

TEST THE PROPHETS AND LOVE THE BELIEVERS

Lesson Aim: Know how to test the spirits and know the benefits of living by love.

Suggestion: Have the students read the Scriptures and answer the questions in the student lesson; then ask the following questions for class discussion.

How are believers to test the spirit of a prophet (preacher)? 4:1-3

He must check a preacher's spirit (the content of his message) by the Word of God. An important area to test a preacher's spirit is his teaching about Jesus Christ. This is the teaching that Satan wants to corrupt. In John's time a false prophet would deny that Christ was a man. Later, false prophets would deny that Jesus was God. The true prophet or preacher will say that Jesus Christ is truly God and fully man; He is the unique Son of God and the sinless Son of man. As such, He is the perfect mediator between God and man. If a person denies Jesus Christ's deity or His humanity, he is against Christ and has the spirit of antichrist.

What is true of a believer and of an unbeliever? 4:4-6

A believer is of God and overcomes unbelievers, because greater is the Spirit in a believer than the spirit in an unbeliever. An unbeliever is of the world. His message is of the world which means he appeals to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life (1 Jn 2:16) and the world hears his message. The one who knows God hears the believer's message, but the one who does not know God, does not hear the believer's message.

What is the source of genuine fellowship? 4:7-10

Love is of God and everyone that is born of God loves others. If a person does not love others, it is a sure sign that he does not know God, for God is love. God demonstrated His love when He sent His Son into the world to satisfy His need for a righteous sacrifice so He could give sinners eternal life through His Son and have fellowship with them.

What is the course of genuine fellowship? 4:11-12

Since God loved us, we should love other believers. His love should flow through us to them. Our love for one another shows that God dwells in us and His love is perfected in us.

How do we know that we dwell in God and He dwells in us? 4:13-16

The first proof is the Spirit that He has given to dwell in us (13).

The second proof is our confession that Jesus is the Son of God (14-15).

The third proof is the love that dwells in us (16).

What does perfect love do for a believer? 4:17-21

Perfect love gives us boldness when the Day of Judgment comes (4:17). Since that is true, we can say that perfect love gives us boldness in serving the Lord now.

Perfect love casts out fear. The one who fears does not have perfect love (18).

Perfect love for God will cause us to have love for fellow believers (19-21).