

A Practical Study of 1 JOHN
“Fellowship With The Father”
Study Number Nine

1 John 4:1-6

Fellowship is Preserved by Discernment

A valuable painting had been purchased by F. W. Boreham called “The Chess Player.” It portrayed Satan playing the game with a young opponent, and the man’s soul was at stake. The game had progressed to the point where it was the novice’s turn, and there seemed to be no move he could make that would not mean defeat for him. Awful despair was on his face as he realized his soul was lost, and Satan was grinning as he anticipated victory. A champion player who had come to view the canvas studied the picture for a time and then called for a chessboard. Placing the pieces in exactly the same position as in the painting, he said, “I’ll take the young man’s place.” He then made a move that showed how the devil’s captive could have won and been set free.

You know many, many times Satan gets us in a corner and it is like no matter what we do, we are down and out and it is all over. It seems like that from our perspective. And then the Lord gives wisdom. The Lord gives victory and the Spirit of God takes over once again and we go on like these young men in the text having conquered the evil one for Jesus Christ.

Now we are talking about FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER.

We have used the term “fellowship” to refer to COMMUNION or to COMMUNICATION. It has nothing to do with relationship. It is my daily walk with the Lord. And because we are KINDRED SPIRITS we need to recognize the fact that there are a number of things that can happen to break that fellowship. Primarily we have spoken of the fact that sin does that, disobedience, rebellion, lawlessness, wickedness.

In Study #5, we talked about “FELLOWSHIP IS BEING EDUCATED BY HIS SPIRIT.” When we became Christians, the Holy Spirit came to dwell in us and it is that Spirit of truth who guides us into truth.

Now that was the POSITIVE side of John’s attitude toward the Spirit of God.

Now we are flipping it over to the NEGATIVE side. What we are looking at this morning is that there is an unholy spirit who also is very, very active and we need to recognize that fact. And so my principle this:

“FELLOWSHIP IS PRESERVED BY DISCERNMENT”

When I recognize these things and I do not get caught up in them.

Preserving our fellowship by enabling us to DISCERN the difference between TRUTH and ERROR is the thought in these six verses.

This is probably the pinnacle of the epistle. These six verses are so crucial but they are so relevant to today. So I hope you will drink in every word as we walk through these six verses.

v. 1 Beloved, stop believing every spirit, but keep on [present tense] putting the spirits to the test to see if they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Now this is the 2nd NEGATIVE WARNING in the book.

It is like this is the second red light on the dashboard of fellowship with the Lord. This is one way you can be nailed and knocked off track and out of fellowship.

What was the first one?

Chapter 2, verse 15

“Stop loving the world, neither the things which are in the world. If a man keeps on loving the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

Now NEGATIVE COMMAND #2:

“BELOVED, STOP BELIEVING EVERY SPIRIT.”

Whenever you have a negative imperative in the Greek language it simply means stop doing what you are doing. So with these young believers he has had to tell them “look you are getting a little bit out of bounds in your love for the world.” And now he is saying “watch it these false teachers are there and active and you can be swept into this thing so stop being gullible.”

“STOP BELIEVING EVERY SPIRIT.”

This is the KEY VERSE to “FELLOWSHIP IS PRESERVED BY DISCERNMENT.”

The Spirit of God must be distinguished from false spirits. We are to test a person on the basis of what he confesses about the person of Jesus Christ. That is the bottom line.

Now why is it necessary for us to be careful about “BELIEVING EVERY SPIRIT”? Why is it necessary for John to give us this warning “STOP BELIEVING EVERY SPIRIT,” but be putting them “TO THE TEST TO SEE IF THEY ARE FROM GOD”?

Satan is a wily foe. He has all kinds of schemes and strategies to accomplish his purpose of wrecking your fellowship with the Lord after you become a believer. I mean he has all kinds of programs on the drawing board to nail you, to keep you from the fellowship which is so crucial to your spiritual development.

Now I am going to remind you of three verses which I think have helped me more than any other verses.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

For such are false apostles and deceitful workers, disguising themselves as the apostles of Christ. And no wonder or do not marvel at it, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his ministers also are ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

You are dealing with somebody that can fake you out man. You are dealing with somebody that can use Scripture. You are dealing with somebody that can use the miraculous. He has all kinds of tools in his arsenal to keep you from making fellowship your #1 priority after you become a believer.

