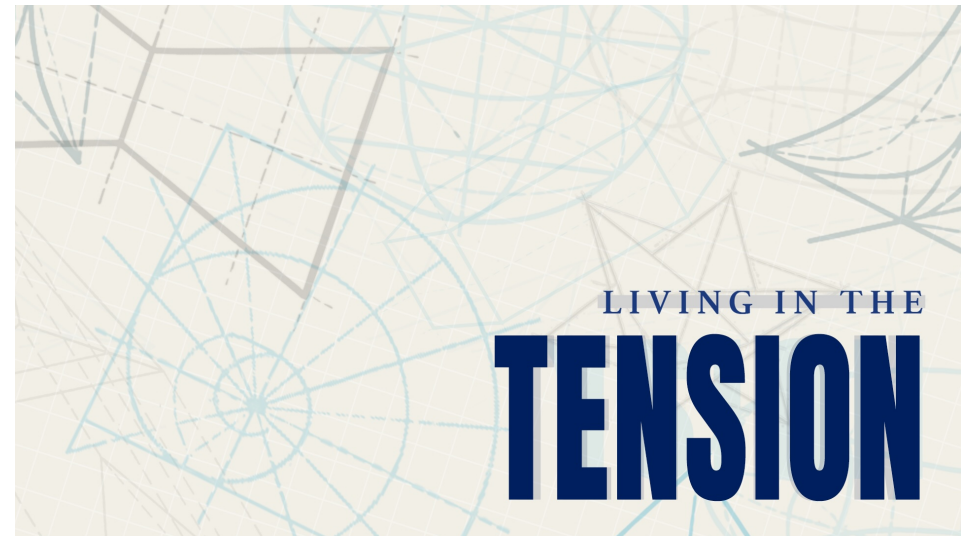
1John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

2. The MORAL Test — Is it your desire to be holy? Are you making every EFFORT to live above sin?

1John 3:6 No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; . . .

3. SOCIAL Test — Do you truly LOVE others?

1John 4:21 And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.



July 18 & 19, 2026 | Living in the Tension- 5 | 1 John 4:1-6 | Mark A. Vincenti

Every Christian can defeat spiritual deception by taking to heart three important lessons from 1 John 4:1-6.

WARNING: BEWARE

1 John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world... 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist which you heard was coming and now is in the world already."

1. There are teachers, prophets, and influencers who are not from God.
2. False prophets are driven by deceptive spirits.
3. False teachers get Jesus wrong.

John 5:39 You search the Scriptures... it is they that bear witness about me.

Cults and false religions always mess with one or all of the following:

- a. Savior: (Who Jesus IS) Identity of Christ.
- b. Salvation: (What Jesus DID) The cross and/or resurrection of Christ.
- c. Scripture: (What Jesus SAID) The Bible = God's Word.

4. The spirit of the antichrist is IN the world NOW.

False teaching is everywhere.

- This doesn't mean we can't TRUST anything, but it means we should TEST everything.

5. False prophets are from the world, and the world listens to them.

1 John 4:5 They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them.

Why do people follow false teaching?

a. Flesh: False teaching makes us FEEL good.

2 Timothy 4:3 - For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions.

b. Fooled: False teachers are DECEPTIVE.

Matthew 7:15 Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

c. Fit in: False teachers have INFLUENCE.

1 John 4:5 ...the world listens to them.

Key lesson: We must be aware but not be afraid.

ENCOURAGEMENT: BE CONFIDENT

1 John 4:4 Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

1. You are FROM God.

2. The Holy Spirit is IN you.

- The Holy Spirit is GOD.
- The Holy Spirit is GOOD.
- The Holy Spirit is GREATER!

TRUST the Holy Spirit.

3. You have OVERCOME false teachers and false spirits by your FAITH in Jesus Christ.

4. GREATER is He that is in you than he that is in the world.

ADVICE: BE DISCERNING

1 John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God...

1 John 4:6 We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Test & Trust

1. Test: Don't believe every spirit. Instead, TEST them.

How to test: Look at their...

- Lips - Content of their message (Word).
- Lives - Conduct of their character (Walk).

Matthew 7:15 Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves... 17 So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit... 20 Thus you will recognize them by their fruits."

2. Trust: LISTEN to the TEACHING of the Apostles.

- a. The Apostles knew Jesus personally. They were eyewitnesses to his life, teaching, and resurrection.
- b. The Apostles are the people God has uniquely used to instruct us through the New Testament.

TWO FINAL THOUGHTS:

1. CENTER on the SAVIOR.

2. SUBMIT to the SPIRIT.

- The Spirit is God, is good, is greater!
- The Spirit is our guide! (John 14:17)

1 John 4:4 Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.