



1 John

Test the Spirits

- Those who belong to Jesus can have confidence before God
- 1 John 3:19–24
- “By this we shall know” . . .
 - We don’t abide in sin but in righteousness
 - We love other people the way God love us
- Those are the characteristics of children of God not children of the Devil

Test the Spirits

- John was reassuring his readers that they could have confidence that they really belonged to God, that they were “of the truth.”
- John had already contrasted those who are of the truth with those who are liars – the antichrists, those who deny that Jesus is the Christ (2:18–25).
- This is the confidence we can rest in – that Jesus is the Christ and that His righteousness is what saves us, not our own.

Test the Spirits

- John reassured them that even when their hearts condemned them, they could have confidence that they really did belong to God.
- In the Bible, the “heart” is not just our emotions, but the entire inner self.
- The condemnation of our hearts refers to that inner voice that can be so self-critical, especially when we fall short.
- We doubt and believe the lie: “You can’t really be saved. You’re not good enough for God.”

Test the Spirits

- This is how we have confidence in Him and assurance of our salvation, which was one of John's main goals in writing this letter (5:12–13).
- We don't have to constantly worry that if we mess up, we'll fall out of favor with God and lose our salvation.
- Our salvation is secure because it is based on Christ's righteousness, holiness and perfection, not ours.
- This is what the well-known hymn, "Blessed Assurance," is all about. The lyrics came to Fanny Crosby, the blind hymnwriter, after hearing a tune.

Test the Spirits

- At the time, the Holiness Movement was a subset of the Methodist Church.
- It focused so heavily on sanctification that they believed in a “second work of grace” called “entire sanctification” that made believers completely perfect, free from any sin.
- This led to a belief that “believers cannot commit sin without forfeiting justification.” This resulted in many believers questioning their salvation every time they sinned. But John wrote that we can know we are of the truth; we can even reassure our hearts when they condemn us.

Test the Spirits

- We can rest in this truth: Jesus is the Christ.
- Our righteousness is not based on our deeds but on His righteousness given to us by grace through faith. God's truth is greater than our hearts.
- So we can be assured of our salvation and be confident that when we come to Him in prayer, He hears us.
- Because we are precious children of a loving Father. It's not about earning God's favor so He'll give us what we ask for; it's about relationship.

Test the Spirits

- John teaches that whoever keeps God's commandments abides in God.
- But keeping the commandments isn't about earning our status.
- It is evidence of the relationship we have with the Father (3:24).
- This is why we keep His commandments and do what pleases Him (3:22), because we love God.
- We want to please Him, just as children want to please their human parents.

Test the Spirits

- It is all about relationship, from the beginning of the chapter to the end.
- We are His precious children, so we can be assured that we will be with Him in heaven forever (5:13).
- We are His precious children, so we can be confident that He will give us everything we need like a good Father (Matthew 7:7–11).
- Because we are His precious children, His love abides in us and we can truly love others.

Test the Spirits

- We must test every spirit to see if it is from God
- 1 John 4:1–6
- John said they could know they abide in God because they had God's Spirit dwelling in them.
- Now he implored them not to believe "every spirit" (4:1).
- John contrasted the Spirit of God with the spirit of the antichrist (4:3).
- He had told them that many antichrists had come, not just one (2:18).

Test the Spirits

- John was telling his readers that this wasn't just an intellectual or theological problem, a disagreement about doctrine.
- This was spiritual warfare. There are two sides to this war, and they are opposed to each other. Christ and antichrist.
- We recognize those on each side by whether they confess Jesus as the way to the Father. Confession doesn't just mean saying you believe Jesus is the way but also living as if you believe it, following Him.
- But these antichrists denied that Jesus was the Christ altogether (2:22).

Test the Spirits

- The good news about this spiritual battle is that we are on the winning side.
- The Devil may be the “ruler of this world” (John 12:31; 2 Corinthians 4:4), but Jesus is the ruler of all things.
- The Spirit who dwells in us is greater than the spirit of the antichrist (4:4).
- Some days it may seem like Satan is winning. He certainly has power over this world (5:19).
- But we know who triumphs in the end. In fact, Jesus has already overcome Satan; He has already won the victory (Colossians 2:14–15).

Test the Spirits

- But the world listens to these antichrists.
- The Devil still has power over the world.
- Those who know God listen to the apostles, but those who don't know God listen to the voices of the world.
- Though the details may be different, this still happens today.
- There is a sharp contrast between what the world teaches about Jesus and what the Church teaches.

