



Small Group Guide: Testing the Spirits

****Based on 1 John 4:1-6****

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

****Icebreaker Question:****

Have you ever been fooled by something online—a fake video, a scam email, or misinformation? What made it convincing? How did you realize it wasn't real?

Key Scripture

Read 1 John 4:1-6 together as a group.

1. ****The Reality of Spiritual Warfare****

- The sermon emphasized that "there's a supernatural world that is at war for your soul and for your allegiance." How does this reality change the way you think about your daily decisions?

- Why do you think many Christians don't take spiritual warfare seriously?

2. ****Satan's Strategy****

- The pastor said, "Satan will always tempt you to abandon God's best for your life for what seems best in the moment." Can you share an example (without going into inappropriate detail) of when you've experienced this temptation?

- Discuss the two primary lies mentioned: (1) You can't trust God's word, and (2) You can't trust God's goodness. Which one do you find yourself more vulnerable to?

Testing What We Consume

3. ****Media Discernment****

- The sermon challenged us to "do your homework" before consuming podcasts, books, or teachings. How intentional are you about vetting what you listen to or read? What steps could you take to be more discerning?

- The pastor mentioned we read reviews for restaurants but often don't research spiritual teachers. Why do you think we're less cautious with spiritual content?

The Test of Truth

- According to verses 2-3, the primary test is: "What does the teacher say about Jesus?" Why is this the most important question we can ask?

- What are some subtle ways teachers today might diminish Jesus while still appearing Christian?

Living in Victory

5. **Greater is He**

- Verse 4 promises: "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." How does this truth encourage you when facing spiritual attacks or deception?

- The sermon mentioned that "Christ guarantees victory for the believer." What does this victory look like practically in daily life?

6. **Complete Surrender**

- The illustration about baptism and the stick figure emphasized giving Jesus everything—from our feet to our head, including our minds. What areas of your life (what you watch, read, listen to) might you still be holding back from Jesus?

Key Takeaways (5 minutes)

1. ****The enemy is real and active**** - Satan is specifically after your soul and allegiance to Christ

2. ****False teaching is everywhere**** - We must test everything against Scripture, especially asking "What does this say about Jesus?"

3. ****Do your homework**** - Be intentional about what spiritual content you consume

4. ****Jesus is better**** - Whatever the world offers, Christ offers something greater

5. ****You have victory**** - If you belong to Christ, He who is in you is greater than the enemy

Practical Applications (15-20 minutes)

****Choose one or more of the following:****

1. **Audit Your Influences**

- Make a list of the top 5 podcasts, books, social media accounts, or teachers you regularly consume

- Research each one: What do they believe about Jesus? Are they faithful to Scripture?

- Remove or replace anything that doesn't align with biblical truth

2. **Establish a Scripture Foundation**

- Commit to reading Scripture daily before consuming any other spiritual content

- Use the 1 John booklet provided by the church to study God's Word directly

- Memorize 1 John 4:4: "Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."

3. **Practice Discernment**

- The next time you hear a sermon or teaching, write down:
 - * What did they say about Jesus?
 - * Did they support their points with Scripture?
 - * Did this draw me closer to Christ or somewhere else?
- Share your observations with an accountability partner

4. ****Identify Your Vulnerability****

- Prayerfully ask God: "Where am I vulnerable to the enemy's lies?"
- Consider: What desires in your heart are you seeking affirmation for outside of Scripture?
- Confess this to a trusted Christian friend and ask for accountability

Closing Reflection

****Final Thought:****

The enemy is clever, but he's not more powerful than Jesus. When we belong to Christ, we have His Spirit within us to guide us into all truth. The question isn't whether we'll be tempted or targeted—we will be. The question is: Will we be prepared? Will we know God's Word well enough to recognize the counterfeits?

****Closing Prayer:****

Lord, thank You that You are greater than any enemy we face. Help us to be vigilant, discerning, and dedicated to Your Word above all else. Show us where we're vulnerable and give us courage to remove anything that draws us away from You. May we declare with our lives that Jesus is better than anything this world offers. In Jesus' name, Amen.