

# Week 2 - 1 John 4-5

## Day One Devotion and Reading

**I John 4: 1-6**

### Test the Spirits

Have you ever held a counterfeit dollar in your hand? You and I might have a hard time telling the fake bill from a real one, but banks teach new employees about the texture, watermarks, microprinting, and color-shifting ink on all of the denominations. These employees know what a real bill looks and feels like.

John speaks to us from the viewpoint of someone who has faced false spirits. The Church was still young and growing when Gnostics infiltrated it in order to spread false doctrines. In this chapter John teaches us how to discern the real Spirit from false spirits.

These false spirits will speak from the viewpoint of the world, and just like employees in a financial institution, we need to be able to recognize the real thing. We need to know the truth of God in order to identify falsities. We need to search God's Word and know it in order to be prepared for those who would distort the truth.

Go back through verses 1 - 6, and write out the steps that John gives us. It's quite a list! Then, practice what the psalmist says in Psalm 119:11: *I have hidden your word in my heart so that I won't sin against you.*

## **Day Two(Reading Only): John 17, Daniel 9: 4, Romans 8:1 4, Romans 8:31-38**

### **Day Three Devotion and Reading**

**John 5:1 - 16**

#### **How Do I Love Thee?**

Have you ever read the beautiful poem by Elizabeth Barrett Browning that expresses a lover's love? It starts like this: "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways." Barret Browning goes on to tell of her love for her lover. It is important to tell the people we love that we love them. We all have a need to hear those words, and if we are in a loving relationship, we had better be saying them to our loved ones. But, there is something much more important than the words alone.

In today's reading, John tells us that love is an action, and when we carry out God's commandments, which includes loving others, we prove that we love God's people, and therefore we show that we love God. In the Gospel of John, Jesus tells Peter that if he truly loves Him, he will love His people. The great commandment in Matthew 22:36-40 tells us that we are to love God, and we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. Notice how the verses continue, "All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two." We have heard this over and over, but are we realizing what a profound truth this is? This command is premier in the Kingdom of God: love one another.

How is it possible for us to love God's people as He commanded? God's Word tells us, because of who Jesus is and what He did, we have overcome the world. It is in this overcoming that we are given the power to love and to love well. We are given the power to resist our earthly nature and live into the new creation that God is making in us

What are things that we allow to stand in the way of loving others? Gossip? Judgement? Appearances? Popularity? Go through each verse in today's reading and develop a path of action from the thoughts that John has laid out for us.

## **Day Four(Reading Only): Romans 13: 8-10, Romans 14:1-18, I Corinthians 13: 1-13**

## **Day Five Devotion and Reading**

**I John 5: 18-20**

**The I Know Book**

John concludes by reviewing the things that he has covered in this book. John wrote this book to remind believers of what we know to be true. Since he was fighting false teachers who were attacking the real message of the Gospel, he knew it was important that the Church be prepared with the truth. Just look at all the “we knows” from John’s writings.

**We know** that anyone born of God does not continue to sin (5:18). (Here, John is not saying we won’t sin, but that we won’t *continue* to sin.) (See also Hebrews 12:1 & II Thessalonians 3:3 – 5.)

**We know** that the One who was born of God keeps [believers] safe, and the evil one cannot harm them (5:18b). (See also John 17, Jesus’ priestly prayer for believers, and II Thessalonians 3:3.)

**We know** that we are children of God (5:19). (See also John 1:12 – 13 and I John 3:1.)

**We know** that Satan is the prince of this world (5:19). (See also Ephesians 6:10 – 13.)

**We know** that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding (5: 20). (See also John 17: 6-8 & 20.)

**We know** that we live in God (4:13). (See also Psalm 139: 1 – 18 and John 17:20-26.)

**We know** that we have eternal life if we believe that Jesus is our Savior and Lord (5:13). (See also Romans 10: 9 – 10.)

**We know** that He hears our prayers (5:15). (See also II Chronicles 6: 36 – 39.)

**We know** that He is the true God and eternal life (5:20). (See also Romans 6:23 and I Timothy 1:17.)

This is just the tip of the iceberg in a Bible that is full of God's truth. As you read the Scripture for today again, take time to look up the suggested passages. You may want to read further in each one. They are full of wonderful truths to spur us on.