

1 John 4:1–6

POINT 1: Don't believe everything you hear (vv. 1–3)

1 John 4:1–3 (CSB):

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.

2 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,

3 but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

Breakdown:

- Not every voice or teaching is from God; many are false.
- The Spirit of God affirms Jesus Christ came in the flesh.
- Rejecting Christ is the mark of the antichrist spirit.
- Testing the spirits is essential—don't believe everything just because it sounds spiritual or popular.

Expanding / 2025 Examples:

- False spirits today can appear as trendy philosophies, popular “life advice,” or social media hype that contradicts God’s Word.
- Sometimes the world’s wisdom is packaged with spiritual-sounding language—“just be yourself,” “follow your heart,” “love is all you need”—but it dismisses Jesus as Savior.

- Biblical testing = filter everything through Scripture and the Spirit's guidance.

Big Idea:

Not every voice in your feed—or your life—is God. **Check the source.**

Not every TikTok, tweet, or trend is God-approved. **Test it**

Question: 🖐️ How can you recognize when a teaching, trend, or advice is from God or from the world?

POINT 2:

A) God's Spirit Brings Victory

B) The world is on copy & paste toward lies (vv. 4–5)

1 John 4:4–5 (CSB):

4 You are from God, little children, and you have conquered them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

5 They are from the world. Therefore what they say is from the world, and the world listens to them.

Culture moment pause & address the Charlie Kirk death:

The world listens to its own—it celebrates death, mocks life, and calls hate normal. That's copy & paste culture.

The world has its own language. John says the world listens to the world. Lies sound normal when you're living in lies. That's why you see things online that are shocking to a believer, but to the world it feels completely normal.

Just think about what's happening right now with the death of Charlie Kirk. Regardless of what anyone thought of his politics, Charlie was a Christ-follower first. He gave his life to Christ as a kid, he went around to college campuses preaching about Jesus, and just four days before his death he posted these words: "Jesus defeated death so you can live." Some of his last words before passing were literally echoing the gospel of Christ. He once said, "I want to be remembered for courage for my faith. That would be the most important thing. The most important thing is my faith in my life."

That's his heart. That's his testimony. Yet what's the world doing? Celebrating his death. Mocking him online. And honestly, some of you may have even been tempted to laugh or post about it yourselves.

Let me be crystal clear: **mocking the death of a brother in Christ doesn't prove your boldness, it proves your blindness.** Love is the evidence of being a child of God. If love is absent, you need to check if Christ is truly present.

When we celebrate another Christ followers death, ***we're echoing the world's voice—not the Spirit's.*** We're siding with the enemy who comes to steal, kill, and destroy—not with Jesus who brings life.

But John reminds us: "The One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." If Christ is in you, then your response should not look like the world's response. You should grieve with hope, you should honor life, you should love—even when you disagree with someone. That's what makes you different.

Breakdown:

- Believers already have victory over false teachers and spiritual deception.
- Why? Because God's Spirit in us is stronger than Satan and the world's influence.
- False teachers speak the world's language—that's why the world listens to them.
- Christians live by a different Spirit, so we will sound different.

⚡ Expounding on Verse 5: The World Follows the World (copy and paste culture)

- John says the world listens to false voices because it recognizes its own.
- In other words: lies sound normal when you're living in lies.
- Think about it—if you're in an echo chamber, you only hear what you already believe.
- That's the world: cycling deception (copy and paste), convincing itself it's truth.
- But as children of God, we don't buy into the same system—we've been given different ears to hear the Spirit.

👉 **Example:** On social media, one person posts a “new truth,” and suddenly thousands echo it. The world eats it up, even if it's empty or harmful, because it matches what they already want to believe.

Big Idea: The Spirit of God in us is greater than the spirit of the world around us—our victory is already secured.

Sidebar:

Copy & Paste the Jesus Way (truth) Not the World's Way (lies)

Question: 🖱️ when the world mocks, do you join in? Or do you stand out and show the love of Jesus? If your life were on copy and paste, would it be headed toward Christ (truth) or the world (lies)?

POINT 3: Test the Spirits—Know Who You Follow (v. 6)

1 John 4:6 (CSB):

6 We are from God. The one who knows God listens to us; the one who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of deception.

Breakdown:

- Believers are from God, so we have the Spirit of truth living in us.
- Not everyone speaking is from God—some are guided by deception.
- Knowing God means learning to recognize His voice and follow it.
- Spiritual discernment isn't optional; it's essential for walking in truth.

⚡ Expounding on Testing the Spirits

- John is emphasizing that there are competing voices in the world—some from God, some from the enemy.
- The world doesn't recognize God's truth, so they dismiss believers or call truth "weird" or "wrong."
- Testing the spirits means comparing what we hear, see, or are taught against God's Word.
- Discernment protects us from deception, false teachers, and empty philosophies.

👉 **Example:** Think about TikTok challenges or “life advice” trends—some might seem fun or cool, but do they don’t align with God’s Word? Learning to filter everything through Scripture helps us recognize what’s from God.

Big Idea: Knowing God equips us to recognize truth, avoid deception, and follow the Spirit faithfully.

Questions:

- How do you know if a voice, teaching, or trend is from God or the world?
- What practical steps can you take to test the spirits in your life—social media, friends, advice?
- When something seems popular but contradicts God’s Word, how do you respond?

✅ **Closing Reflection / Challenge**

- Are you discerning the spirits in your life, listening to God’s voice above the noise of the world?
- Are you living confident in the Spirit’s victory over the world and deception?
- Are you testing what you hear, see, and follow against God’s Word?

Challenge: Live intentionally, filtering life through God’s Spirit. Don’t follow the world blindly—know who you follow, and let the Spirit of God guide you.