



VERSE BY VERSE MINISTRY
INTERNATIONAL

TEACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

1 John 4

Chapter 4:

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- Review of Chapter 1:
 - The Word of Life is Jesus from beginning of creation.
 - Jesus brought the way to have fellowship with God resulting in eternal life.
 - The apostles were eye witnesses to Jesus' physical resurrection.
 - Believers have sin but should avoid sin.
- Chapter 2:
 - Jesus is our propitiation.
 - A person cannot love the things of the world and God at the same time.
 - Antichrists deny Jesus is the Christ.
 - The truth leading to eternal life is found in Christ which leads us to love others and practice righteousness vs. the lie which denies Christ's deity and practice sin.
 - Be prepared to deal with false teaching and false teachers in the church.
- What are the five basic tenets of Gnosticism discussed?
 - 1. knowledge superior to virtue
 - 2. non-literal scripture only a select few could interpret
 - 3. God is not only creator because He couldn't create a world with sin
 - 4. Deity can't exist in flesh
 - 5. No resurrection
- Chapter 3:
 - Believers are children of God.
 - We will be resurrected as Jesus was resurrected when He comes back for us.
 - The part of a believer that becomes purified like Jesus is in the spirit as one receives the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation when we are born again, this allows a believer to practice righteousness and love the brethren.
 - Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil.
 - Believers are to love one another and demonstrate this in actions of sacrifice even to death as Jesus did.
- Begin in 1John 4:1-6

1John 4:1 Beloved, 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.

1John 4:2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;

1John 4:3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

1John 4:4 You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

1John 4:5 They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and

the world listens to them.

1John 4:6 We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

- v.1 Who is John addressing? (Beloved)
 - What are the beloved? (Believers)
 - What warning does John give the believers? (do not believe every spirit,)
 - What spirit is John referring to? (The spirit that is inside a person)
 - John is continuing a discussion about the spirit within a person. See 1 John 3:24.

1John 3:24 The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

- John has spent time exploring the Spirit inside believers and now moves to a discussion of the spirit world in general and says, do not believe every Spirit is the same.
 - What does John tell the believers to do? (but test the spirits to see whether they are from God,)
 - Why do believers need to test the spirits? (because many false prophets have gone out into the world.)
 - What type of spirit would take the false prophets out into the world? (not the Spirit of God)
 - The conclusion John makes is that the false prophets would not have the Spirit of God.
- v.2 What is the test to be applied to the spirit world? (By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;)
 - Those who have the Spirit of God, known as the Holy Spirit will say Jesus Christ came to men as incarnate and was sent by God.
- v.3 What is the opposite result this test can expose? (and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God;)
 - Where does this spirit come from? (this is the spirit of the antichrist,)
 - The confession of the spirit in someone is of the utmost importance to believers.
 - If they deny Jesus is the Christ, that is the spirit of antichrist.
 - Keep in mind many false religions don't blatantly deny Jesus is the Christ, instead they chose not to confess or acknowledge Jesus is the Christ.
 - Both of these responses demonstrates the spirit of antichrist.
 - What did John acknowledge believers knew about this spirit? (of which you have heard that it is coming,)

- John said it is not only coming but what else? (and now it is already in the world.)
 - John makes it clear this early church had already been made aware of this coming of the spirit of antichrist.
 - Now John clearly says this spirit is now already in the world.
- v.4 John encourages the believers how? (You are from God, little children, and have overcome them;)
 - Who are the “them”? (those with the spirit of the antichrist)
 - Those referred to in v.1; the many false prophets that have gone out into the world.
 - How had the believers overcome them? (because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.)
 - Who is the ‘He’ in the believers? (The Spirit of God)
 - Who is the ‘he’ who is in the world? (The spirit of the antichrist)
- v.5 What is true about those with the spirit of antichrist? (They are from the world;)
 - People of the world have what view point? (therefore they speak as from the world,)
 - What is the result? (and the world listens to them.)
 - Unbelievers will communicate with the world successfully because they have the same desires springing from the same spirit inside them.
 - This is confirmed for us in 1 Corinthians 2:11-14.

1Cor. 2:11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.

1Cor. 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, 1Cor. 2:13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

1Cor. 2:14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

- This is a confirmation that God’s thoughts are known only by those who have the Holy Spirit.
 - Those who do not have the thoughts of God because they don’t have the Spirit of God can be known by those with the Spirit of God.
- 1 John 4:6 What does John say is true in contrast to the world? (We are from God; he who knows God listens to us;)
 - John says the opposite is true how? (he who is not from God does not listen to us.)
 - What is the outcome of this understanding? (By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.)

- John makes a definitive declaration here by stating those who are opposed to what the apostles taught were clearly not believers.
 - These men will claim Jesus did not come in the flesh sent from the Father.
 - This is a clear refutation to the Gnostic’s teaching that deity does not exist in the flesh.
 - This also is true for any other false teaching with this denial or omission.

