

1 John 4: 1-21 (New International Version)

²³ And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. ²⁴ The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

1 John 4: ¹ Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² 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, ³ 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.

⁴ You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. ⁵ They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶ We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit^[a] of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

⁷ Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

¹³ This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. ¹⁶ And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. ¹⁷ This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. ²¹ And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

Footnote: [1 John 4:6](#) Or *spirit*

OASIS: Living Deep: 1 John 4: 1-21

Preface: Welcome to the 7th of 8 Bible studies in our I John “Living Deep” series. You can access these studies in the Sunday morning OASIS course or on the GC “Sermon” webpage (or via the LIFE Community “resource page”) by the following Monday. These studies work sequentially through I John (and were connected to our fall message series but are not sermon-dependent). We hope you will get great transformational benefit.

Possible starter question: As we head into the last two studies of our I John series, what emphases or big ideas do you remember from our previous discussions and studies? (It’s okay to peek back 😊.)

Transitional comment: The nice thing about this letter is that John doesn’t hesitate to hammer his major points, especially the ones that are core to the Christian life. He is totally committed to helping us experience the fullness of God’s presence in our lives! Let’s see what chapter 4 has in store for us today.

Let’s listen as our passage is read aloud (4: 1-21), beginning with two transitional verses from our last study. (Someone, who enjoys reading aloud, want to read this for us?)

(Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead your study, if you haven’t already prayed.)

Read and Overview: Now take several minutes by yourself to study this passage. Look for repeated words and ideas. Note some of the key contrasts. What seem to be the big idea or major insights?

O What repeated words and ideas did you see? What key contrasts did you notice? (3-5 min.)

First Section (v. 1-6):

O In these 6 verses, John contrasts the influence between the apostolic teachers and the false prophets. What are some of the differences you observe?

O What do you learn about how God’s Spirit differs from other spirits?

(n.b. As in earlier sections of I John, remember that antichrists are not so much evil supernatural powers but people and forces who are not aligned or against Christ.)

I What do you think it means to “test the spirits”?

A When are some situations in our lives when it would be wise to “test the spirits”?

O In vs. 4-6, what does John want us to realize?

I Who is “the one who is in you” and what difference can this one make?

Second Section (v. 7-16a):

O In vs. 7-8, what are the primary points (concepts) John is making about love?

O In vs. 9-10, how are those concepts expressed concretely? How has God shown his love?

O As expressed in vs. 11-12, what are the implications for Christians?

I Any ideas of how loving one another “completes” God’s love in us?

A Any examples come to mind from in your life or our LIFE Community?

O In vs. 13-16a, what insights into Christian living does John provide?

I What do these insights mean for you? What difference can they make?

Third Section (v. 16b-21):

O In vs. 16b-18, what new ideas or insights does John supply?

I In what ways are we like Jesus?

I What do you think is the dynamic between fear and love?

A How does fear cripple or affect our ability to love people?

O Vs. 19-21 summarize John's bottom line expectations. What are they?

A in summary for you, what might be the "take-away" application for you?

Prayer together: Pray...

- ❖ that the life of Christ, the Holy Spirit, would become more influential in each of our lives.
 - ❖ that we would be able to find fresh, deeper ways to care and love for one another this year.
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Text notes (you can access biblical texts via www.Biblegateway.com)

- a. BIG idea: God's love liberates us from sin and enables us to love God and others.
- b. Key verse: I John 4: 16b: "God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them."
- c. KEY: O = Observation; I = Interpretation; A = Application (or C = Challenge)

Advice to study leaders:

- d. Complement your OIA questions with "process questions" (what else? What more? What do others of you see/think?).
- e. Determine the core questions you'll ask (know which ones to skip if pressed for time).
- f. Always reword questions in words that are comfortable for you (and, if the question doesn't make sense to you, then discard it.) You want to "own" each question.
- g. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. How long do you wait? Take your time; don't rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
- h. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.
- i. Application: Pace the study to conclude with "difference making" application.
- j. Secondary texts—use other texts very sparingly, even if they are relevant. Otherwise, other texts will push you more into the "teacher role," rather than that of facilitator. It also can cause some people to feel distracted or de-powered.
- k. If you are utilizing this "on-line" study and not part of the OASIS course, I recommend that you get the 1-volume commentary entitled New Bible Commentary, Revised (21st Century Edition, IVP). It is well worth the \$40.