

Joyful Life Bible Studies

I John 4:1-12

Lesson 17

FIRST DAY: Review and Overview

1. Review I John 3:19-24. Share specific ways these verses are operative in your life today.
 - a. One of the deepest desires of most Christians is to learn more about prayer. What do you discover about prayer in this passage? Use I John 3:21, 22 as a guideline for your answer.
 - 1) Meditate on I John 3:22 for a few moments. Memorize it, if possible. Print it on a card and/or post-a-note. Read it over and over and let it impact your life. What is this verse saying to you personally today about your prayers?
2. Note and mark the paragraph divisions of I John 4:1-12 and identify the subject of each of them:
 - a. I John 4:1- 6
 - b. I John 4:7-12
3. Have you ever wondered how Christians could fall prey to false teachers and end up in a cult? Often it is because they do not recognize the spirit behind the speaker. The first six verses of I John 4 supply criterion whereby believers can detect false teaching. The second part of this week's study, I John 4:7-12, emphasizes in a fresh way the importance of our loving one another. We need to understand, embrace, and act upon the instruction in this passage. **Write a prayer** asking the Lord to enable you to do this in your study of this lesson. Thank Him for His word which guides us and His love for us in giving His Son to die for us.

*And this is the confidence that we have in Him,
that if we ask anything according to His will,
He heareth us: and if we know that He heareth us,
whatsoever we ask, we know that
we have the petitions that we desired of Him
I John 6:14, 16*

SECOND DAY: Read I John 4:1-3

1. John opened his exhortation in I John 4:1 with the word *beloved*. This word expressed God's love for those believers as well as John's love. You, too, are *beloved* of God and He wants to speak to you through His Word today just as powerfully as He did to these first century Christians. What does I John 4:1a tell believers to do?
 - a. The word *try* is translated *test* in other versions of the Bible. The believers were to *test the spirits*. *Spirits* here refers to human beings such as teachers, pastors, evangelists activated either by demons or by the Holy Spirit. Why were they to *test the spirits*?
I John 4:1-3
 - 1) Notice the word *many* concerning these *false prophets*. They not only abounded in the first century, but they abound also in this 21st century.
Describe them from II Corinthians 11:13-15.
 - (a.) Observe these false prophets or deceivers from II Peter 2:1-3. What do you see?
2. According to I John 4:2, 3 what is the *test* whereby we can know whether or not teachers are true or false?
 - a. There are other tests we can apply to determine whether or not teachers are of God's truth, but the most important is *what they believe about Christ*. If they do not *confess* (bear witness) that *Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*-that is that Jesus Christ is God come to earth in a physical body - they are not of God. *Confesseth* means more than an inward acknowledgement, it means we publicly acknowledge that He is Christ. Affirm this from Romans 10:9,10.
 - 1) What do we learn from I John 4:3b about *this spirit*?
 - 2) Record what II John 7 reveals about this.
 - (a.) How are we to deal with these *deceivers* who try to bring this doctrine into our home? II John (8, 9) 10, 11
3. Look back on I John 4:1. Who is responsible for applying this test?
 - a. I John 4:1-6 challenges us to use our heads as well as our hearts. It is not God's will that His children be deceived or gullible. There are counterfeiters and deceivers that infiltrate the body. If we are going to be kept from deception, we must be able to detect false teaching such as the denial of the deity of Christ and the inspiration of the Scripture. How will applying the test of I John 4:(1) 2, 3 keep you from being deceived by one of these counterfeit Christs? (Antichrist can mean either against Christ or a counterfeit Christ).

Challenge: What other *tests* can we apply to ascertain the genuineness of the message and the messenger? Support your answer with Scripture.

*I have no greater JOY
than to hear that My children walk in truth.*

III John 4

THIRD DAY: Read I John 4:4-6

1. Christians in John's time were exposed to the assaults of false teachers. How does I John 4:4 assure the believers that they have the victory over these deceivers? (The *them* in verse 4 refers to the false teachers.) Write your answer phrase by phrase from I John 4:4. Underline or highlight and memorize if possible, I John 4:4b.

a. Define the word *overcome*.

1) Where does the power to resist these false teachers and doctrines come from?

b. If a Christian today is frightened or overwhelmed when confronted by one of these clever deceivers, how would relying on I John 4:4 encourage and assure him he need not fall prey to these men's deceptive teachings?

c. In light of I Timothy 4:1 how will you apply this I John 4:4 truth when you are being exposed to false teachers?

2. Take a closer look at the false teachers and the true apostles by filling out the following chart from I John 4:5,6a:

False Teachers – v 5	The True Teachers – v 6
e. They are	a. We are
f. therefore	a. he that
g. and	a. he that is not

a. The phrase *they are of the world* reveals the source of the false teachers' message. Who is the inspiration behind the deceivers' speaking? John 14:30

1) How does this help us understand why those *who are not of God* will not listen to the truth? I John 4:6

b. Who is the inspiration behind the speakers of the truth? I John 4:6a

3. The phrase *hereby we know* appears twice in this passage. From I John 4:1-6 what have you learned that will enable you to recognize the *spirit of truth* and the *spirit of error*.

Challenge: Write a brief report on what various groups such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Unitarianism, Mormonism, teach about Who Jesus is.

Whosoever believeth that Jesus Christ is the Christ
is born God ...

I John 5:1a

FOURTH DAY: Read I John 4:7-10

1. The emphasis in John's letter now shifts from *testing the spirits* to that of *loving one another*. Summarize these emphases by reviewing and writing I John 3:23.

