

SESSION 7 – WEEK OF 28 FEB 2021

LIVING IN GOD - IN LOVE AND IN THE SPIRIT

SCRIPTURE: 1JOHN 4:1-13

Theme:

This passage has two main sections. The first exhorts readers to test the spirits, to beware of the spirit of the anti-messiah (anti-christ), and to recognise God's Spirit. The second section reprises the theme of love for one another, which is modelled after the love displayed by the Messiah (Christ).

Key Verse:

"No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit." (1John 4:12-13)

Read 1 John 4:1-13

Core Questions for Discussion

(If your group meets fortnightly, combine Core Questions of two sessions and choose one Further Question from either session.)

1. Based on 1 John 4:1-4,
 - a) Why are we to test the spirits?
What should we look out for in testing the spirits?

 - b) What attitude are we to hold toward these antichrist spirits?

Some notes on the Antichrists

"The word antichrist (antichristos) appears only in the Johannine epistles (1 Jn 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 Jn 7), although the concept occurs elsewhere. [...] The antichrist tradition results from the converging of separate streams of Jewish tradition within early Christian eschatology. [...] One is a nonpolitical, deceptive religious figure from within the community [...] a false prophet who opposes the true prophet and misleads the righteous with signs and wonders (Deut 18:18-22). The second form is a tyrannical ruler from outside the community who oppresses the faithful in the end times. It may be rooted in the Jewish tradition of end-time tyrants."

- Duane F. Watson, "Antichrist," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments* (InterVarsity Press, 1997), 51.

3. How would you explain 1 John 4:12 which says, “No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us”? Is God’s love moving closer toward completion in your life?

Further Questions for Discussion

(Optional question for discussion if time permits. Do allocate adequate time for prayer and fellowship.)

If you have time ...

4. 1 John 4:7-8 reads: “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.” Does this verse mean that all who love others are of God, even if they do not profess Christ as Lord? Does “God is love” mean “love is God”?

Suggestions for Prayer

5. Would you consider praying for:
 - a) God to work His grace in yourself and in your fellow group members, that God’s love might daily move closer toward its transformative goal and toward completion. Pray that God’s love may be fully manifest, realised, and actualised in each of our lives (see item 3 above).
 - b) An opportunity to talk to someone about God’s love, as we have considered and prepared for in item 2(c) above. Ask God to lead you, trust that He will provide an opportunity, and keep an alert lookout. When the opportunity arises, simply speak with sincerity and genuineness. Then, share your experience with your small group at the next meeting.