



True Stories – Real Fakes
1 John 4:1-6

1 John 4:1-6 (HCSB)

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to determine if they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit who confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. But every spirit who does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist; you have heard that he is coming, and he is already in the world now. 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. They are from the world. Therefore what they say is from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God. Anyone who knows God listens to us; anyone who is not from God does not listen to us. From this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of deception.

I. The Instruction – *“Don’t believe everything you hear!”*

Matthew 7:15 (HCSB)

“Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravaging wolves.”

2 Peter 2:1-3 (HCSB)

But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, and will bring swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their unrestrained ways, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. In their greed they will exploit you with deceptive words. Their condemnation, pronounced long ago, is not idle, and their destruction does not sleep.

II. The Identification – *“Put the teaching to the test.”*

- False Prophets

The Content Test

Verse 2-3

“This is how you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit who confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. But every spirit who does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist; you have heard that he is coming, and he is already in the world now.”

The Convert Test

Verse 5

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

The Commercialism Test

II Peter 2:3 (HCSB)

“In their greed they will exploit you with deceptive words.”

The Character Test

II Peter 2:2-18 (ESV)

And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you. They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children! Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. ...they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption.

- Faithful Preachers

The Agreement Test

Verse 2

“Every spirit who confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.”

The Acceptance Test

Verse 6

“We are from God. Anyone who knows God listens to us; anyone who is not from God does not listen to us. From this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of deception.”

Verse 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.”

John 16:13-14 (NIV)

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. ... He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.