

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

1 JOHN 3:1-4:6

The early 1960s was a tumultuous time in America. War protests, a fight for racial equality, a generational gap, political assassinations. And in the midst of it all, songwriter Hal David, wrote the lyrics, “**What the world needs now is love, sweet love, it’s the only thing that there’s just too little of...**” *But that’s as far as Hal got...*

He got stuck. Drew a blank. Nothing else came to his mind. So he shelved the song for the next two years.

One day Hal was in route to a friend’s house. He was meeting with composer Burt Bacharach to work on a few songs. Hal thought of his unfinished lyrics, “**What the world needs now is love, sweet love...**” Suddenly, it hit him, the song was a prayer. It should be addressed to God. Hal wrote, “**Lord, we don’t need another mountain...**” And the rest of the song began to flow. Hal said it was at this point, “**the song wrote itself.**”

I believe all our longings for love should ultimately be addressed to God. He is the source of real love. Forty years after Hal wrote it, it’s still true. “**What the world needs now is love, sweet love. It’s the only thing that there’s just too little of.**” What our world needs now, more than ever, is both **the love of God** and **a love for one another**. And that’s the subject in 1 John 3...

And it begins with a bang, “**Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!**” The word translated “*manner*” is strange. It means “**from what country.**” It speaks of a behavior or trait indicative of a specific nationality.

Which reminds me of a joke, “**Heaven is where the police are British, the chefs are Italian, the mechanics are German, the lovers are French, and it’s organized by the Swiss.**” Such a world would be heaven indeed! Whereas, **Hell is where the police are German, the chefs are British, the mechanics are French, the lovers are Swiss, and it’s all organized by the Italians.**”

Different countries are known for their own peculiar characteristics. *And so is heaven!* Heaven is known for what’s in such short supply on earth - **love, sweet love!**

And particularly God’s love! Ephesians 3:18 speaks of “**the width and length and depth and height**” of Christ’s love. His love is **wide** enough to cross borders and break down walls. It’s **long** enough to outlive years and disappointing memories. It dives

deep enough to reach the lowest sinner. And it rises **high** enough to touch God's heart and atone for all sins over all time.

Think of the degree of love it took for the eternal, holy, impeccable God to make children out of sinful, rebellious, onerous us. Spiritually speaking, I was a dumpster diver - *when I think of where I've been, the scraps I've sucked on, the scum I've swam in, the depths to which I've sunk, the shameful stuff I've done.*

Yet God in heaven made a way for me to become His kid. Those who are in Christ are now children of the King. *Behold the mind-blowing love God has for us... "that we should be called the children of God!"*

But he continues, *"Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him."* God calls us His kids, but the world doesn't recognize us as such.

And this was how they treated Jesus. Jesus is the Son of God. He reflected the Father in all He did and said - yet the Jews called Him *a blasphemer*. They didn't recognize *God the Son*, because they didn't know *God the Father*. And this is true for all God's kids.

In Christ we are co-heirs with Jesus - beneficiaries of His grace and mercy - members of His forever family, yet we too are often ignored or scoffed at. We're not recognized and appreciated for who we really are!

Movie star, Helen Hunt, has been a successful leading lady and movie director. She's won an Oscar for best actress. Yet she's not always recognized.

Once Helen placed an order at her neighborhood Starbucks. When she went to pick up her drink, fellow actress, Jodie Foster's name was written on the side of the cup. Later Helen tweeted, *"Ordered my drink @Starbucks asked the barista if she wanted my name. She winked and said 'We gotcha' #JodieFoster."* And just as that barista didn't recognize the movie star, this world doesn't recognize us for who we really are.

If you're a Christian your heart is the site of a miracle. God's Spirit now resides in you! Your spirit is a sacred place. Yet instead of being treated as special, we're often treated as a number, or another face in the crowd, or stereotyped, or racially profiled, or age profiled. This is happening a lot to me lately, *"aw, he's an old man... he's grumpy, slow, forgetful..." Don't do that to me! I've still got plenty of tread left on my tires!*

Don't let the way people treat you effect how you see yourself! As Christians don't allow the world to press you into its mold - *rather live out what God has put in. We all need to remember who we are in Christ!*

In Colossians 3:3 Paul writes to the believers, “For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”

Realize the Christian life is **the hidden life**. The world looks at the Christian, and our devotion makes no sense. They scoff, “She’s committed herself completely to Christ, and has nothing to show for it!”