There are two things Satan will do:

- 1. HIS #1 THING IS TO HAVE AS MANY CHILDREN GO TO HELL AS POSSIBLE. And so he will do everything to keep you from making a decision, a clean cut stand to receive Christ. That is his #1 priority.**
- 2. Then when he lost that one, he does not quit. HIS #2 PRIORITY IS TO RENDER YOU INEFFECTIVE by keeping you childish and carnal and out of fellowship with the Lord as many days as possible.**

So every day that you win the victory by deciding you are going to spend time with the Lord you have gained another victory over the evil one. You have come to the audience of the king of Kings with divine truth in your hands to discover what it is that God wants to teach you.

And so he is concerned about them because of these schemes, because of these strategies.

Let me give you a few verses just to show you that John is not the only one.

2 Peter 2:1-3

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

2 Peter 2:17, 18

These are springs without water, and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved. For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error.

2 Timothy 3:5

holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these.

Jude 11

Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

You see as a believer you have to be careful not to believe every spirit and if you are experiencing study number five, being educated and taught by the spirit, then you have within you the defense mechanism that God designed, the Spirit of God. But what happens when you get out of fellowship? You have grieved Him, you have quenched Him and He does not function like He would and so then you become vulnerable out of fellowship to be swept up by Satan in some of these things that look so enticing as the instant answer to all of your problems.

Keep on putting the spirits to the test to see if they are God. We are not to be believing every spirit.

Positively, we are to “KEEP ON PUTTING THE SPIRITS TO THE TEST TO SEE IF THEY ARE FROM GOD.”

Now, why do we do that? There are spirits that are not from God. There are two worlds. Yes, supernatural in both but there is the divine, the God side of things and then there is the satanic part of it. Keep on putting them to the test.

How would you characterize these spirits that you are testing? I put down three F's:

- 1. THEY ARE FALSE**
- 2. THEY PRECIPITATE FEAR**

Any time somebody is going to ask you to do something in a religious meeting, I do not care whether it is speaking in tongues or standing up and jumping or doing something else, if it strikes fear in your heart, it is not from the Lord. You see the Spirit of God “God hath not given a spirit of fear” 2 Timothy 1:7 “but of power and of love and of sound mind.” Your spirit with the one who is proclaiming truth ought to identify to the point where you have peace and you do not feel afraid. “It is the fear of man who brings the snare but whoso puts his trust in the Lord shall be saved” Proverbs 29:25.

They are false, they precipitate fear, you can feel it in your gut man.

3. **THEY ARE A FAKE.** Their lives will not bear close scrutiny to what they are teaching. And when you get in close you realize that they are talking out of two sides of their mouth. They are saying one thing here but they are doing something over there.

And those three words will always come to the surface. They are **FALSE**, they precipitate **FEAR** and they are **FAKE**.

Now the word “**TO TEST**” is a technical word. It means testing the metal. It means to see if it rings true, if it is up to standard. It is putting it in the crucible and seeing if it really does work “**BECAUSE MANY FALSE PROPHETS HAVE GONE OUT INTO THE WORLD.**”

You know I never realized this but J. Vernon McGee reminded me of it when I read his little commentary notes on 1 John 4:1. Listen to what he says:

Quite a few things which have happened in our day are really spooky. We had, for instance, the appearance of the book, Jonathan Livingston Seagull. The author, Richard Bach, said that a voice dictated the book to him and that it was not his own style of writing. I understand that many churches recommended the reading of this book and that several good men were taken in by it. It is the story about a theological concept of a young sea gull which has human attributes. He soared off toward unlimited perfection and found that each of us is just an idea of the Great Gull.

This book teaches that birth and sin and sickness and death are not realities but only illusions, that what the biblical writers call sins really are virtues, and that freedom is freedom to do what one pleases. All of that is not new but is actually out of the very pit of hell itself--it is satanic.

And yet how many of you sitting in this room read that book and thought it was a wonderful little gift book to give to somebody else because it had such a story about a gull.

Matthew 7:15

Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

Matthew 24:11

And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many.

One of the greatest safeguards against error is your fellowship with the Father and your sensitivity to the Spirit of God who is guiding you into all truth.

Many of us of course have kind of been on the outskirts of Scientology and the dramatic developments with regard to that particular movement. It was science fiction L. Ron Hubbard who wanted to clear people's minds of their discontentment.

The church of Scientology is making a lot of people unhappy these days. Of course Hubbard is now gone.

