

April 16, 2023

*The Bridge Bible Fellowship*

Pastor Paul S. Brown

1 John 4:1-6

**“Doctrinal Test #2: Does the Spirit of God Abide in You? – Part 1”**

- I. Prologue [Introduction] – 1:1-4
- II. Tests of Genuine Fellowship: Cycle (Spiral) #1 – 1:5-2:27 – [Moral; Social; Doctrinal tests]
- III. **Tests of Genuine Fellowship: Cycle (Spiral) #2 – 2:28-4:6**
  - A. The Moral Test – 2:28-3:10 – Family Resemblance
  - B. The Social Test – 3:10b-24 – Family Resemblance
  - C. **The Doctrinal Test – 4:1-6 – Family Resemblance**

## Discussion & Application:

1. John mentions “the Spirit whom He has given us” in 3:24. Who is **the Spirit**? What does the Bible teach us about the person and work of the Spirit? (List as many things as you can think of and find verses to support it.) What is the role of the Spirit in our assurance and joy?
2. What does the word “**discernment**” mean? Why is discernment important? What might happen to people who are not discerning? Give examples. How does a person become more discerning?
3. Why does John tell his readers to **stop believing every spirit**? What is the connection between spirits and false prophets? (See 1 Jn. 4:6; 1 Tim. 4:1)
4. Many philosophers and professors in our culture say there is no such thing as absolute **truth**. Why do they say that? What authority do they have to make those claims? Who originated that argument that God has not made absolute statements of truth? What impact does not believing in absolutes have on beliefs about Jesus, the Gospel, the Church, morality...?
5. What does John mean when he commands his readers to “**test**” the spirits to see whether they are from God? If we cannot physically test a spirit we cannot see, how do we test them? What standards do we use?
6. What does the prefix “**anti**” mean? Who is “**the antichrist**”? What do we know about him and what he will do? What modern examples do we have of false teachers who have the spirit of antichrist?
7. What are some commonly accepted ideas / concepts / ideologies in the world today that need to be tested and rejected?
8. **Case study.** A friend comes to you and says that they know what the Bible says about morality & sexuality, but they have to live out their truth. They must be authentic to themselves so they can be fully human. Anyone who tells them they can’t live however they want to live is limiting their full expression of their humanity.  
How would you answer them? What spirit is behind these ideas? How does a proper understanding of the biblical Jesus and the biblical Gospel contradict what they are saying? What would you tell them about the true Jesus and the true Gospel so they could be set free to experience humanity in its fullness?
9. What role might **social media** have in the propagation of lies and half-truths? What tools do you use to fact-check what you see, hear, and read on social media? How can parents help their children not be led astray by “influencers”?
10. **Memorize 1 John 4:1-6.** Meditate on what these verses tell us about how to grow in discernment. Think through specific things you have been taught by the world that you need to test and reject.