

To Whom Are You Listening? 1John 4:1-6

Know The Source

The validity of a statement often depends on the source
This is even more important with matters of the soul
What is the source of your soul's directives?
To whom do you listen?

This Is No Inconsequential Matter

Our "source" will dictate our actions
Many sources available today
Preachers, Denomination, Religions, Science, Family, Friends, even Self—trust own conscience
Different advice leads to different actions
Some may feel justified because some "authority" approved it - 2Timothy 4:3-4
Seems easy for us to find ways to rationalize behavior we want

Where Should We Turn? Who Is The Source Of Authority?

As Christians, we naturally turn to God as our authority
He is our Creator, has plan for us, loves us, and is One True God - Genesis 1:26-27; Ephesians 3:11-12
We can pray to Him for wisdom - James 1:5-6

How Can We Make Sure That We Are Truly Listening To God?

John helps us see that as he deals with Gnosticism and Docetism in 1John 4:1-6
Disputes nature of Jesus -- Docetism – Gnostic idea Jesus had no body, only appeared to die
We cannot believe every spirit-- many false spirits must "test the spirits" (v. 1)
Accept He came in flesh - from God; deny Jesus came in flesh represent spirit of antichrist (v. 2-3)!
John asserts supremacy of God over evil one (v. 4)
To deny Jesus in the flesh are from world, speak as world, and world hears them (v. 5)
"We" are from God, and those who know God listen to "us" (v. 6)
Those who do not listen to "us" are not of God (v. 6)
Thus, one can discern spirit of truth from spirit of error (v. 6)

What Does This All Mean?

John provides a layout for understanding – not limited to Docetism only
Knowledge of God manifest in whether one observes the commandments - 1John 2:3-6
Believe Jesus came in flesh, yet practice immorality - teach false doctrine, don't really know God
Test Everything By God's Standard - 1John 4:1

What comes from God is of one accord, it agrees with the Bible - 2Timothy 3:16-17

Conforming To Error

Testing required because the spirit of error is present in the world - 1John 4:1,6
Docetism flourished because it made "more sense" to Greek world around Christians - 1John 4:5
God "appearing" but not really being flesh was more appealing than understanding Jesus was God in the flesh! ("That's not rational thinking")
Error often clear because its teachers appeal to worldly desires or expectations - 1John 2:15-17

Truth

Those who are "of God", however, speak the truth 1John 4:1-6 - 1John 4:4
John speaks of "we"-- "we" speak, and those who listen to God hear - 1John 4:6
While "we" here refers to Apostle and audience, we must make sure we are really in the "we"!
We may know if we are with Apostle by understanding to whom we listen!
"We" walk with Christ & do His commandments 1John 1:5-2:6
"We" are those who listen to God - 1John 4:6
To be part of that "we", we must be ones listening to God and those who teach God's truths!

If we believe the truth, and preach the truth, we may know the spirit of God from the spirit of error-
- those who teach the truth with us versus those who teach anything contrary - **Galatians 1:6-9**

The Question, Returns To Us -- To Whom Are We Listening?

Are we listening to a spirit of error?

Is our source of the world, speak as world, & to which world listens?

Do we uncritically just accept what is said or do we test the spirits? - **Acts 17:11; 1John 4:1**

Are we listening to the spirit of truth?

Do we listen to God?

Do we listen to those who accurately convey God's truth?

Are we willing to listen, even when the message is hard to swallow, and requires us to change to conform to Christ? - **Galatians 2:20**

Are we willing to hear the message, even with its unpopular parts and hard expectations?

There is no middle ground-- we must choose!

Let us seek to listen to God and His Word today!

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