Test the Spirits

- We believe Jesus is the Son of God, that He rose from the dead and is alive, and that He is the only way to the Father.
- The world thinks He was a good religious teacher or that He never even lived at all.
- The world thinks there are many paths to God, if He exists at all.
- The Gospel is foolishness to the world, but to us who know Jesus, it is the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:21).

Test the Spirits

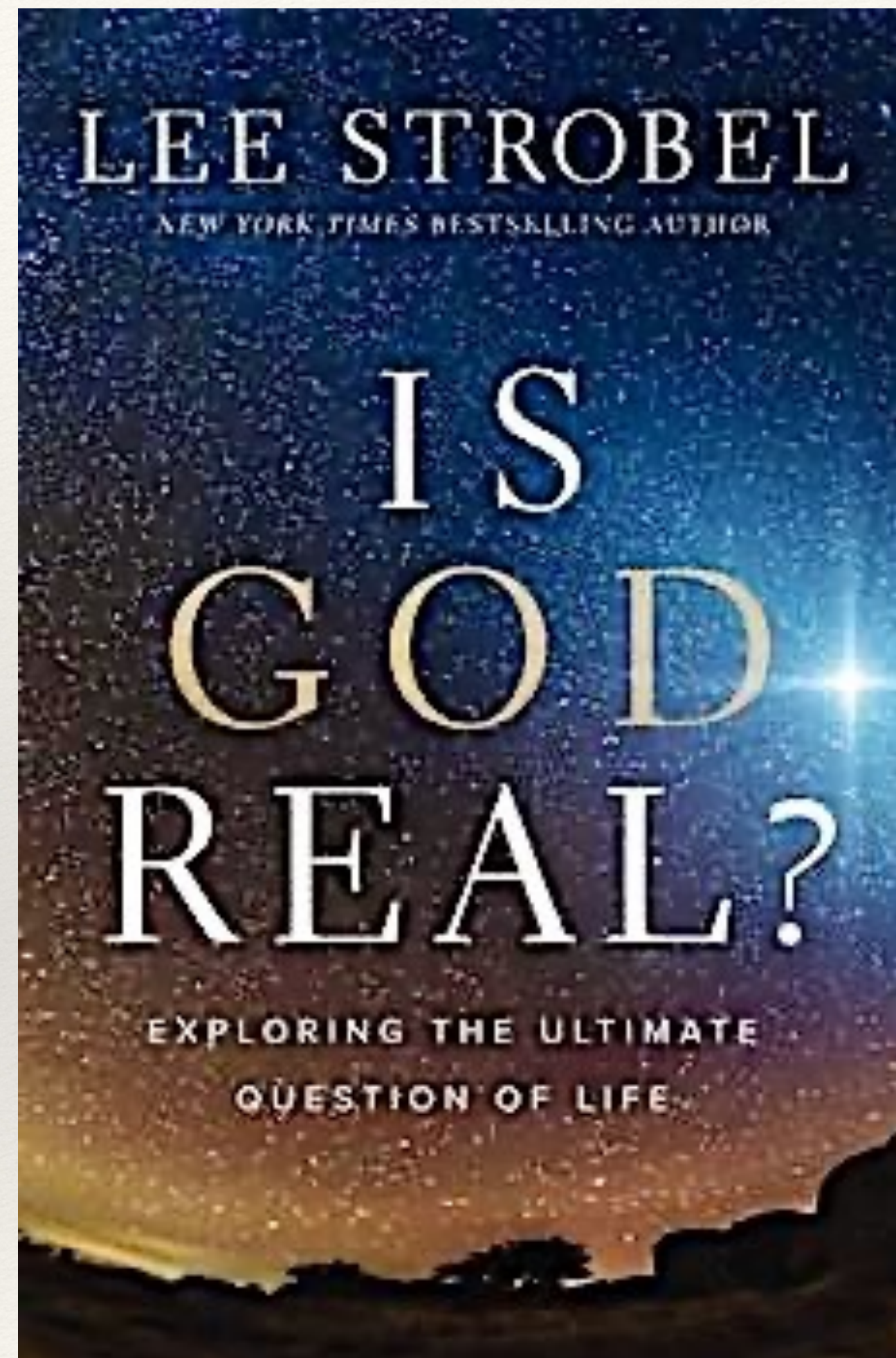
- Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44). He is still lying to keep people from Jesus, and the world is still believing the lies.
- We must have discernment to test the spirits, to see if what people say is consistent with God's Word. We must know God's Word deeply so we can recognize the lies.
- It's all about relationship, fellowship, abiding in Christ. Those who know Jesus have His Spirit dwelling in them (3:24; 4:2). They belong to God. They recognize His voice (John 10:27).

