



SERMON BASED STUDY GUIDE

Pastor Charlie Riley

1ST JOHN PART 5

OPENING & PRAYER:

The epistle of John is revisited with a clear, urgent focus: believers are defined by their union with Christ and by love that moves. Being "in Christ" means ongoing cleansing by Jesus' blood, a present identity that defeats the power of sin and breaks the devil's hold. That new identity is rooted in God's lavished love—God sent his Son to remove sin and to make believers children of God—and this reality should shape both confidence before God and daily conduct. Love is presented not as sentiment but as costly, visible obedience: Christ's laying down of his life establishes the pattern, and Christians are called to lay down their lives for one another in concrete, discerning ways.

"Lord, thank You for bringing us together in this moment right now. We ask that You would stir our hearts and minds to be curious about You and kind to one another. Please reveal more of Yourself to us as we grow closer to You and one another. We thank You for this small group time we're about to have. In Jesus' name, amen."

SCRIPTURE:

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. **1 John 3:1**

And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. **1 John 3:5-6**

He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. **1 John 3:8**

Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. **1 John 3:9**

Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. **1 John 3:9**

By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? **1 John 3:16-17**

My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. **1 John 3:18-20**

Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment. **1 John 3:21-23**

Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us. **1 John 3:24**

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. **1 John 4:1**

By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. **1 John 4:1-3**

And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. 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. **1 John 4:3-4**

They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. 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 4:5-6**

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. **1 John 4:7-9**

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. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. **1 John 4:10**

No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. **1 John 4:12-13**

And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. **1 John 4:14-16**

Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. **1 John 4:17**

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us. **1 John 4:18-19**

"Possessing God's Love results in fearless confidence toward God and love for the brethren. The one who knows this love has no dread of facing God at judgement. Even now in the world we are as He (Christ) is. The comparison is that of position, not characters. Jesus is well-pleasing to God as His Son, and we are God's children acceptable to him." Spirit Filled Life Bible - **1 John 4:17-19**

If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also. **1 John 4:20-21**

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. **1 John 5:1**

GO DEEPER:

Practical application sharpens the call. Helping others must be defined carefully; true help guides people toward health and responsibility rather than enabling destructive patterns. Financial giving and compassion are important, but they must be governed by wisdom about long-term flourishing. John also presses spiritual discernment: not every spirit that speaks belongs to God. The definitive test is the confession that Jesus Christ came in the flesh—denials of the incarnation reveal a spirit opposed to Christ and open the door to deception. Believers have the Spirit within them—“greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world”—so discernment, not fear, should mark the community.

The end of the argument returns to love: God is love, and abiding in love produces boldness before God and casts out fear. Love with action—the union of orthodoxy and charity—marks authentic children of God. The epistle repeatedly ties correct belief to ethical obligation: genuine faith shows itself in sacrificial service, careful help, spiritual sobriety, and a fearless confidence born from being loved and sealed by God’s Spirit.

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KEY TAKEAWAYS:

1. Abiding in Christ changes identity. Being in Christ is more than a legal standing; it is ongoing cleansing and a real reorientation of power. This identity unravels the lie that sin defines the believer and reframes failures through continual cleansing by Christ's blood. Confidence before God grows out of being positioned in the Son, not from moral perfection. **[05:55]**

2. Love demands sacrificial, visible action. True love follows the pattern of laying down life—words alone are insufficient. The standard is Christ's self-giving, which compels concrete service and costly commitment to others. Love that refuses practical involvement betrays a gap between confession and reality. **[09:44]**

3. Help must guide, not enable. Charity without discernment can perpetuate bondage; genuine help directs people toward health and responsibility. Refusing to enable harmful behavior can be the most loving intervention. Wisdom in giving protects both giver and receiver and honors God's design for flourishing. **[15:17]**

4. Discern spirits by Christ's incarnation. The central test of spiritual truth is whether a teaching confesses Jesus Christ come in the flesh. Any teaching that denies the incarnation is antichrist at its core and opens the door to deception. Spiritual sobriety requires this clear boundary while relying on the Spirit within for guidance. **[28:05]**

5. Perfect love removes sin-based fear. When God's love is grasped and lived, fear loses its grip; perfect love produces boldness before God. This confidence is positional—believers stand as children accepted by the Father—and it changes how believers face judgment and daily danger. Love, not timidity, becomes the measure of spiritual maturity. **[41:25]**

LEARNING AND GROWING:

1. According to 1 John 4, what clear test does John give for discerning spirits, and how is this different from judging by enthusiasm or popularity? **([28:05])**
2. What does it look like, in everyday terms, to live as if “greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world”? How should that reshape the way a church family approaches news, trends, and spiritual claims? **([30:15])**
3. How can refusing to enable destructive behavior still be genuine Christian love? What biblical principles help draw the line between help and harm? **([15:17])**
4. When your heart condemns you, what specific step helps you assure your heart before God—confession, making something right with a person, or stepping into an act of obedience? Choose one step and share it with the group. **([20:00])**
5. Where this week do you need to rely on the indwelling Spirit rather than fear—maybe a hard conversation, a decision, or a cultural pressure? What will “yielding to Him” look like in that moment? **([34:17])**

CLOSING PRAYER:

“Father, thank you for the opportunities to grow in our faith. We will continue to lean on Your Word as we grow to bring people to know you. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.”