

1John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

1John 4:2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

1John 4:3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

John tells the believers to test the spirits to see if they are from God. (The essence of our being is our spirit. I think John is just referring to men who represent themselves as teachers or prophets of God or the truth.) Again he warns that **many** false prophets have gone out into the world. (The way this is worded makes me think that there are many evil spirits who have continued to inhabit willing earthly vessels throughout history to inhibit the work of THE SPIRIT.) Every spirit (teacher/prophet) that acknowledges Jesus Christ (the Messiah) has come in the flesh (God in flesh) is from God. (The Messiah is THE ONLY WAY—no additions, modifications, deletions.....i.e., the cults.) The spirit of the antichrist already prevails in the world (through Satan – the prince of this world).

Paul encourages the same discernment on the part of the believer.

1Thessalonians 5:21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

“prove” = test, discern, examine

1John 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

We as believers have already won the victory. That is where our focus must stay as we fight our battles. The power of the Holy Spirit in us is far greater than the power of Satan.

1John 4:5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

Satan and his spirits speak to people from the viewpoint of what they want to hear, so they are eager to hear his lies.

1John 4:6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

One who is a believer and knows God is eager to listen to one sent from God and fellowship with other believers. (This is one of the reasons it is so hard to stay on top when you work with lost people. You are eager and even excited to be a witness, but you don't fit in. It's hard sometimes to continue patiently. They are just looking for you to slip up. You have to love their souls yet stay separate. That's not always easy to do.) When you see to whom people listen and with whom they fellowship (maintain close relationship), you know to whom they belong—God or the world.

1John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

1John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

John repeats how we should love one another—love comes from God. You can't truly love without being "born of God" because true love comes from God. The inverse is also true—one who does not show love is not of God, does not know God—because God is love.

Again, the context is addressing loving fellow believers.

1John 4:9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

This verse is basically the same as John 3:16. God showed His love to each person by sending His only Son into the world to become the perfect sacrifice for the sin of each and every person who has and will ever live. Those who choose to accept that gift in faith are given life—new life that will be enjoyed for eternity.

God's love for us is in spite of not because of who we are.

1John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

1John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

God's whole purpose in sending Jesus as a sacrifice to atone for our sins was to provide a way for us to live and fellowship with Him for eternity. He loved us THAT MUCH. If God can show that kind of selfless, "no strings attached," just take it as a gift kind of love, we should certainly be able to love one another with the empowerment of the Spirit.

1John 2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins* of the whole world.

1John 4:12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

No person has ever "seen" God. (Even Moses was only allowed to see His glory from His turned back.) If we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us. (The implication being that others can see the love of God through us.) I like the term "made complete" (which is the meaning in Greek for *perfected*). Even though God's gift is a complete finished act in itself, He gets glory when His creation in turn chooses to give to others as He has given to them. (I think I have a small inkling of that kind of sense of completeness when I see my kids reflect in their lives the actions that reflect the truths and principles upon which we as parents have tried to raise them.)

1John 4:13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

Again John reminds the believers that the evidence of the Spirit in their lives is also the evidence of their position in Christ.

Ephesians 1:13-14 In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

What constitutes evidence of the Spirit in one's life?

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Ephesians 5:9 (For the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

1John 4:14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

1John 4:15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

The apostles had been privilege to see the Savior, the Son sent by God the Father. Anyone who acknowledges that JESUS is THE SON of God, God is part of Him and He is part of God (just as is the natural relationship with all fathers and their children). This statement implies that to "confess" Jesus to be the Son of God includes acceptance of His sacrifice on the cross to provide one's salvation.

1John 4:16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

We as believers know and rely on God's love for us. (It's a fact we depend on.) GOD IS LOVE. (John evidently feels the truth can never be repeated too many times.) Whoever lives in love lives in God and God in him.

Paul defines love in his letter to the Corinthians. (Charity = love; The same Greek word is used for the word *charity* as is used for *love* in this verse.)

1Corinthians 13:4-8 Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth...

1John 4:17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

1John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

Again John tells us how we complete love—by loving others as Christ loved us. When we live our lives in love, Christ-like, we will be confident in the day of judgment, not fearful. There is no fear in love. Fear is connected to an expectation of punishment, and one who loves has no fear of punishment. One who fears is not made perfect in love. (Being fearless and perfect in love does not mean we are without sin. It just means we are confident of our position in the Savior because the predominant characteristic in our life is an unselfish servant spirit toward others. We can suffer the consequences of sin without fear, because we know we are loved and only what is for our good/refinement will be allowed to touch us.)

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

“as he is, so are we in this world” – This phrase really jumped out at me this time through. This is a profound and amazing statement that is easy to miss. Everything that Christ is and possesses in character and power are ours “in this world.” In Christ we have no excuse for failure. He has imputed to us His righteousness, His love, His authority to rebuke evil and overcome the enemy. I know I have a tendency to function from the mentality that “I am human, therefore, imperfect.” That is true as far as it goes. In Christ, however, I am a new creation. Christ became my sin on the cross to make me righteous “in Him.”

2Corinthians 5:21 For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

We, as believers, need to learn to operate from the mentality that though human, we are “in Christ” and “as He is, so are we.” We need to live as overcomers, not as those doomed to failure until we get to heaven. This is a very convicting truth.

1John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.

1John 4:20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

1John 4:21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

We love Him because He first loved us. (Man’s natural tendency is to sin and self; only through the love of God in our lives are we able to love and die to self.) Again John repeats that you can’t love God and hate your brother. Anyone who says he can is a liar (statement of fact). If you can’t love the brother that you can see and touch, you can’t love God whom you have never seen. This is a command (not request) of God: If you love Me, you must love your brother. This would indicate that love is a choice.