Test the Spirits

- Everything comes back to love
- 1 John 4:7–8
- John returned to the same basic commandment – love one another – because love is from God. It is a refrain he repeated throughout all his writings, but especially in this letter. And he's not the only one. Jesus said that love is the greatest commandment (Matthew 22:36–40; John 15:12).
- Paul said that nothing religious we do matters if we don't do it out of love (1 Corinthians 13:1–3). It always comes back to love.

Test the Spirits

- John had just written that Jesus' commandment is to believe in Him and love one another (3:23).
- John had just said that the way we recognize true believers is by the way they love others (3:14–18).
- Just after he talked about testing the spirits to see who was really from God, he came back to love.
- This is the third and final time he discussed love in this letter, each time using it as the way to identify those who really know and love God.



- More than 200 times a second, around the clock, someone is asking an online search engine about God.
- Is God Real? or Does God exist?
- Lee Strobel offers a reply while interviewing some of the leading experts on topics that point to God's existence.
- Six chapters provide evidence for God, and a two additional chapters respond to frequent questions about God.

Is God Real?

- The Cosmos Requires a Creator
 - *Interview with William Lane Craig*
- As a student, he wondered whether the arguments for God could stand up to scrutiny and wrote his dissertation on the subject.
- That launched him into a lifetime of exploring cosmology.
- He proposes the Kalam Cosmological Argument - whatever beings to exist has a cause, the universe had a beginning, the universe has a cause.

Is God Real?

- The Universe Needs a Fine-Tuner
 - *Interview with Michael Strauss*
- The numbers for fine-tuning are calibrated with mind-boggling precision.
- Michael Strauss earned his PhD in experimental high energy physics.
- The fine-tuning applies not only to the universe and our galaxy, but also to building a life-sustaining planet.
- This points back to the “God Hypothesis.”

Is God Real?

- Our DNA Demands a Designer
 - *Interview with Stephen Meyer*
- Francis Crick told his wife that he had discovered the secret of life, but she didn't believe him.
- Stephen Meyer received his masters degree and doctorate at Cambridge University with a dissertation on origin-of-life biology.
- He makes the DNA-to-Design Argument.

Is God Real?

- Easter Showed That Jesus is God
 - *Interview with Michael Licona*
- Historian's three Rs: reliable sources, responsible method, and restrained results (New Testament writers, apostolic fathers, minimal facts).
- Jesus was killed by crucifixion, disciples believed He rose and appeared to them, the conversion of church persecutor Paul, the tomb was empty.
- He also spends time “Fielding Objections.”

Is God Real?

- Experiencing God
 - *Interview with Douglas Groothuis*
- Spiritual experiences are more common than you might think (Barna Research found 38% of Americans, and 78% of evangelicals).
- God is infinite and personal, we are finite and personal. Being made in God's image opens the door to communion with Him.
- Need to take time to test these experiences - are they trustworthy.

Is God Real?

- Which God is Real
 - *Interview with Chad Meister*
- He almost committed suicide but had a vision with the words: “Acts 14:22.”
- Apologetics Pyramid: truth, worldview, theism, revelation, gospel.
- Everyone can't be right, testing atheism and pantheism.
- Theism - the fingerprints of God.
- Revelation - has God spoken to us?

Is God Real?

- Challenge #1: If God Is Real, Why Is there Suffering?
 - *Interview with Peter John Kreft*
- “How can a mere finite human be sure that infinite wisdom would not tolerate certain short-range evils in order for longer range goods we couldn’t foresee?”
- Evidence for evil and suffering can actually be used in favor of God.
- Evil - the Megaphone of Pain (C.S. Lewis).

Is God Real?

- Challenge #2: If God Is Real, Why Is He So Hidden?
 - *Interview with Kenneth Richard Samples*
- Rocked by the suicide of his brother, Kenneths Samples began to seek answer to deep questions.
- He uses the analogy of the pitcher and the catcher. There is stronger evidence for the failure resting with the receiver than the sender.
- CLEAR evidence: C-cosmos, L-life, E-ethics, A-attractions, and R-religion

Conclusion

- Your Encounter with the Real God
 - Creator God
 - Fine-Tuner God
 - DNA Design
 - Easter-Resurrection
 - Experiencing God
 - Only One God

