

A Discerning Fellowship
1 John 4:1-6

I. 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
2. There are other spirit beings – Eph. 6:12
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 for Discernment – 4:1

1. Do not be deceived
Be aware of presence of evil spirits
They work through false prophets
May even do some miracles
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?
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 is already present in our world

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. Word of Counsel – 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

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