

The Johns

1 John 4:1-6 -- With **Suspicious Minds**

How do you “test a spirit?”

1. Who or what are “the spirits” in 4:1?

“A Spirit” – the “spiritual” part of a person ... what makes us a person’s DRIVE or MOTIVATION

Key thought: if you don’t have the Holy Spirit driving you ... what does drive you?
(What is the “old” of 2 Cor. 5:17?)

2. How do we “test” these spirits?

→ How might we think that these spirits could be tested?

- By the # of FOLLOWERS? - By the # of BOOKS THEY WRITE? - By the SENSE THEY MAKE
NO!

→ According to 4:2-3, what is the test?

3. For context, we need to be aware of the heresies that the early church faced.

- Early heresies: (1) Denied the humanity of Jesus (2) Denied the divinity of Jesus

- Today’s heresies: Deny Jesus is the means of SALVATION for mankind! (Can you think of any?)

> Ex: *Power of positive thinking? Evolution? Looking within?*

So ... what’s the point:

“We should be SUSPICIOUS of our TEACHERS!”

> Who are our teachers? {Pastors, TV Evangelists, Authors, Bloggers, ???}

> Is their focus on JESUS as the key to everything?

... but doesn’t suspicion quench the spirit?

Read 1 Thess. 5:19-21

> According to this passage, how might we mishandle the Spirit?

(1) QUENCH IT → not allow the spirit to move.

(2) HATE IT → deny His work; denigrate His followers (Ralph Wilson)

(3) ACCEPT IT without QUESTION

> The old cliché is apropos: “Don’t throw out the baby with the bath water!”

1 John 4:7-21 -- Love, Love, Love

*** Interesting fact: The word "love" is used 43X in this letter; 32X in this section alone!

Everyone who loves has been BORN OF GOD???

 (consider the implications)

Q: Is love all it takes to be born again?

No ... being born again is not a RESULT of loving. Loving is an OUTGROWTH of being born again!

Q: Can a person who is *not* born again love?

NO ... not the way you think!

> She can EROS.

> He can PHILEO.

> But AGAPE is impossible without Jesus!

Q: What is AGAPE?

UNCONDITIONAL & VOLITIONAL

Unconditional – There are no IF'S

> *Think of all the conditions you place on love.*

The Unconditional Love game.

Check where you "check out"

- ___ I love you as long as you are beautiful / handsome.
- ___ I love you as long as you provide for me.
- ___ I love you as long as you feed me.
- ___ I love you as long as you meet my needs for intimacy.
- ___ I love you as long as you turn me on.
- ___ I love you as long as you make me happy.
- ___ I love you as long as you love me back.
- ___ I love you as long as you stay faithful to me.
- ___ I love you as long as you stay with me.
- ___ I love you as long as you don't try to hurt me.

Volitional – An act of the WILL

> Not something you FEEL, but something you CHOOSE TO DO!

Agape is

(1) INEVITABLE (4:7-8)

(2) SACRIFICIAL (4:9)

(3) REACTIONARY (4:10) – we don't initiate this love ... it is a response to God's love!

(4) REFLECTIVE (4:11-12) – His love is intended to be modeled!

When we agape, we illustrate the invisible!

(5) INDICATIVE (4:17-18) – What does agape indicate? (*Our salvation*)

-- What *fear* does agape "drive out?"