

1 John – God is Love: Week Four

What it Means to Know God

Day One: How to Identify a Deceiving Spirit

I am so glad you're still with me! The fact that you are still reading this, says that you are committed to Jesus and are more than a "mere woman"! The book of 1 John is not a book you can read casually and move on without being forced to take a hard look at yourself. If you are like me, then the words of this book have challenged you to think about whether your words, "if you say..." are matching your behavior and thoughts. Are we pleasing God or man? There is a big difference between being a people pleaser and a people lover.

Begin this week by praying this prayer or one of your own.

Father, I am so grateful for you and your Son Jesus. You have proven over and over again, that you love me, and that you are committed to me. Thank you for calling me Your child. Your promises are amazing, telling me that you empower me to overcome every situation, and that you will be with me through all of life's difficulties. Jesus, thank you for being my Advocate, my Propitiation, and my Friend. Lord, this week, as I study your Word, illuminate it for me, so that I can know you better. Help me see clearly through the eyes of the spirit and teach me whatever it is You want me to know about you. I love you Lord. Amen

Read 1 John 4:1-25

In this chapter, there are certain things that John wants us to be certain about. I think John saw that the people in His church family were often confused about who or what to believe. Remember, they didn't have the written Bible yet, so they had to learn from John himself, or from copies of the letters that Paul, Peter and James wrote, or copies of one of the four Gospel accounts.

The devil was also at work, attempting to deceive the believers and lead them away from the Truth. John was explaining how they could tell the difference between truth and error. He wanted his friends to be confident in the faith, and not to be afraid.

John uses the phrase "By this you know", five times! Let's find out what he wants us to know. Fill in the blanks:

1. 1 John 4:2 By this you know the _____
2. 1 John 4:6b By this we know the _____ and the _____

3. 1 John 4:7b Everyone who loves is born of God and _____
4. 1 John 4:13 By this we know that _____
5. 1 John 4:16 We have come to know and have believed _____
which God has for us.

Today we will focus on the first 3 things John says we can know.

1. The Spirit of God 4:2
2. The Spirit of Truth 4:6
3. The Spirit of Error 4:6

God is Spirit. The word for “spirit” in the Greek language, is “pneuma”. Vine’s Expository Dictionary explains “pneuma” as “like the wind, is invisible, immaterial, and powerful.” God does not dwell in a human body. Of course, we know that Jesus “*became flesh and dwelt among us.*” (John 1:14) On Day Two we will learn more about the spirit of man, and other spirits.

Reread 1 John 4:1-6 and answer the questions.

1. What are we told not to believe? (v.1) _____
 2. Rather, what are we told to do instead? (v.1) _____
 3. Why is this important to do? (v.1) _____
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John tells us that many false prophets have gone out into the world. By false prophets, he is including both those who predict the future (and what they say does not come to pass) and those who preach false doctrine. These false prophets corrupt the Word of God by adding to it, omitting parts of it, or mixing some truth with lies, so that people are deceived or confused.

When John says that we must not believe every spirit, he means that we must not believe every teaching or teacher that pretends to come from God, just because they appear to be qualified.

John Gill says, “There are some who call themselves the ministers of the Gospel, who, though they may have some natural abilities and a share of human learning, and a nominal knowledge of things, yet have never received either grace or gifts of the Spirit, nor have they ever been called by Him.”

The divinely inspired letter from the Apostle John is giving you and me some great advice! Don't just believe everything you hear or read, even when the speaker or book is popular. God wants each of us to be responsible for what we are being taught. Check out what the teacher is saying, to make sure it agrees with the Word of God. A good teacher will want you to check out the Scriptures for yourself. We trust God's Word. It is the Word of God that is infallible – not men or women!

4. Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (v.2)

5. When we hear that confession of faith regarding Jesus Christ (mentioned in v.2) who will we know is involved? (v.2) _____

6. Every spirit that (v.3) _____ is not _____

7. What is the spirit called that does not confess Jesus? (v.3)

8. What are two things we know about the spirit of the antichrist? (v.3)

- It is _____
- It is _____

9. Since you are from God, you have (v.4) _____ them.

10. Who have you overcome? (v.3) _____

11. Why have you been able to overcome them? (v.4) _____

We know that there are false prophets in the world (4:1) and the spirit of the antichrist is in the world. These two enemies deny that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (or came down from His home in Heaven with the Father). It is implied that they also deny what Jesus taught as truth, and the fact that He gave His life as the sacrificial Lamb of God for

all mankind and rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven. Jesus also taught us that God created the world, and that we are to believe the words of the whole Old Testament. Here is an example of one of the teachings of Jesus that show that He taught us God created the world, and male and female, and established the institution of marriage. Therefore, the teachings of evolution, or that there is no distinction between male or female, and marriage vows can be broken, etc. is contrary to the teachings of Jesus.

“Jesus said...’But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and the two shall become one flesh, so they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.” Mark 10:6-9

The point is, when someone denies any of the teachings of Jesus, or says that He was just a good man or even a prophet, they are denying the truth, and the Spirit of God is not in them.

We need to be made aware of the nature of the world we live in. The systems of the world that deny Christ are controlled by Satan, so we should not be surprised by the fact that the popular culture in our society opposes everything that honors the Lord Jesus Christ. The world systems will mock and ridicule any mention of Jesus or His followers. The world systems include everything that denies Jesus, including politics, education, music, art, science, engineering, social media, television and movie industries, etc.

Read 1 John 5:19 Fill in the blanks:

The whole world lies in the _____.

Reread 1 John 4:5-6

Those who do not believe in Jesus (referred to as “they”):

- They are from the _____.
- Therefore they _____ the world.
- And the world _____.

When we made the decision to follow Jesus, we became children of God, filled with His Spirit. Therefore, the world, (and Satan) hate us.

Read John (the Gospel) 15:18-20.

Why does the world hate us?

Read 2 Timothy 3:1-5, 12-15

In this passage, the Apostle Paul instructs young Timothy and tells him not to be surprised by the ungodly behavior and attitudes in the world. Then he tells Timothy (and us) how he should respond to the world.

You, _____, however, continue in the (v.14)
(put your name here)

_____ and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them (meaning, that we have learned them from the Spirit of God, Himself).

You and I have been convinced of the Truth. God Himself has revealed it to us. Those who do not believe in Jesus are of the world. They are being deceived and are following a path that leads to destruction. Remember, the enemy comes to “steal, kill, and destroy. Jesus came to bring us “life and to have it abundantly.” (John 10:10) You and I are God’s ambassadors to the lost people of the world. We need to share the Truth with anyone who will listen to us.

According to 1 John 4:6, our identity is from God. We belong to Him. We do not belong to the world. Therefore:

- He who _____ listens to us.
- He who _____ does not listen to us.
- By this we know....
 - The Spirit of _____
 - The Spirit of _____

After our study today, do you think you would be able to discern the spirit of truth and the spirit of error? If so, how? _____

“Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.” 1 John 4:4b