

## 1 John 4:1-6—A Spirit of Discernment

- **Intro:**
  - Going up to someone in a public place that you think you know but DON'T.
  - Johnny Hunt story in Atlanta airport.
- **Discernment Defined**
  - **Defined—the ability to think BIBLICALLY about all areas of life.**
    - Colossians 3:17—and whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.
    - Colossians 1:9-10—asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him.
- **The Necessity of Discernment (v.1)**
  - DO NOT BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU HEAR THAT IS SAID BY SOMEONE CLAIMING TO BE SPEAKING FOR GOD.
  - **The Black and White of Truth Claims:**
    - **There is actual truth, which comes from the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit**
      - Comes from God and is Truth
      - **There is falsehood, which comes from the spirit of deception and error, Satan.**
        - Is of the antichrist and is error
  - 1 Thess. 5:21-22—but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.
  - 2 Peter 1:3—His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence.
- **The Test of Discernment (v.2-3)**
  - This test is Confessional—it centers on what we believe
  - This test is Christological—it centers on what we believe about Jesus
    - **Compare/Contrast on the Son**
      - Christians—Jesus is eternally existing as God and was made man in Jesus to save humanity from their sin.
      - Mormon—Jesus earned his godhood; fought with Lucifer to be the Savior; Jesus was the literal offspring of the Father and Mother from procreation; 3 separate Gods.
      - Jehovah Witness—Jesus was a “divine angel” that was near but not equal to value to God. Began as archangel, became Messiah at baptism, after resurrection became archangel again; deny that Jesus deserves and should receive worship.
- **2 Requirements for Discernment:**
  - **Right Doctrine**
  - **Recognition of Error**
  - 2 Timothy 1:13-15—Follow the patten of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you. You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.
    - GUARD THE GOOD DEPOSIT through RIGHT DOCTRINE and CAREFUL DISCERNMENT.
    - **THEOLOGY MATTERS!**

- **The Difficulty of Discernment (v.1)**
  - **Why is discernment so hard?**
    1. Indwelling Sin—clouds our perception and our sinful hearts lead us astray.
    2. Presence of an enemy—puts us in wartime deception
    3. Inundation with worldly influences trying to overcome us.
- **The Reward of Discernment (v.4-6)**
  - 2 themes in this text highlighted by the words “beloved” and “little children”—the theme of discernment and the theme of overcoming.
  - In this sin-saturated, deception-filled life that we live, God holds out overcoming hope!
  - The Greater One—God gives to us, by the Spirit, the One who is greater than the world
  - **“Have overcome”—the tense emphasizes a final and completed past action with lasting and ongoing effects.**
    - In Christ, we not only OVERCAME but have OVERCOME and ARE OVERCOMING!
- **Conclusion:**
  - We must be thinkers, perceivers, discerners.
  - What we believe and our ability to weigh religious information against the truth of the Bible is CRITICAL!