



# **Recognizing God's Spirit (1 John)**

David Feddes

# Purposes of 1 John

- 1. Debunk deceivers:** I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. (2:26)
- 2. Confirm confidence:** I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. (5:13)

***Descriptions of real Christian: “born of God” “knows God” “God lives in him”***





# Recognizing God's Spirit

- 1. Belief in Jesus:** God's Spirit reveals Jesus as Son of God and Messiah who became human to be our sacrifice and Savior.
- 2. Apostolic fellowship:** God's Spirit connects people to the Book He inspired (Scripture) and the Body he indwells (church).
- 3. Godly life:** God's Spirit empowers active love and obedient living.

4:1 Dear friends, 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. <sup>2</sup> This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, <sup>3</sup> but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

<sup>4</sup> You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. <sup>5</sup> They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. <sup>6</sup> We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

<sup>7</sup> Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

<sup>8</sup> Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup> This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.



<sup>11</sup> Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

<sup>13</sup> We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup> If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. <sup>16</sup> And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

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# Belief in Jesus

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. (4:9-10)

Jesus is "the Christ" (5:1), "the Son of God" (4:15). "He is the true God and eternal life" (5:20). He "has come in the flesh" (4:2) to die as "the atoning sacrifice for our sins" (2:2) and "to destroy the devil's work (3:8).

# **The spirit of antichrist**

Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of antichrist (4:2-3).

Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist—he denies the Father and the Son. (2:20-22).

# Many antichrists have come

- **Arians:** Christ is the first creature; he is not God the Creator.
- **Muslims:** Jesus is not God appearing among us but a prominent prophet. He did not die.
- **Unitarians/liberals:** Jesus is not God.
- **Mormons:** Jesus came from Mary's union with the visible body of Elohim the Father.
- **Jehovah's Witnesses:** The archangel Michael gave up his angel nature to become Jesus the man. Jesus was never God.

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# **Apostolic fellowship**

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched —this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. (1:1-3)

# **Abandoning apostles**

Even now many antichrists have come. They went out from us [apostolic church--Body], but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us. (2:19)

We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us [apostolic truth—Book]; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood. (4:6)



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## **Active love**

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers.

Anyone who does not love remains in death... If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. (3:14-18)

# Obedient living

We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. (2:3-4)

Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us. (3:23-24)

# God loving and living in us

Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love... No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. (4:7-16)

# Test the spirits

1. Test your own spirit
  - a. Strengthen assurance *or*
  - b. Discover need for new birth
2. Test other spirits
  - a. Bond with brothers and sisters *or*
  - b. Resist fakes and antichrists

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## **We know!**

We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him. We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true—even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. Dear children, keep yourselves from idols. (1 John 5:20-21)