

Briefing Document: 1 John Lesson 70

Wednesday-July 22, 2026

Executive Summary

The following briefing outlines the markers of true salvation and the critical need for spiritual discernment as presented in the study of 1 John. There are six primary indicators, or "holy affections," that identify a person as a child of God. These include love for fellow believers, gratitude toward God, boldness in prayer, obedience to God's commands, faith in Jesus Christ, and the internal presence of the Holy Spirit.

A significant portion of the analysis focuses on the nature of spiritual warfare, which is defined not as physical or external combat with demons, but as a battle for the mind between truth and error. The source material emphasizes that all religious ideologies have a spiritual origin—either the Spirit of God or demonic spirits. False teaching is not merely a human mistake; it is a strategic deception by the kingdom of darkness. Believers are encouraged to use the Word of God to scrutinize all teachings, as the strategy of the enemy involves creating doubt, distortion, and denial of God's revealed truth.

Indicators of True Salvation: The Six Holy Affections

The document identifies six specific indicators that provide assurance of a person's standing as a child of God. These "holy affections" represent changes in a person's heart and behavior following salvation.

- **Love for Other Christians:** A genuine affection for the "brothers" is considered one of the primary signs of a true follower of Christ.
- **Gratitude Toward God:** This is an affection driven by a deep thankfulness for God's grace.
- **Boldness in Prayer:** A child of God experiences a new confidence when communicating with Him.
- **Obedience to Commands:** A sincere desire to please God and follow His Word serves as a practical evidence of faith.
- **Faith in Jesus Christ:** A foundational belief and trust in Christ as Lord.
- **The Presence of the Holy Spirit:** This is the final and internal indicator. As 1 John 3:24 states, *"And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us."*

The Role and Evidence of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit's presence is often mysterious, compared to the wind that blows where it wills. However, His power is visible through His impact on a person's life. Evidence of the Spirit includes:

- **The Fruit of the Spirit:** The presence of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
- **Instruction and Guidance:** The Spirit acts as a teacher, making the Word of God come alive to the believer.
- **Empowerment:** The Spirit energizes prayer, witnesses to others, and directs a person's life to accomplish God's purposes.
- **The Recognition of Christ:** No one can truly call Jesus "Lord" except by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Doctrine of Discernment

The transition into 1 John 4 introduces the theme of discernment. This is the ability to distinguish between the "spirit of truth" and the "spirit of error."

Defining Spiritual Warfare

Contrary to popular misconceptions, spiritual warfare is defined simply as the battle between truth and error. It is a "battle for the mind." The objective of the church is to bring the truth of Scripture to bear on ideologies that act as "fortresses" or "prisons" for the human soul. To liberate people from error, these lofty thoughts must be torn down and replaced with obedience to Christ.

The Strategy of Deceit

The strategy used by the kingdom of darkness to assault the truth has remained consistent since the Garden of Eden. It follows a three-step progression:

1. **Doubt:** Creating uncertainty about what God has said (e.g., "Has God indeed said?").
2. **Distortion:** Twisting or misrepresenting God's words to change their meaning.
3. **Denial:** Flatly contradicting the truth of God (e.g., "You will not surely die").

Combined, these strategies result in total deceit, aimed at making people ignorant or dismissive of God's Word.

The Source and Propagation of Error

The document asserts that there is no neutral or "merely human" religious information. All ideologies are traced back to a spiritual source.

The Demonic Origin of False Doctrine

Any teaching that contradicts or assaults the Scripture is considered "demonic" in origin. As 1 Timothy 4:1 notes, *"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons."* While false teachers are human, they serve as mouthpieces for "seducing spirits."

Characteristics of False Teachers

The human agents who spread these lies are described as "hypocritical liars." A key characteristic is that their consciences have been "seared with a hot iron." This means their moral compass is like scar tissue—it is cauterized and feels no guilt, remorse, or conviction for the lies they tell. Because they are unconscionable, they can propagate error with great passion.

The Reality of False Worship

Using the example of pagan idols, the document explains that while an idol itself is nothing (a piece of wood or stone), the system behind it is fueled by demons. 1 Corinthians 10:20 states, *"Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons."* Therefore, a person cannot maintain a connection to the truth while also participating in systems of error.

Conclusion: Two Kinds of Wisdom

The analysis concludes by contrasting two types of wisdom as found in James 3.

- **Wisdom from Above:** This wisdom is *"first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy"* (James 3:17).
- **Earthly Wisdom:** This wisdom is described as natural, sensual, and demonic (James 3:15).

True believers are called to be discerning, testing every spirit and every teaching against the Word of God to ensure they remain in the truth.