

DEVOTIONAL STUDY FORM

Date: 3/20/2008

Passage: I John 4

Prayer

☐ (check when done)

Meditation

Paraphrase:

Don't blindly trust what someone tells you about God. Make sure you examine their teachings and ensure they are consistent with what scripture tells us. One big test is this: if a person says that Jesus never really came to earth as a person, then he is not really teaching a message from God.

Another way you can check and see if the person is authentic is to see who their message attracts. If it seems that people who live worldly lives flock to hear this teaching, then the teacher is not teaching a message from God. If people who practice an authentic faith confirm the teaching, then the message must be from God.

There is yet another test we can perform on the messenger. How does he really treat other people? People from God show each other love. Because God is the very epitome of love (He loved us first and demonstrated that by sacrificing His Son for our redemption), we can be assured that a person who is demonstrating love to others has the Spirit of God in him and his message can be trusted. Make sure that you are showing love to each other.

This whole idea of God is love is very important because it truly is the only way to see God while in the flesh. Anytime love is shown, then God is seen. Also, this is a gauge of how God is affecting our lives. The more like God we are, the more loving and caring for others we are. As we grow in maturity, we demonstrate God's love to others more and more.

Another way to know if we are in God, besides demonstrating love, is if we proclaim that we believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the savior of the world.

For people who are full of love, there is no need to fear the day of judgment because our love for others shows that we have matured in Christ and have been demonstrating God's love to the world.

List: Christians Love...

1. because God is the essence of Love – love is inherent with all He does. Even his judgment and wrath are perfectly harmonized with His love (just like a parent who disciplines their child). Discipline demonstrates love. (v.7,8)
2. to follow God's example – The judgment of sin on the cross is the supreme example of God's love. (v.9)
3. because love is the heart of Witnessing – Nobody can see God loving since He is invisible and His love is invisible. Without Jesus being in the world to manifest God's love, it is only through the demonstration of love by God's people that the world can know of God's love. (v. 12)
4. because love is the Christian's assurance that he is saved – A lifestyle of love is the demonstratable proof of salvation. (v. 13-16)
5. because love is the Christian's confidence in judgment – (v. 17-19)

Application

(Personal, Possible, Practical, Provable)

It is clear that love is a significant attribute of those who are mature. One cannot love God without first loving his fellow believer. A claim to love God is a delusion if not accompanied by unselfish love for other Christians. One of my character flaws is that I can be very judgmental and condescending towards those who have made poor choices. This is not a demonstration of compassion or mercy that reflects the love of God. I must remember that I am the vessel through which God demonstrates his love. If I am not showing his love, then I cannot be assured that my messages are from him and people who listen might be led astray.

For the next 30 days, I will be alert for times I have unloving feelings for people I think have made poor choices. When I sense that, I will come back to this study and write down the person's name and one action I can do to demonstrate love for that person.

Person	Action

Memorization

"And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother."

1 John 4:21