

A Discerning Fellowship
1 John 4:1-6

I. Caution: Supernatural Forces – 4:1

1. Believers are alive spiritually in Christ
Ephesians 2:1-5; Romans 8:1-10
The Holy Spirit lives in us – Rom. 8:9, 16
He is our teacher – 1 John 2:20-27
He also leads – Rom. 8:14
2. There are other spirit beings - Eph 6:12
Satan & fallen angels with supernatural power
Be prepared – Ephesians 6:10-18
They work through humans
As the magicians in time of Moses
False Prophets speak for Satan
2 Corinthians 11:13-15

II. Call: Need for Discernment – 4:1

1. Do not be deceived - not all speak for God
Be aware of presence of evil spirits
They work through false prophets
2. Don't open yourself to false spirits
Fortune telling, séances, seeking miracles
Dealing with supernatural forces
3. Learn how to test those who speak
Are they from God or are they false?
Don't be deceived because "they are many"
God wants us to be discerning

III. Criteria: for Discernment – 4:2-3

1. Listen carefully to what is said
How does it line up with the Holy Spirit?
God's Spirit speaks God's truth
God's Spirit inspired men to write Scripture
What do they say about Jesus Christ?
Jesus is the Son of God & the Messiah
He is God come as man to be our Savior
2. Those who deny or deviate are not of God
The issue is the Person & Work of Christ
Any denial or deviation is of antichrist
Spirit of error (antichrist) is present in our world – 2:18

IV. Confidence: in Discernment – 4:4

1. God provides for His children
God wants us to have discernment
He has provided for us to overcome deceivers
2. God's Spirit indwells believers
He is greater than all the false spirits
He will give us discernment & victory
Through Him we can overcome
3. We need to listen to God's Spirit
He is our source of discernment

V. Counsel: To help us Discern – 4:5-6

1. Don't judge truth by popularity – 5
False spirits & prophets are of the world
They are part of the world system
They speak from viewpoint of the world
They say what people want to hear
Therefore the world listens to them
Many follow the broad road to destruction
2. John says "we are of God" – 6
The "we" and "us" are writers of Scripture
Those who know God listen to His truth
Those who are not of God do not respond
This is what separates truth and error
God is the source of all truth
Turning from God opens us up to error