**Grace Group Guide**

**1 John 4:1-6**

Rosie Ruiz. You may or may not be familiar with that name. If you are the latter, let me introduce you – *“Rosie is a*[*Cuban American*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuban_American)*runner who was declared the winner in the female category for the 84th*[*Boston Marathon*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boston_Marathon) *in 1980, only to have her title stripped eight days after the race when it was discovered that she had not run the entire course.*

*On April 21, 1980, Ruiz appeared to win the Boston Marathon's female category with a time of 2:31:56. Her time would have been the fastest female time in Boston Marathon history as well as the third-fastest female time ever recorded in any marathon. However, suspicions mounted about Ruiz almost from the beginning. Men's winner*[*Bill Rodgers*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Rodgers_(athlete))*, who had just won his third straight Boston Marathon, noticed that Ruiz could not recall many things that most runners know by heart, such as*[*intervals*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interval_training)*and splits. Other observers noticed that Ruiz was not panting or coated in sweat, and her thighs were much flabbier and fatter (***not my words!)** *than would be expected for a world-class runner. She later released stress-test results showing her resting heart rate as 76. Most female marathoners have a resting heart rate in the 50s or lower.*

*In addition, her time of 2:31:56 was an unusual improvement, more than 25 minutes ahead of her reported time in the*[*New York City Marathon*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_City_Marathon)*six months earlier. When asked by a reporter why she did not seem fatigued after the grueling race, she said, "I got up with a lot of energy this morning.’”* – *Via Wikipedia search: Rosie Ruiz*

Sometimes it baffles me why someone would go out on such a limb and take such a big risk just to have a moment in the spotlight. But then I remember, we’re human and along with that comes lots of foolish behavior bent towards self and personal gain. It took a lot of people putting together little things that they noticed in order to finally shed light on Rosie’s deceit but in the end, it all made perfect sense. There were certain things that marked elite runners and then there were certain things that marked elite runners who had just run a marathon…she didn’t bear those marks.

This is the message that John has presented time and again concerning the false teachers of his day and he constantly encourages us to pay attention to the marks of a believer. Consider the following thoughts and related test from Jack Arnold and his sermon: *When Unbelief Is Right.*

***“This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God:  Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,”*** – The mark of orthodoxy is over the person of Jesus Christ.  Jesus the Savior, is also the Christ, the Messiah of the Old Testament.  According to the Old Testament the Messiah would be God come in the flesh.  John says an indispensable fundamental of the Christian Faith is that God became incarnate in human flesh without sin.  That the eternal Son of God, co-equal with Father, became a man.  Thus, Jesus Christ becomes the unique person of the universe.  He becomes the God-Man.  He is truly God and truly man.  He is perfect humanity and undiminished deity united in one person forever.  This is a historical fact.

To deny the full deity or humanity of Jesus Christ is to be a heretic and not a true Christian.  A true teacher of Christianity will gladly acknowledge the entrance into history of the Son of God as Jesus of Nazareth, the God-Man who labored, loved and died for sin and rose again from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the Father.  The truth that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, was with God and was God and became a man in incarnation is biblical and has been supported by true Christians all through the history of the Church. It is not just enough to acknowledge this as a historical fact.  There are many who are orthodox in doctrine and say that they believe in the incarnation.  They show it to you in their creeds and hymn books and repeat it every Sunday, “We believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord.”  BUT they have never committed themselves to this truth in a personal way.  The Apostle John says you must believe that Jesus Christ is the God-Man as a historical fact but you must also confess it before men.  This is an open and bold confession that Christ is the God-Man, the only true Savior. Do not listen to any teacher who does not believe the historical fact of the incarnation and who is not committed to it personally.

***“But every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God.  This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.”*** - As the world moves towards the last days when the Antichrist, the world dictator, who will be an incarnation of the Devil shall appear, there will be an ever-increasing spirit of anti-Christ which will prepare the world for his coming.  *Never has there been such denial of Christ, then in our present generation!*

***All heresy can be tested by one’s belief in the person and work of Jesus Christ.***

*1.   Christian Science:  They say that Jesus was a mere man upon whom the Spirit of Christ came.  The Spirit of Christ is the eternal One and he came upon Jesus at his baptism and left him again before he died upon the cross.  Thus Jesus was born a mere man and died a mere man.  Thus the only thing of real value is the moral teachings of Christ.*

*2.   Jehovah Witnesses:  They believe that Jesus Christ was the first created being from Jehovah and then everything after that was created through Christ.  They deny the deity of Christ.*

*3.   Mormons:  They say that Jesus never was the eternal, unchangeable God, but he was a man who became God and came to show us how we might become God’s someday.  They deny Christ’s eternality as the Son of God.*

*4.   Modern Day Liberals In The Professing Church:  They say that the Jesus of history is not important to us; that His virgin birth, His miracles, His resurrection, and even His crucifixion are but myths, legends gathered about the figure of the man, Jesus highly exaggerated ideas that the early church added to the facts.  The facts of the historical Jesus are not important.  The important thing is his moral teachings.  Liberals deny the deity of Christ.*

For our benefit, consider this list from A.W. Tozer and let it aide us as we go forward in discerning what we allow to speak into our lives.

1. **How does the teaching affect my relationship with God? Is He magnified and glorified, or diminished?**
2. **How does the teaching affect my attitude toward the Lord Jesus Christ? Does it magnify Him and give Him first place? Or, does it subtly shift my focus onto myself or some experience?**
3. **How does the teaching affect my attitude toward Scripture? Did the teaching come from and agree with the Word? Does it increase my love for the Word?**
4. **How does the teaching affect my self-life? Does it feed self or crucify it? Does it feed pride or humility?**
5. **How does the teaching affect my relationships to other Christians? Does it cause me to withdraw, find fault, and exalt myself in superiority? Or, does it lead me to genuine love for all that truly know Christ?**
6. **How does the teaching affect my relationship to the world system? Does it lead me to pursue the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life? Does it lead me to pursue worldly riches, reputation, and pleasures? Or, does it crucify the world to me?**
7. **How does the teaching affect my attitude toward sin? Does it cause me to tolerate sin in my life or to turn from it and grow in holiness? Any teaching that makes holiness more acceptable and sin more intolerable is genuine.**