

# WHO DO YOU BELIEVE?

## 1 John 4 (# 5 of Series on 1 John)

**Introduction:** who do you believe in today's controversies?

- Climate change:
  - the deniers or
  - there's going to be a catastrophe in a few short years?
- Australia's Power Sources:
  - renewables & no coal OR
  - Renewables + coal
- Morality – what do you believe about gender
  - Is it physical
  - Mental
  - Moral?
- Spirituality: Is there a spiritual part of me?
  - Is it fed by
    - World's systems
    - Evil spirits
    - God's Spirit
- Who or what do I believe?

### 1. Test Everything

**1 John 4:1-4** *Dear friends, 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. This is how you can recognise the Spirit of God: every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.*

*You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.*

- Told to “test the spirits” – what is the spiritual drive or motivational element?
- False prophet – someone who claims to have spiritual power or insight
  - In John’s day – leading Christians away from belief in Jesus who is God the son who came in the flesh.
  - In our day – Many religious groups claim Jesus as a prophet, but not God
    - JW, Mormon, Islam, Jews, Hindu, Buddhist, etc
  - This is called “spirit of antichrist”
- What if I don’t have any of those religions / beliefs in my background?

**Ephesians 2:1-2** *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.*

- We were dead spiritually
- We followed the ways of the world
- Followed a ruler (spirit)
  - This spirit is at work in those who are disobedient.

**1 John 4:4** *You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.*

## **2. Love’s Purpose**

**1 John 4:8-11** *Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: he sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*

- God showed His love by sending His Son
  - Begotten = Father and Son of the same substance

- Atoning sacrifice – a cleansing, satisfying sacrifice that provided a covering shelter (Mercy Seat in Hebrews 9:5)
- We are not commanded to love one another to earn or become worthy of God’s love
  - We love one another because we are loved.
- To KNOW – experience God
  - Love for others must be present and growing.

### 3. Love’s Destiny

**1 John 4:16b-19** *God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: in this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us.*

- God is love – love is not God
- God’s love gives us confidence
- God’s love drives out fear
  - We are not talking about a holy reverence for God, which is sometimes called “fear” in the Bible
  - Fear is to do with anxiety, trepidation
    - Punishment, correction or rejection.

### 4. Love’s Maturity

**1 John 4:21** *And he has given us this command: anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.*

- What does mature love look like?

**1 Corinthians 13:1-3** *If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.*

**1 Corinthians 13:4-5** *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.*

**1 Corinthians 13:6-8a** *Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.*

**1 Corinthians 13:11;13** *When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me... And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*