1John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

1John 4:8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

1John 4:9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

1John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

1John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

1John 4:12 No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

1John 4:13 By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

- v.7 What does John call the believers to do? (Beloved, let us love one another,)
 - Who is the source of this love? (for love is from God;)
 - What is true about believers who love one another? (and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.)
 - To be born of God is to be a believer and, as a believer, has a relationship with God (knows Him).
 - The true knowledge of God is demonstrated in the virtue of love.
- v.8 What is true when one professing to be a believer does not love one another? (The one who does not love does not know God,)
 - Why is this true? (for God is love.)
- v.9 Because God is love, what is true? (By this the love of God was manifested in us,)
 - God’s love can reside in us because of what? (that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.)
 - The term “His only begotten Son” can also be translated “His one and only” (NET and NIV)
 - “One and only” translates *monogenh*, “only born one”, which is also used in John 1:14, 3:16.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that

whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

- Jesus is the only born one of God; there will be no one else, there is no other way the Father is bringing men to Himself.
- 1 John 4:10 John gives an example of what love looks like how? (In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.)
 - What does John say was true first? (not that we loved God)
 - Love did not begin within us towards God and then He responded to us in some way.
 - There are many who would claim to love God without a true understanding that it is impossible for us to love God on our own initiative.
 - What was true about God's love first? (but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.)
 - We covered the propitiation of our sins in detail in 1 John Lesson 2A; here is the conclusion after looking at what the scriptures teach about propitiation.
 - Only the death of an innocent man can produce a perfect blood sacrifice to satisfy God's justice.
 - God accepted a substitutionary payment of Jesus' death with His blood in place of our death and blood for our sin.
 - This was completed though Jesus and when we believe this, which can only happen by the gift of faith, we are redeemed to God.
 - The death of Jesus with His blood applied for us IS a propitiation.
 - John's point here is that God provided this out of His love for us – not that it was a response to our love for God. See also Romans 5:8

Rom. 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

- Unbelievers can have a desire for eternal things and in religious efforts might feel a love as man for God, they like the idea of love for God.
 - This is expressed in many ways that ultimately focus on self-gratification; how it makes man feel.
 - True love requires a sacrifice of self as God demonstrated by sacrificing His Son for us while we were still sinners.
 - It is a subtle difference but the ultimate distinction in comprehending a love for God.
- 1 John 4:11 This is the example of love provided by God, so what should believers do? (Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.)
 - If God loved us without regard for our love first, we should love one another in the same manner.
 - This is the sacrificial love a believer is able to express for other believers because we have the love of God in us.

- v.12 What is a truth about God? (No one has seen God at any time;)
 - John also describes this in his gospel in John 1:18

John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

- 1 John 4:12 What way has God provided for men to see God? (if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.)
 - When God abides in us His love is demonstrated in us as we love one another.
 - God's love is perfected when it is replicated in us.
 - True Love is not an emotion it is an action.
 - What do we do to show love for one another?
- v.13 Why are we able to love one another? (By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.)
 - It is only because we have His Spirit (Holy Spirit) in us that we are able to love one another. See Romans 5:5

Rom. 5:5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

- A believer knows he abides in God when he can love other believers with the love God has poured into his heart through the Spirit.

1John 4:14 We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

1John 4:15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

1John 4:16 We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

1John 4:17 By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

1John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

1John 4:19 We love, because He first loved us.

1John 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

1John 4:21 And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

- v.14 No one has seen God but John says what? (We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.)

- This is what John said in the first three verses of Chapter 1, We have seen the Son.
- 1 John 4:14 The Son is to be what? (the Savior of the world.)
 - We can only understand the sacrifice of God for our salvation through faith.
 - It is because we have seen this we can testify to the world as a witness.
- v.15 For those who have not seen with their own eyes they can still do what? (Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.)
 - Only those who abide in God and God in them will confess Jesus is the Son of God.
- v.16 How is the abiding of God in someone demonstrated? (We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us.)
 - What are the two things true about God’s love for the believer? (We know and believed)
 - This is because God is what? (God is love,)
 - When is the result? (and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.)
 - Only those who abide in God and God in them can demonstrate God’s love.
- v.17 What is John’s conclusion from vv.15-16? (By this, love is perfected with us,)
 - What is “this” referring to? (Confessing Jesus is the Son of God and demonstrating God’s love)
 - When we do these things what else is true for the believer? (so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment;)
 - What is the day of judgement? See Matthew 10:15, 2 Peter 2:6-9, 3:7

Matt. 10:15 “Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.