2. Print in large block letters the opening phrase of I John 4:7. *Selah*
 - a. Stop! Realizing this is not just a fervent appeal from John but a command of Christ, how are you obeying this command today? Reflect on your relationships, friendships, and attitudes towards other members of the body of Christ in reference to this command. How are you putting this into practice when you're offended, upset or crushed?

3. Ponder I John 4:7, 8. What do you learn about the origin and nature of this *love*? *Selah*

verse 7: Love is _____

verse 8: God is _____

 - a. Why do you think John links *loving others* with *knowing God*?

4. How did God manifest or demonstrate His love for us? I John 4:9
 - a. Read this paraphrase of I John 4:10: *In this act we see what real love is; it is not our love for God, but His love for us when He sent His Son to be the atoning sacrifice, that paid the penalty for our sin.* Define the phrase *Herein is love* (I John 4:10a) by describing this *love* in your own words from I John 4:9, 10.

 - b. Did we deserve this love or do anything to earn this love? Support your answer with Scripture.
 - 1) What does this say to you about the kind of *love* and quality of *love* we are to have for one another?
 - (a.) Do you feel this is impossible in the natural? You're right! It's supernatural. Recall once more how this *love* is produced in our lives from Romans 5:5b.

 - (b.) Since love is the fruit of the indwelling Spirit, what might not loving others indicate about a person? See John 15:5b; Galatians 5:22

5. Share an insight on loving others that you have gleaned from I John 4:7-10.

*Amazing love! How can it be
that 'Thou my God should die for me?
-Sagina*

FIFTH DAY: I John 4:11. 12

1. What do you learn from I John 4:11 about our response to God's love?
 - a. Reflect on the phrase, *God so loved us*. Intently gaze on that love revealed in I John 4:9, 10. List as many qualities of love as you can think of revealed in that *love*.
 - b. In what way does God's love for you motivate you to love others?
 - c. What things hinder or cause us to resist loving others as the Word teaches us to do?
 - 1) What should we be doing about that in the light of I John 4:11?
 - d. Share practical ways we can communicate this love (agape) for others.
2. Record what I John 4:12a reveals about God.
 - a. Read John 14:9,10 and tell how Jesus revealed the Father's nature to us.
 - b. *The God Whom no one has seen is seen in those who love others*. How does our loving *one another* (as God loves us) reveal God to others?
3. Record the two results of loving one another revealed in I John 4:12b: (Use other versions if you desire.)
 - a.
 - b.
 - c. According to I John 4:12 we recognize that God has not only done something **for** us but He has done something **in** us. To think that God dwells within us and that through His indwelling presence His love is *perfected* or *matured* in us is an awesome reality. Are you aware of this glorious indwelling presence of God?
What difference does it make in your relationships with others to recognize this?

4. So much of I John speaks to us about loving others. In what way does the perspective of I John 4:7-12 increase your desire to be obedient to Jesus' command to *love one another*?
 - a. Share any changes taking place in your life, no matter how small, in response to the emphasis on love that is urged in I John.

***Let the walls fall down
 Let the walls fall down
 Let the walls fall down
 By His love Let the walls fall down***

***In His love. no walls between us
 In His love a common ground
 Kneeling at the cross of Jesus
 All our pride comes tumbling down
 Batstone, A. Barbour & J. Barbour***

SIXTH DAY: Review I John 4:1-12

1. Identify the two essential subjects dealt with in I John 4:1-12.
 - a. Which of these two subjects, *testing the spirits* or *loving others*, do you sense you need to concentrate on more fully? Why?

2. Why is what we believe about Jesus Christ crucial to our salvation?
 - a. Using I John 4:2 as a guideline *confess* in writing what you believe about Jesus.

 - b. Why is the doctrine that is being espoused by these false teachers of I John 4:1, 3 so dangerous?

Challenge: I John 4:5b points out that these false teachers speak from the world's viewpoint. Cite a few present-day examples of this.

3. *In his conflicts with sin, temptation, or error (false teachers or false doctrine), the Christian should never despair, for his God will ensure him the victory.* Explain why this is true using I John 4:4.

4. The greatest expression and example of love known to mankind was revealed through Jesus' death on the cross. In response to that love we are to reach out to others with Calvary love. Symbolize this love by drawing a cross. Over the top write I John 4:7-12. On the vertical line write: *God is love*. On the horizontal line write: *Love one another*.
 - a. Often loving others requires us to lay down our rights, forgive, or make things right. What does the cross represent in your life as it pertains to loving others?

Recommended: View this love from Amy Carmichael's book: "It".

5. How does our love for others make the unseen God more visible to them?
 - a. Think of and share here specific actions you can take to put this love into practice.
 - b. Hebrews 10:24 NIV encourages us to *consider how we may spur (provoke κιν) one another on toward love and good deeds*. Give an example of how we can do this.
6. Write the verse, phrase, or passage that ministered to you the most powerfully through your study of I John 4:1-12 this week.

It should be remembered that even the best of people leave much to be desired, and we must not expect too much. We need to be very patient with the faults of others. The most perfect people in the world have many imperfections and so do we. And sometimes it is quite difficult for us to tolerate each other. Nobody will deny that the imperfections of others cause us a lot of inconvenience! Please understand about love. I am not asking from you a love which is tender and emotional. All I ask is that your will should choose to love, that you should make up your mind to love others regardless of your feelings.

'Let Go'
Penelon

*Beloved, let us love one another.
I John 4:7a*