

Study Guide: 1 John Lesson 73 - Discernment and Exhibiting Perfect Love

Wednesday, August 19, 2026

This study guide examines the biblical principles of discernment as outlined in 1 John 4:1-12. It explores how believers can distinguish between the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error by testing doctrines and teachers against the Word of God. The material also covers the unique nature of humanity, created in the image of God for the purpose of divine and interpersonal relationships.

Quiz: Testing the Spirits

1. Why is it necessary for a believer to test every spirit they encounter instead of believing them all?
 2. According to the text, what is the primary confession that demons and the spirit of error will always deny?
 3. How does the Bible define the "spirit of antichrist" that is already present in the world today?
 4. What is the difference between "incarnation" and "regeneration" as described in the study?
 5. Why are true believers considered "impervious" to fatal errors or the lies of false teachers?
 6. What are the "spiritual instincts" that help a believer realize when a teaching is not right?
 7. In what way do false teachers usually try to explain how a person can reach God?
 8. Why does the world have a natural affinity for false teachers and their messages?
 9. What did the example of the Bereans teach regarding how to handle new information or teaching?
 10. What does the Hebrew root word *tselem* suggest about how God created humanity?
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Answer Key

1. Believers must test every spirit because Satan desires to be confused with the Christian church. By putting everything to the test against the Bible, Christians can avoid being led astray by those who refuse to admit when a teaching is wrong.
 2. The primary denial made by demons is the deity of Jesus Christ. They will inevitably reject the fact that He is God in human flesh and, in doing so, they also deny the Doctrine of the Trinity.
 3. The spirit of antichrist is any teaching or spiritual system that leaves out or redefines Jesus Christ. This spirit is already active in the world through any person or idea that attacks the truth of the Father and the Son.
 4. Incarnation is the act of God becoming a partaker of human nature through Jesus Christ. Regeneration is the process where man becomes a partaker of the divine nature by receiving the Holy Spirit.
 5. Believers are secure because the Holy Spirit, who is greater than the spirit of the world, dwells within them. This indwelling anointing teaches them all things and protects them from falling victim to deception and fatal heresy.
 6. These instincts are the result of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God working in a believer's life. When a Christian hears something false, the Spirit of God acts as a resident teacher to signal that the information is inaccurate.
 7. False teachers often promote a system based on human achievement rather than divine accomplishment. They focus on ceremonies, works, and religious rituals as the way to find God instead of through the work of Jesus Christ.
 8. The world listens to false teachers because they speak from a worldly perspective and share the same origin as sinners. Because the world is "in the lap of the evil one," it lacks the capacity to understand or discern the truth of God.
 9. The noble Bereans were known for searching the Scriptures to verify if the things they were being taught were actually true. This serves as a model for believers to use the Bible as the final authority for all doctrine.
 10. The word *tselem* means "to carve out," suggesting that God shaped and formed man to be a replica of Himself. This means humanity was created with a transcendent capacity for relationships, mirroring the fellowship found within the Trinity.
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Essay Questions

1. Describe the three specific tests a believer should use to discern whether a teacher is speaking the truth or the spirit of error.
 2. Explain the significance of the statement "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" in the context of spiritual security.
 3. Analyze why the confession of Jesus Christ as both fully God and fully man is the essential "Christology test" for any religious system.
 4. Discuss the purpose of the Trinity's relationship and how being made in the image of God allows humans to experience relationship in a way no other creature can.
 5. Why does the author describe the defense of the faith as a "battle," and what are the consequences of failing to guard the truth for future generations?
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Glossary of Key Terms

- **Antichrist:** Any person or teaching that denies the Father and the Son or opposes the true nature of Jesus Christ; also refers to a future figure known as the "beast."
 - **Christology:** The branch of Christian theology relating to the person, nature, and role of Jesus Christ.
 - **Deity:** The state of being God; in this context, the divine nature of Jesus Christ.
 - **Discernment:** The ability to judge well and distinguish between the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error.
 - **Incarnation:** The act of God taking on human flesh in the person of Jesus Christ.
 - **Natural Man:** A person who does not possess the Spirit of God and therefore cannot understand or discern spiritual truths.
 - **Regeneration:** The spiritual rebirth of a person by the Holy Spirit, making them a partaker of the divine nature.
 - **Trinity:** The Christian doctrine that God exists as three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—who share the same essence.
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Greek Language Appendix

English Word	Greek Word	Phonetic Pronunciation	Definition
Jesus [¹]	<i>Iēsous</i>	ee-ay-SOOCE	The Greek form of the name Joshua, which means "Jehovah saves."
Christ [²]	<i>Christos</i>	kris-TOS	A title meaning "the Anointed One," "the King," or "Messiah."

[¹]: Referring to the Greek form of the name Joshua used to identify the Savior. [²]: Referring to the title of Jesus Christ as the promised King and Anointed One.