2Pet. 2:6 and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter;

2Pet. 2:7 and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men

2Pet. 2:8 (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds),

2Pet. 2:9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,

2Pet. 3:7 But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

- “The day of judgement” is always used in reference to the day for punishment of the unrighteous and destruction of ungodly men.
- 1 John 4:17 What would it mean for one to have confidence in that day? (They will not receive punishment or destruction in that day)

- Why can believers have confidence? (because as He is, so also are we in this world.)
 - Who is the “He”? (Jesus)
 - What is meant by, “as He is”? (As Jesus is)
- What is true about Jesus now? (Righteous and resurrected)
 - The believer knows he will not endure punishment or destruction in the day of judgement because he confesses Jesus.
 - Believers have full confidence of this, there is no doubt!
- v.18 What else is true for the believer when love is perfected in them? (There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear,)
 - Why does one have fear? (because fear involves punishment,)
 - The punishment brought when? (the day of judgement)
 - What is true for one who has fear of the day of judgement? (and the one who fears is not perfected in love.)
 - Those who do not know the love of God, through Jesus, know the fear of the day of judgement.
 - There is no fear of this day in the one who knows the love of God, is a believer.
- v.19 What is true for believers? (We love,)
 - Why do we love? (because He first loved us.)
 - There is a difference in man’s natural ability to love and the divine love given and expressed from God
 - A believer can only express this divine love because we have received it from God first and now have His Spirit in us.
- v.20 What is a test to know which of these someone is? (If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar;)
 - A believer cannot claim to love God and hate the brethren, just like he cannot claim to know God but disobey His commands or claim to know God but deny the truth of Him sending His Son.
 - Why is this true? (for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.)
 - Why is the love of the brethren a test for the abiding love of God? (The brethren are able to be seen)
 - The brethren are here in this world now to receive the love of God that is in the believer now.
 - When one claims to have the love of God in them but can’t demonstrate that love to a believer they testify to the truth that the love of God does not abide in them.
- v.21 What did John say because of this truth? (And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.)
 - These words also come to us from Jesus Himself in Mark 12:28-31.

Mark 12:28 One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

Mark 12:29 “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

Mark 12:30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’

Mark 12:31 The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

- The Jewish leaders often tried to answer this question, debating among themselves when discussing the Mosaic Law.
 - They believed all the law was binding but they felt some were of more importance than others.
 - There were those who would try to find a way to sum up the most significant laws with a summation found in other laws.
 - The leaders of the the day for Israel were trying to trap Jesus in any answer He would give and this is identified in more detail in Mark 12:13 and 18.

Mark 12:13 Then they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Him in order to trap Him in a statement.

Mark 12:18 Some Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection) came to Jesus, and began questioning Him,

- Mark 12:28 What did this teacher of the law notice about what Jesus had just answered for these two groups of men sent to trap Jesus? (Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer,)
 - The question the teacher of the law put before Jesus could have been a trap or a sincere question, but in hope to receive a correct answer.
 - He asks Jesus Which (*poios*, “what kind of”) commandment is the most important (*prōtos*, “first”) of them all?
 - Jesus answers by quoting from Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

Deut. 6:4 “Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!

Deut. 6:5 “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Deut. 6:6 “These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.

Deut. 6:7 “You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.

Deut. 6:8 “You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as

frontals on your forehead.

Deut. 6:9 “You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

- Israel’s God is defined how? (the LORD is one!)
 - There is a specific God being spoken of here.
- v.5 Now that who God is has been clearly defined what are the people of God to do? (You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.)
 - Now the identity of God moves from “our God” to “the Lord your God”.
 - This God is to be loved how? (with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.)
- The question put forth to Jesus was, of all the commandments which is the most important.
 - The teacher of the law wanted to know which one commandment was the most important, but Jesus gave a second commandment as well, “Love your neighbor as yourself”. This is also found in the Old Testament in Leviticus 19:18.

Lev. 19:18 ‘You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD.

- When we studied this back in Chapter 2 it was pointed out that after this answer the teacher asked who his neighbor would be.
 - Jesus tells the parable of the “good Samaritan”, and ends with these two verses.

Luke 10:36 “Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers’ hands?”

Luke 10:37 And he said, “The one who showed mercy toward him.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do the same.”

- Paul gives the same conclusion in Galatians 5:13-14.

Gal. 5:13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Gal. 5:14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.”

- Paul makes it clear we are to demonstrate love for one another by serving one another.
 - This will be contrary to our fleshly desire as we are drawn to serve ourselves first.
- Both Jesus and Paul use the same standard when determining what love we already

have in ourselves that can be used to turn to the brethren in love

- They both say in the way you “love yourself”, use that to love the brethren.
 - There is a false teaching in the church today that says we must learn to love ourselves first before we can love others the way God desires for us to love others.
 - There is nowhere in scriptures this teaching can be found.
 - God is always about getting us to focus outside ourselves.
- Here in 1 John 4 we are reminded that the first circle of focus outside ourselves is towards God and then secondly towards the brethren.
 - What ways is God revealing to you to make Him first in your life.
 - In your heart?
 - In your soul?
 - With all your might?
 - What sacrifices will be necessary to lead you to this type of sacrificial life.
 - What ways is God revealing to you to love the brethren as you already love yourself.
 - What ways are you being encouraged to serve the body of Christ?
 - These two are interconnected; you can't claim to love God and then not love the brethren.