

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, April 17, 2005

Passage: 1 John 4:1-6

Memory Passage: 1 John 4:4

TODAY: From your study this past week, what is one thing that impressed you that can be of help in your life?

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read 1 John 4:1.** Why does John encourage his readers to test the spirits (1 John 5:19; 2:18)?
- (b) What did Jesus warn his disciples about false teachers (Matthew 7:15-16)? How will they be identified?
- (c) According to Mathew 24:4-5, how will false prophets come to the people of God? What does 2 Corinthians 11:12-15 tell us about the work of false teachers? Are they obvious? Why not?
- (d) What other evidences of false teachers did Paul give in Romans 16:17-18? According to 1 Peter 2:1-3, what do these teachers use to exploit believers?
- (e) Why did Jesus commend the Church at Ephesus (Revelation 2:2)? What does 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21 tell us to do?
- (f) *Family:* Read 1 John 4:1-3 together and talk about false prophets and teachers. What kinds of groups or teachings are you aware of today that would be considered false teachers or deceiving spirits? Pray that each person will develop an attitude of discernment and be alert to false teachings that they might come in contact with.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read 1 John 4:1.** What was the basis for this testing in the OT (Deuteronomy 13:1-5)?
- (b) What are the dangers of using signs or miracles for determining true and false prophets?
- (c) What can we see about the deception of miracles from Exodus 7:8-13? What does Paul remind us will happen in the last days (1 Timothy 4:1)? How will this happen?
- (d) Contrast the attitudes toward discernment in Proverbs 14:15 and Acts 17:11? What is the difference in the two?
- (e) What test did Paul give for those who claimed to be prophets in 1 Corinthians 14:29-37?
- (f) What did Paul warn the Ephesians elders in Acts 20:28-32? How can the church be protected from such false teachers according to verse 32? What does this tell us ought to be the church's priority?
- (g) *Family:* Read 1 John 4:1-3 again and Psalm 119:98-105. Talk about why God's Word is the only sufficient test for determining true and false teaching. What would be the dangers if miraculous signs determined truth? Thank God for His Word and pray for those who teach you the Word of God, that they might be faithful to God's Word every time they teach.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read 1 John 4:2-3.** What is the chief way that we can know if a spirit or teaching is of God?
- (b) When the Spirit speaks, what is His emphasis and priority (John 16:13-15)? How can this be another way to test the spirits?
- (c) What should a true prophet be teaching about Jesus? Is this essential for teaching about salvation (Romans 10:9-13)? Explain.
- (d) What were the Gnostic heresies teaching about Jesus (1 John 2:18, 22; 2 John 1:7)?
- (e) Why is it important that Jesus came *in the flesh* (Hebrews 2:14-16)? What doctrines are denied *if* Jesus did not come in the flesh?
- (f) *Family:* Read 1 John 4:2-3 and Romans 10:9-13. Why is it important that Jesus came in the flesh? Summarize some tests for determining true and false prophets. What is the ultimate and final test? Thank God for sending His Son to be one of us to die for us.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read 1 John 4:4.** What reminder does John give to his readers? Is this true of every believer or just some (Romans 8:9; 1 John 3:24)?
- (b) How is this assurance important for standing against the enemy and false teachers? What kinds of things do false teachers try to make believers think are missing from their Christian experience?
- (c) How have they overcome him [Satan]? Consider Ephesians 6:10, 13; and Revelations 12:11.
- (d) Do they do it in their own strength? What in this verse reminds us that He gives us the victory? How are we *more than conquerors* according to Romans 8:37?
- (e) Also compare 1 John 5:4 – how does *our faith* overcome the world?
- (f) *Family:* Read 1 John 4:4. Talk about what it means to have the Spirit of God living in you. How does this happen? Thank God that believers have the Holy Spirit living in them and that HE is greater than anyone we face.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

- (a) **Read 1 John 4:5-6.** Can we determine true teachers based on their success or popularity? What does this verse tell us about why they are so popular?
- (b) According to Psalm 17:4, what kept the Psalmist from departing from God’s paths?
- (c) What are some of the evidences that these are truly *of the world* (John 15:19; 17:14; 1 Timothy 4:3)? Where have we seen each of these already in 1 John?
- (d) What final test of false prophets is given in verse 6? Also compare John 14:17; 15:26; and 18:37.
- (e) Who is the “we” that John refers to (1 John 1:1-4)? What witness is he referring to (Ephesians 2:20; 3:5; 2 Peter 3:1-2)?
- (f) *Family:* Read 1 John 4:5-6 and Ephesians 2:19-22. Talk together about the danger of basing truth on outward success. What should be the measure of true teachers? Discuss the importance of “faithfulness” to the teachings of the apostles. Thank God for providing many faithful witnesses for the church through the centuries. Pray that each of you may be faithful to His Word.

DAY 6 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

Think back through what you have learned each day this week. What have you learned about the importance of discernment? Is it wrong to be critical of the teachings of others? What should be the basis for our testing the spirits? What will be the consequences of not testing the spirits? Summarize some of the characteristics of true and false teachers. Pray for your services tomorrow, especially for the clear presentation of God’s Word.

DATE: April 17, 2005

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The Deception of Love

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit...”