

SERMON-BASED STUDY: WALK IN GOOD SPIRITS

1 John 4:1-6, ESV – 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. ²By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³and 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. ⁴Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. ⁵They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶We 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.

Notes:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

ENGAGE WITH THE MESSAGE

- 1 How can Christians be misled and get "sloppy" with the truth and their priorities?
- 2 Why is it important to test every spiritual idea and message? How can you test these things?

3 What can followers of Jesus do to be better prepared in the area of discernment?

DIGGING DEEPER

A **Matthew 7:15-20, ESV** – ¹⁵ “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

4 Why can it be difficult to recognize a false prophet? Describe a false prophet during Jesus’ time. Describe a false prophet during our time.

5 Looking at the passage above, what does Jesus mean by “fruit”? How would you describe the difference between good fruit and bad fruit?

6 Can a false prophet be able to fake “good fruit”? Explain.

B **Acts 17:10-13, ESV** – ¹⁰ The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. ¹¹ Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. ¹² Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men. ¹³ But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Berea also, they came there too, agitating and stirring up the crowds.

1 Thessalonians 5:20-21, ESV – ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies, ²¹ but test everything; hold fast what is good.

7 What can we glean about the Bereans in the passage above? How did the Bereans practice Paul’s instructions in 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21?

8 When did many of the Bereans believe what Paul and Silas preached to them? How have you seen this example in your life or the life of others?

9 How can we “hold fast to what is good”? Why is this important when it comes to “testing everything”?

TAKING IT HOME

People can be easily misled to believe and follow wrong ideas, messages, and people. Jesus knew this and therefore, instructed believers on how to avoid these false messages. To test a message, we must know the correct message, and that can be found in the Scriptures. Like the Bereans, we are to examine the Scriptures daily. How are you doing in this area? How are you doing with testing ideas and messages that you hear and read? What steps can you take this week to be better in the area of discernment? Share with your group or accountability partner what God is showing you. Pray for one another as you strive to walk in good spirits.

PRAISES AND PRAYER REQUEST

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FOR FURTHER STUDY

Matthew 24:23-24
Romans 16:17
2 Corinthians 10:5, 11:1-15
Ephesians 4:14, 6:12
2 Timothy 3:16-17
2 Peter 1:19-21