Yet Scientology continues to flourish as its 700 centers in 65 countries use new strategies to lure unsuspecting people into their financial web. A variety of front groups ranging from publishing to health care have proven quite successful. In fact, one cult-monitoring group that has information on over 200 mind control groups says that Scientology extracts more money from its members than any other cult.

Just another of the many that are sweeping people into their clutches across the country.

And then I did not know this:

Heung Jin Moon, Sun Myung Moon's son, who was killed in a 1984 automobile accident, is being worshiped by some members of the Unification church as one who fulfilled a role similar to Jesus. Some within the church claim that the young Moon died "so that his father could live to complete his own earthly mission while his son rules in heaven."

Boy you read some of this stuff and you really realize how much he is at work.

The bottom line of almost all of them is their attitude toward Jesus Christ.

I want to remind you that C.S. Lewis said it this way after his conversion:

“When all is said (and truly said) about divisions of Christendom, there remains, by God’s mercy, an enormous common ground.” In light of this, my encouragement for you today is that each one of us pursue what unites us with others rather than the few things that separate us.

You see the common ground is Jesus Christ. And we in the body of Christ have really divided ourselves up and we really should be coming together around the person of Christ. You know if we do not hang together we are going to hang separately. And we need to mobilize like we never have before.

The richer and the deeper your fellowship with the Father becomes and the greater your knowledge of Jesus Christ, the more able you are to discern the direction of His Spirit when truth is being spoken.

Now when truth is spoken there is going to be several results:

- 1. there is peace, there is just like “yeah, that is right.”**
- 2. there is going to be unity, there is a prevailing sense of oneness.**

3. **there is going to be transparency, nobody is hiding anything.**
4. **there is going to be openness, we do not have to worry about somebody asking a question.**
5. **and there is going to be honesty.**

Now there are some questions that we need to ask ourselves in this ninth study since this is our key verse.

1. **Is your fellowship being preserved by your discernment? Are you sensitive to the issues? And do you know how Satan is working today?**
2. **Are you allowing the Spirit of God to guide you into truth and to protect you from so many of these paths of error that are around us today?**

You know I am always reminded of some of those last words Jesus said in the Olivet discourse:

It will be a day when it possible for even the very elect to be deceived.

We are witnessing that before our very eyes. The power and the onslaught of Satan's last shot for his kingdom and his followers must be very near because we are a unique generation saturated with stuff coming at us from all directions. Be careful not to become caught up in it.

v. 2 In this you are knowing the Spirit of God: every spirit that is confessing Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.

When a person confesses that Jesus is the Christ and He has come in flesh from God you are hearing truth. Now we have already learned that. He came, God's Son came in human flesh for two reasons. Do you remember it?

1. to take away sin and
2. to destroy the works of the devil.

And when you have God coming in human flesh with those two distinct purposes man you are on track.

John 1:14

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

You can recognize the false teacher by their failure to acknowledge and confess "JESUS CHRIST HAS COME IN THE FLESH."

Now I want to turn over to **2 John** for just a second and **verse 7**.

2 John 7

For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.

He just says it better over in 2 John and verse 7 to describe what he is talking about here in this place.

Now do not forget the fact that Satan is alive and well and God has given us the Spirit to guide us into all truth.

v. 3 And every spirit which is not confessing Jesus is not from God; and this is the spirit of the antichrist, [and we already know he is referring to them as the false teachers] which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

The NEGATIVE side:

“EVERY SPIRIT WHICH IS NOT CONFESSING JESUS IS NOT FROM GOD.”

Let me just read a sentence from several major cults to show you that this is exactly on track.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE says:

“Jesus Christ is not God as he is said to have declared. Christ is a divine ideal.”

SPIRITUALISM says:

“Jesus Christ was not divine, he is now an advanced spirit.”

JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES say:

“Jesus Christ was a man, neither more nor less.”

MORMONISM says:

“Jesus, the Son of Adam, God, and Mary—the father has begotten him in his own likeness. Jesus was married at Cana to the Mary’s and Martha, whereby he could see his seed before he was crucified.”

UNITY says:

“Jesus was not the Christ.”

GARNER TED ARMSTRONG says:

“Jesus Christ is not God.”

Much of MODERN THEOLOGY says the same thing.
Listen to this:

“Jesus was divine and in the same sense all of us are divine. [*Now doesn’t that sound great?*] The same spark of divinity only needs to be fanned into the flame.”

