

INTRO

- Have you ever been sold something that is counterfeit? Or,
- What is something you own that has tremendous value to you?

READ

1 John 2:18-27

As we've come to see, John helps us prove the authenticity of our faith around 3 tests: HEAD—our beliefs; HEART—Our loves; LIFE—Our lifestyle.

REFLECT & RESPOND

In this passage, John makes the case that what we believe really does matter by exposing the danger of false teaching and being led astray by false doctrines, especially when it comes to the person and work of Jesus.

John reminds us that we are in the last hour (the period between Jesus ascension and his return), and many will seek to oppose Jesus. Read v22.

Qu: How does it make you feel reading this verse?

Jesus himself offered us the fundamental truth test: "who do you say that I am?" (Mt 16:15)

The spirit of antichrist or heresy always seeks to deny or diminish Christ.

Thankfully, John provides us 3 clear safeguards against being led astray in this last hour.

1. COMMUNITY — The *Body* of Christ

Read v19. Whenever we break from God's community, we expose ourselves to danger. The Body of Christ is a safeguard for believers and is the pillar and foundation of the truth (1 Tim 3:15). The Church is by no means perfect, but Jesus loves her and calls his followers to love her too.

Qu: what does your relationship with God's church say about you?

2. GOSPEL — The *Word* of Christ

In v24, John exhorts them to remain in what they heard from the beginning: the gospel—the good news of Jesus, who he is and what he's done on our behalf as the fulfilment of Scripture.

Qu: in what ways can you make a habit of remaining in the gospel?

3. SPIRIT — The *Spirit* of Christ

Lastly, John reminds them (and us) of the incredible gift of the Holy Spirit we have been given! The Spirit teaches us all things (Jn 14:26), is the Spirit of truth (Jn 15:26), and guides us into all truth (Jn 16:13). As we learn to listen to and be led by the Spirit in our lives, we can have confidence of walking in the truth.

What's clear is that John's truth test brings us back to the centrality of Jesus Christ in our lives. As we make him central to our lives by remaining in his Body, Word, and Spirit, the result will be an authentic walk with God of faithfulness and fruitfulness.

Qu: Sometimes it's hard to balance these 3 safeguards. Which one/s are you most likely to neglect? How can you correct that going forward?

PRAY

- Pray that the group's love and relationship to the Church is more like Jesus's.
- Pray for a greater sensitivity to the Spirit in each one's life, and that the Holy Spirit would give greater discernment in knowing truth from lie, right from wrong.