And in a sense the world is right... Our God is invisible... Our home is over the horizon, out-of-sight, off-the-map... Our greatest rewards are still in the future... Our Savior is seen only through eyes of faith... Our helper, the Holy Spirit, is like the wind. He’s spiritual rather than tangible - sensed not seen... Our treasure is buried in our hearts... Our source of joy, and love, and power, and peace is accessed only from the inside of our lives. *The handles are on the inside!*

In short, our “life is hidden with Christ in God...”

Yet one day our plight will change, verse 2, “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” One day, God is going to let the cat out of the bag! What we truly are - the glorious children of God - will be revealed! *Everyone will be in awe of us!*

When Jesus appears in the clouds we’ll be on *Cloud 9*. 1 Corinthians 15 tells us at the rapture of the Church (*the day Jesus returns to snatch away His church*), Christians will receive new, perfected bodies. Our rotting flesh will be transformed. Rather than defined by our looks or physicality, we’ll radiate God’s glory.

Our current bodies are too opaque. All you see of me now is like the dust jacket of a book. *And we all know you can’t judge a book by its cover.* My eternal body will be more transparent. When Jesus comes the glory on the inside of me, will be seen from the outside.

Today, we wonder what these future bodies will look like? Imagine being clothed in a resurrection body? A body no longer vulnerable to pain, sickness, soreness. *A body that never breaks down or grows tired.*

We can mull over our body’s future characteristics, but John heightens our curiosity with five words, “*we shall be like Him.*” We’ll have the same type body - with similar capabilities our Lord had after His resurrection.

Recall Jesus walked with two disciples on the Road to Emmaus. Then as they broke bread together He vanished. He reappeared shortly thereafter in the upper room in Jerusalem. Jesus’ resurrected body wasn’t limited by time and space. I’m not sure all “*Christ-like*” includes, but the one certainty is we’ll be the envy of the angels... beautiful beyond description!

Today, skeptics label the doctrine of the rapture as a form of escapism. They say rather than changing our world for the better, rapture believers just sit on their hands, and twiddle their thumbs, and bide their time waiting for a future event... **but that's not true!**

In verse 3 John says the rapture hope is a powerful motivation for godliness today! For **"Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."**

Trust me, a young lady isn't idle thirty minutes before she walks the aisle to marry her groom. She's primping and getting ready. She wants to look her best when the moment comes. And likewise the Bride of Christ wants to be at her best when Jesus returns. It's the constant expectation of His arrival that keeps us on our toes.

Wherever I go, whatever I do - I need to first ask myself if Jesus returned this moment is this where I'd want Him to find me? We want to be pure... for sure!

Verse 4, **"Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness."** I like what GK Chesterton once said, **"The more I considered Christianity, the more I found that while it has established a rule and order, the chief aim of that order was to give room for good things to run wild."** Indeed, God's laws restrict certain behaviors, but God's prohibitions only *make room* for good things to flourish.

Thus, to violate God's order diminishes people and their quality of life. This holds true for how God has ordered our gender, our sexuality, and our marriage.

When we think of **"lawlessness"** we imagine looters breaking glass and running out of a store with stolen merchandise. But a more subtle lawlessness teaches folks to ignore God's commands and **"be who you are," "love who you want," "follow your own heart."** While God tells us to **"be who God created you to be,"** and **"love who God wants you to love,"** and **"follow Jesus."**

And since we've all been lawless and thought our way was best, verse 5 is good news, **"And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin."** Here's a reason Jesus came into our lawless world... *to take away our sins.* Realize, sin can be paid for by proxy. In God's courtroom someone else can make my bail, or pay the penalty for my sin.

