



International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

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1 John 4:1-6 Study Hints for Discussion

[*Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further*](#) are not actually intended to be *the answers* to the discussion questions. These indeed are “hints” a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class. The [*Class Preparation Guide*](#) includes the questions below, and it can be given to students at the end of the previous class; then, they can pray, read, and think ahead to prepare for the next week’s Bible lesson. And/Or, consider giving each student the [*Verse-by-Verse Scripture Handout*](#), which includes the Bible verses to be studied before class and other questions.

1. Why did John say he wanted the followers of Jesus to test the spirits?

Some spirits are demons who will control false prophets and make them tell lies to mislead people. They will try to mislead people away from God the Father and God the Son. They will try to mislead people away from trusting the Bible is the true Word of God written. John wrote of himself and the other apostles, “We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us.” Whoever knows God will listen to the Bible and not follow a false prophet or evil spirit. Studying and believing the Bible will help the followers of Jesus test the spirits and avoid believing and following evil spirits.

2. How can you tell the difference between a false spirit and the Spirit of God?

A false spirit will not confess that Jesus is from God, it will deny that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (as a real human being with a real human body, mind, and soul). A true follower of Christ will know a false spirit is not the Spirit of God. When a false spirit denies Jesus has come in the flesh, that spirit is denying that the Bible is the true Word of God written and that spirit is denying the teachings of Jesus about God the Father and himself.

3. Who is the one who is in the believer and how can this encourage a believer in Jesus?

God the Father, God the Son, and the Spirit of God are in the believer. Believers know they are from God and have conquered these evil spirits.

4. Who do those of the world listen to and why do they do so?

They listen to the spirits that are not from God and to false prophets rather than listen to the Spirit of God, what followers of Jesus say, and what the Bible teaches. They listen to those who are from the world for what they say is from the world. They do so because they have rejected the true God, the revelation of God in Jesus and in the Bible, and they refuse to obey God.

5. How do we know the difference between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error?

Those with the spirit of truth (Spirit of Truth) listen to the Bible (to the teachings of Jesus and the writers of the Bible) and obey God's commands. Those with the spirit of error listen to evil spirits and false prophets, and they will not listen to the Spirit of Truth or obey the Bible's teachings. They will deny some truths that are clearly revealed by Jesus and the Bible.

Thinking Further for Extra Credit Your Discussion Notes

1. How would you define "spirits" in the way John wrote about? How can a spirit be dangerous?

2. What might happen to someone who believed and believed in a spirit that was not from God?

3. What does it mean to believe “Jesus Christ has come in the flesh”? What kind of person believes this?

4. How can those John called “little children” conquer spirits that are not from God? How can knowing this encourage new and mature believers in Jesus?

5. Why do you think some people, even some who call themselves Christian, refuse to believe that the Bible is true in all it affirms or is an infallible standard of faith and practice for those who follow Jesus? What do you believe about the Bible?

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