And we all can become little Jesus’.

“EVERY SPIRIT WHICH IS NOT CONFESSING JESUS IS NOT FROM GOD; AND THIS IS THE SPIRIT OF THE ANTICHRIST, WHICH YOU HAVE HEARD THAT IS COMING, AND NOW IT IS ALREADY IN THE WORLD.”

I read this little article the other day and it really got to me.

Satanism is attracting American teenagers. Four forces that lure them: 1) Thirst for power and knowledge. 2) Peer pressure. 3) Curiosity. 4) Hopelessness. Three levels of involvement: 1) Dabbling--reading horoscopes, playing with tarot cards, enjoying occult-influenced music. 2) Obsession--wearing satanic jewelry, buying occult books, practicing occult rituals. 3) Demon possession--becoming suicidal and violent, experiencing frightening demonic activities. Warning signs: 1) Heavy metal music. 2) Occult jewelry featuring a goat’s head or pentagram. 3) Occult books such as Anton LaVey’s Satanic Bible. 4) Occult games such as Ouija boards and tarot cards--also Dungeons and Dragons. 5) Drug and alcohol abuse. 6) Personality changes. 7) Physical mutilation.

Our kids are being swept away in a wake like this.

C.S. Lewis when he talked about the person of Christ said this:

I am trying here to prevent anyone from saying the really silly thing that people often say about Him: "I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God." That's the one thing we mustn't say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said wouldn't be a great moral teacher. He'd either be a lunatic on a level with the man who says he's a poached egg or else he'd be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was and is the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon: or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But don't let us come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He hasn't left that open to us. He didn't intend to.

Jesus Christ came in human flesh.

v. 4 You are from God, little children, and you have conquered them; [*why? Reason*] because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

To these believers he is saying you, little children, have conquered them, that is these false teachers.

Now it is interesting in those three verses from 4, 5 and 6 you have a change of words so you know exactly who he is writing to:

He has the word “YOU” in verse 4

The word “THEY” in verse 5 and

The word “WE” in verse 6

So you can track his argument.

YOU believers that are reading my letter, “you are from God,” you have had a new birth experience.

And you also are to be commended, “YOU HAVE CONQUERED THEM.” Have we had that word conquered before?

Have we had that word CONQUERED before? You see that was the YOUNG MEN back in chapter 2. They had “conquered the evil one.” They had conquered him and were commended for the fact that they had done battle and conquered them.

Have you ever noticed that there are such nice people that teach error? I mean it is just amazing how many really nice guys there are that teach error. And yet how are you supposed to handle that?

I am sure there were a lot of nice guys among those 250 men that confronted ELIJAH on Mount Carmel but I want to tell you when fire came out of heaven and consumed the sacrifice, Elijah did not care whether they were nice guys or not.

They were prophets of Baal and all 250 of them bought the dust. I mean that was the end of the road. They dealt with them severely and the victory came. Why?

“BECAUSE GREATER IS HE WHO IS IN YOU THAN HE WHO IS IN THE WORLD.”

You have a great God.

John 10:28, 29

He gives to you eternal life and nobody is going to take you out of His hand.

You see there is ultimate judgment coming on this world ruler and the day has been fixed when Christ is going to gain the ultimate victory in all of it. Basically the victory has been secured by what he has done on the cross but it is going to be realized in this glorious day when the king of Kings and the lord of Lords comes back to earth to set up His kingdom.

“GREATER IS HE [Christ] WHO IS IN YOU THAN HE WHO IS IN THE WORLD [namely Satan].”

Now what does Satan do to try to get us into his mesh. Well we know he uses the world around us, he uses the flesh within us and he attacks our spiritual moorings. You can almost write it down in your little book that when you see addictive behavior among believers you have Satan at work winning a battle. I mean you just put it down.

In the face of it, that is why the *Life Recovery Bible* has been written, you have people who are enslaved in some way. Satan is involved in that enslavement. And there is a desperate need for victory.

Let me share a little simple article along this line to help you understand where I am tracking.

