

Your Spiritual Assignment:

(1) Read through **1 John**. (2) Review your Study Guide with attention given to how the Apostle Paul highlights connecting, building, and protecting community in **Ephesians 4**.

***Ephesians 4:11-16** And He (God) Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect (mature) man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*

The spiritual maturity of every believer is the desire of God for His church and is the primary purpose for God providing pastors. **God gave gifts of leaders to the church** to equip the membership for service and to **edify the body towards unity and maturity**.

***1 John 1:1-4** That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—² the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—³ that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.*

1. Historical Context for Christianity | 1 John 1:1

***Galatians 1:6-9** I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, ⁷ which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.*

Everyone who confesses Christ should connect to, build, and protect community.

2. Empirical Evidence for Christianity (We have seen, heard, and touched Jesus.) | 1 John 1:1-3

***1 Peter 1:8-9** whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹ receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.*

3. Call to Connect to Community (That you may have fellowship with us...) | 1 John 1:3

"What benefit is there in communion with them? Is it anything else but to be sharers in troubles, reproaches, scorns and all manner of evils?" John Owen 1616-1683

Why take the risk of connecting to Community? Any and all arguments for lack of connecting to community should be surrendered with this fact that...connecting to community is about **God and His Son Jesus Christ!**

4. Clarification as to purpose of the Letter ("That your joy would be full.") | **1 John 1:4**
(re: Hebrews 12:1-3)

5. Protection of Community from Mere Words | **1 John 1:5-7**

***1 John 1:5-7** This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*

***1 John 3:11** For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another*

***1 John 3:23** And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.*

- If "love" was only an emotion or a feeling, how could it be commanded?
- We cannot "will" our emotions, but we can "will" our actions regardless of our feelings.

Love is more than how I feel; love is to seek out the very best for the other person regardless of my feelings. The very best for another is that they KNOW GOD, and not just KNOW *about* GOD, but KNOW GOD! Re: **John 17:3**

To "know God" is to experience His love in Christ and to return that love in faithful obedience. (**1 John 2:3, 3:18-19, 4:8, 11, 19, 5:2-3**) The love of God does something to us and through us.

1 John 4:7-11** Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ **Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

- **God loves us** in all of our messiness, so we ought to love others in spite of theirs.
- "**God does *not* love us** because we are valuable; we are valuable **because God loves us.**"
Martin Luther

We might live through Him. We might love through Him.

God's love produces within us a desire to deeply care for those within the body of Christ in spite of their struggles and problems.

WHEN WE LIVE THROUGH CHRIST, we have a genuine desire and a deeper concern for others. We will fight against our natural tendency to look to ourselves.

"**True love**" is both founded and built on the **truth of God,** not on how we feel.