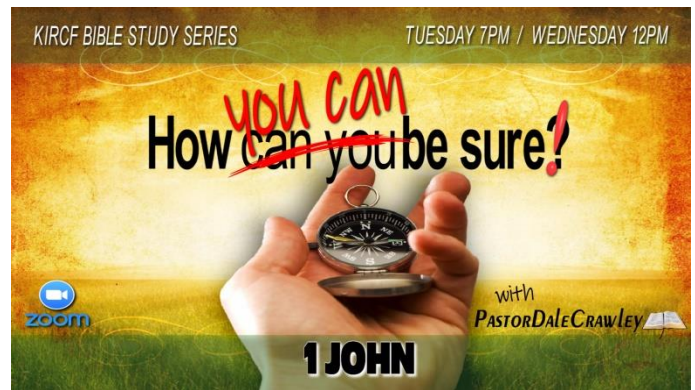


## 1 John Chapter Four: Part 2 “Discerning the Love of God”

John reminded his readers in 1 John Chapter 4 that they are children of God, and they will prevail over the false prophets who are not of God, but belong to the world.



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**“<sup>4</sup> You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. <sup>5</sup> They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. <sup>6</sup> We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”** -- 1 John 4:4-6 (NKJV)

Up to now, John assured his readers, that they had overcome these antichrists. They had successfully resisted the antichrists (false prophets) by means of the One who is in them (no doubt another reference to the Spirit). Reliance on God is the secret of all victory whether over heresy or any other snare. **The indwelling One - the Holy Spirit who indwells every believer** ... and is thus **“the One who is in you”** ... is mightier than the one who is in the world, namely, Satan!

The antichrists (false prophets) are from the world and speak from the viewpoint of the world. For this reason they get a good hearing from the world. It is always true that satanically inspired thought has a special appeal to worldly minds. But people who are from God (“of God”) listen to the apostles (“the Word”). In the history of the church, apostolic doctrine has always been the means by which the Holy Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood can be effectively distinguished. True Christianity is apostolic Christianity.

### **Read: Verses 7-21**

The second half of chapter three explained **how love behaves**. In 1 John 4:7-21, the apostle returns to the **“test of love.”** John explains **why love behaves** the way it does (i.e., why Christians should love each other). We should love one another for the following reasons.

1. God is love, so we should love (4:7-8,16,19).
2. God abides in us, and we in Him, if we love (4:12).
3. God’s love for us is perfected when we truly love our brethren. So, we should not dread punishment, but we can look forward to eternal fellowship with God with confidence (4:12b,17-18).

## Love Acts.

Therefore, to understand God's love for us ... we look at His actions. **"He sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins"** (4:10), who is **"the only begotten Son"** (4:9).

**John encouraged his readers to love each other because their love comes from God.** He said that if a person loves, they belong to God. Love, after all, was the reason that God sent Jesus so He could atone for the sins of the world. If God loved humankind that way, then humankind should love each other.

**"And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God love his brother also"** (4:21). Christian love (i.e., loving as God loves) ... is the result of learning and obeying the gospel!

**When we confess Jesus as the Son of God, we have learned and responded to the love of God** (4:16). We learn **what** love is, **how** love behaves, and **why** love behaves the way it does. When we love like God loves, He abides in us and we in Him!

## Love Rejects Fear

John also said in 1 John Chapter 4 ... that fear and love cannot exist together. Love rejects fear because fear causes pain and that prevents love from being perfected. He told his readers that he and they love God because God loved them first.

**He went on to say ... that a man cannot say he hates his brother but loves God!**

John said that a man cannot hate his brother, who he sees every day, but love God, who he has never seen. He reminded us ... that the call to love one's brother is also a commandment from God ... because if a person loves God, he must love his brother as well!