The article opens with a story of nose-spray addiction and the conclusion: “As soon as one tries to control any truly addictive behavior by making autonomous intentional resolutions, one begins to defeat oneself.” The usual steps in a purely will-power approach to addiction is 1) I can do it. 2) Pride. 3) The fall. Theologically an addiction is an attempt to fulfill our longing for God through objects of attachment. For the power of addiction to be overcome, personal power must be aligned with the power of grace. If only the behavior is reformed, one addiction is often exchanged for another less destructive one. What God offers us is a deeper transformation of desire. “Every struggle with addiction, no matter how small, and no matter what our spiritual interest may be, will include some homeward call, some invitation to transformation. If we answer yes, even with the tiniest and most timid voice, our struggle becomes consecrated. Consecration means dedication to God. It occurs when we claim our deepest desire for God, beneath, above, and beyond all other things.” Characteristics of a consecrated intent to break an addiction: 1) Honesty in accepting the addiction. *I have a problem with alcohol. No – I am an alcoholic. I have a problem with lust. I have a problem*

with food. I have a problem, problem, problem, addictive behavior that Satan is using. Honest acceptance of the addiction. I will tell you the most refreshing thing in my Al-Anon meeting and I happened to be chosen to read the 12 steps that night and I had to introduce myself "I am Don Anderson. I am an alcoholic. And then I read the 12 steps. You know just being in that group and seeing the honesty and transparency I wished somehow that we could get that way in the body of Christ. Man, what wouldn't begin to happen if we could acknowledge we have struggles and people wouldn't look down on us and criticize us and clobber us. We could be honest.] 2) Dignity--acting as if we are created in God's image. 3) Community--seeking the companionship of and accountability to other people. *[That is a crucial part of it]* 4) Responsibility--respecting ourselves and those around us. 5) Simplicity--stopping an addiction boils down to this: don't do it, refuse to do it, and keep refusing to do it.

One of the things that came out of the *Life Recovery Bible* I thought was so interesting when I was looking through the lens of recovery and addictive behavior at Saul and David, do you know why Saul did not come back? You see he never was accountable. He was an arrogant, lone wolf. He could not even be accountable to Samuel in what he did. And no wonder he ends up a suicide on a mountain, a real failure. He did not use the resources that were available.

The difference between him and David, a man after God's own heart, is David has had his fat held to the fire by Nathan the prophet every time he turned around and he was confronted with his behavior and then he did something about it and he responded in a contrite, broken and repentant way. God brought healing and blessed and used that man.

And did you ever notice that when you fly in the airplane you can look down and see the landscape for many miles? Have you ever watched from the air if you have a window seat the rivers below? Have you ever seen a straight river?

It is amazing when you look at them. I mean they look like they just turn right around and almost come back and then they go like this and then they come right around go back. Do you know why they are like that? They follow the course of least resistance and there are a lot of crooked Christians running around and we as genuine, blood bought, born again, Bible believing believers are to be straight as arrows. We are to hold forth the light to a crooked and perverse generation among whom we shine as lights in the world.

Boyd Luter was the editor on *Life Recovery Bible*. He was a professor at Talbot Seminary. He wrote a book called *Looking Back, Moving On: Applying Biblical Principles of Freedom to Your Life*. And this is what he says:

In a nutshell, recovery is the comeback process from an unhealthy event, relationship, or behavioral pattern that continues to impact a person's life in negative ways.

That is all it is. It is coming back from that to this that I might be properly oriented in what God wants me to do. And you know that made a lot of sense because then I remembered that verse again in

Luke 22:31, 32

Simon, Simon, behold, Satan desires to have you that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and when you are converted, strengthen your brethren.

Forge a ministry out of what is going to happen in your life.

And then here is another one.

2 Timothy 2:25, 26

with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

And it is possible to be caught up in those things. Remember your resources. In your arsenal you have one who is greater than he who is in the world. And the victory is yours for the taking.

Verse 5 THEY, you notice it was YOU, now it is THEY.

v. 5 They themselves are out of the world. On this account, out of the world they are speaking, and the world is hearing them.

In these verses you have the 3 GROUPS, you have:

- 1. THE READERS,**
- 2. THE ANTICHRISTS and**
- 3. THE APOSTLES.**

In verse 5 you have 3 THINGS. These false teachers, you have:

- 1. THEIR ORIGIN,**
- 2. THEIR MESSAGE and**
- 3. THEIR AUDIENCE.**

What is THEIR ORIGIN? They are “OUT OF THE WORLD.”

**What is THEIR MESSAGE? “THEY ARE SPEAKING”
from the world.**

Who is THEIR AUDIENCE? “THE WORLD.”

**And so you have the picture of where they come from
and what they are doing.**

**And what are we supposed to do? We are not supposed
to love the world. The man who keeps on loving the
world, the love of the Father is not in him.**

I love the way Phillips translates that. He says:

“This world is the limit of their vision.”

**“They have a form of godliness but they deny the
power thereof.”**

**Well we are living in desperate times and many of these
things are real and here is the last verse.**

**“We ourselves are from God;” now he has changed it to
“WE.”**

We went from “YOU” in verse 4.

To “THEY” in verse 5.

**And now back to “WE” and John is speaking of the
apostles.**

v. 6 We ourselves are from God; the one who is knowing God is hearing us; he who is not from God is not hearing us. From this we are knowing the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Those who know God hear us and our message and they respond to it. Those who are not they do not.

As a result you have the acid test. Are they responding?

Jesus said in John 10:27

My sheep hear My voice, and they know them, and they follow Me.

When the Spirit of God comes in He provides the ability to hear truth and to respond to it. It is

“THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH AND THE SPIRIT OF ERROR.”

That word ERROR in the Greek:

means “wandering”

it means “roaming”

it means “wandering from the path of truth”

it means “error”

“delusion”

“deceit”

“deception to which one is subject”

Yes, the Spirit of God guides us into truth.

Now, how does Satan do that? I just felt before I wrap this up I needed to take just a second to show you how he really works in getting us out of fellowship and off track. I would be remiss if I did not do this.

James 1:13-15. He uses the flesh, my old nature. He knows that he has a friend inside of me that is selfish and he does everything he can to play on that number. Listen to the way he does it.

James 1:13-15

Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own desires. Then when those desires are conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

That is the number he plays on believers all over the place.

And then secondly another number he uses is human works rather than faith in Jesus Christ. That is

Matthew 7:21-23

Not everyone who says to Me, “Lord, Lord,” will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven.

And then spiritually, oh goodness, organizing your time so that you will always have a crisis every day you wake up so you never have time for the Lord.

Ephesians 4:14

As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men.

The answer is:

Colossians 2:6-8

Be firmly rooted and grounded and built up in your faith and overflowing with gratitude.

Stay rooted in Jesus Christ.

“THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH”

It is the Spirit of understanding

It is the Spirit of discernment

It is the Spirit whereby you can separate the difference between truth and error.

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

LESSON #1: The two warning lights in the epistle of 1 John are: 1) stop loving the world; and 2) stop believing every spirit

LESSON #2: We are commanded by John to keep on putting the spirits to the test to see if they are from God.

LESSON #3: Fellowship is preserved by discernment, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

LESSON #4: The key test question is, “Does the teacher believe that Jesus Christ is God’s Son come in human flesh?”

LESSON #5: The one who does not hold to the deity and the humanity of Christ is manifesting the spirit of antichrist.

LESSON #6: We become part of God’s family—we are His children when we are born again by the Spirit.

LESSON #7: The victory has already been secured on Calvary’s cross and is assured to us, because greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world.

LESSON #8: The false teachers have a real audience with the world because they are speaking from their perspective.

LESSON #9: John says, “We ourselves are from God, and the one who is knowing God is hearing us.”

LESSON #10: In being guided by the Spirit, it is our responsibility to ascertain the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

STUDY NUMBER NINE

FELLOWSHIP IS PRESERVED BY DISCERNMENT

1 JOHN 4:1-6

KEY VERSE 4:1

v. 1 Beloved, stop believing every spirit, but keep on putting the spirits to the test to see if they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

v. 2 In this you are knowing the Spirit of God: every spirit that is confessing Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.

v. 3 And every spirit which is not confessing Jesus is not from God; and this is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

v. 4 You are from God, little children, and you have conquered them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

v. 5 They themselves are out of the world. On this account, out of the world they are speaking, and the world is hearing them.

v. 6 We ourselves are from God; the one who is knowing God is hearing us; he who is not from God is not hearing us. From this we are knowing the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

NOTES

QUESTIONS:

1. Read 1 John 4:1-6 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What command is given in verse 1?

3. Why are the spirits to be put to the “test,” according to verse 1?

4. How can you identify the “Spirit of God,” according to verse 2?

5. How is it possible for the Christian to be victorious, according to verse 4?

6. How are the false prophets described in verse 5?

7. How do we know the “Spirit of truth” and the “spirit of error?”

8. Can you think of a modern illustration where you have used your discernment in the way described here?

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?