And this was done by our Lord Jesus. The One in whom **"there is no sin"** took away my sin and your sin.

"Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him." Now, we need to grasp what this verse does **not** mean. John is not

teaching sinless perfection. Earlier in 1:8 he said, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” We all *blows it and John knows it!*

In the original language of the NT, which was Greek, the verb here, “*sins,*” is in its present tense. It might best be translated, “*whoever continues to sin.*”

The Greek word for “*sins*” or “*harmatia*” is “*to miss the mark.*” It was when an archer missed his target.

And man’s problem is not that he occasionally misses God’s glory. *It’s not that his eye mists up, or he gets distracted, or his hand slips... It’s that his aim is bad.* Our problem is internal. Our human nature is stained by sin. We’re warped and can’t shoot straight.

This is why Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Jesus births in us a new nature. He transforms our spirit with the Holy Spirit. He turns us into **a straight-shooter.**

Of course, a new nature doesn’t mean I’ll never slip up and sin again. But I shouldn’t “*continue in sin.*” At times we all sin, but the problem is no longer a warped nature. Evil is no longer internal to my spirit, *its external.* It’s the pressures of this world, or wiles of the devil, or my fallen flesh that cause me miss the target.

That means the key to living the Christian life is to abide in Christ. Rely on Him to live His life through me.

As believers there’ll be times we miss the mark, but it’s no longer because we can’t aim correctly. Before I came to Christ I occasionally slipped up and did good, but the flow of my life was toward sin and selfishness. Now that I’m in Christ at times I slip up and sin, but my prevailing desire is to love God and please Him.

Verse 7, “Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning.” It’s like father like son. A child of God will act godly. Whereas, evildoers are the devil’s children. **For a child will mimic his or her dad.**

Once my kids and I were walking around the house: *Zack, Nick, Natalie.* They were just tots. We turned the corner when I spit in the yard. Then Zack spit; then Nick spit; then *you guessed it,* my darling Natalie spit. Kathy saw it, and didn’t approve! *What gross habit had I taught my little girl?* But kids mimic their dad, and it’s true spiritually. If God is your Dad you’ll habitually do what’s right, but if you continually sin, or harbor hatred; regardless of your claim you’re a child of the devil.

Verse 8, “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” This is the second reason John gives us that Jesus was

manifested, or came into the world. *“To destroy the works of the devil.”* Jesus came to break Satan’s chokehold, and set us free from his influence.

In John 10:10 Jesus exposes Satan’s goal, *“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.”* Satan works to rip us off. He’s out to kill - *our joy, our peace, our gratitude*. Satan tries to destroy any hope we have for a better life. In contrast, Jesus promises to give us *“life and life more abundantly.”*

Verse 9, *“Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin (i.e. “sin continually”), because he has been born of God.”*

Listen to how JB Philips translates verses 8-9, *“The man whose life is habitually sinful is spiritually a son of the devil, for the devil has been a sinner from the beginning. Now the Son of God came to earth with the express purpose of undoing the devil’s work. The man who is really God’s son does not practice sin, for God’s nature is in him, for good, and such a heredity is incapable of sin.”* In other words, righteousness and unrighteousness is in the genes. Actually, today, every dysfunction and sinful behavior is blamed on genetics.

From serial killers, to homosexuals, to alcoholics, folks claim they were born that way. *And in a sense they’re right...* We’re all born with a proclivity to sin.

We can all blame our problems on the sin nature we inherited from the first man, Adam. Yet we still have a responsibility. We can be born again through Christ! Jesus will remove our *defiant spirit* and replace it with a *compliant spirit* - one that loves God and loves others!

Verse 10, *“In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.”* From time to time you read stories of babies who were accidentally switched at the hospital. Families went home with the wrong baby. After some time suspicions rise and testing gets done.

Here John says that many churches make the same mistake. We send people home thinking they’re a child of God, when in reality they’re a child of the devil.

And the way to know for certain is a **spiritual DNA test**. If your life stubbornly opposes surrender to God’s will, or harbors hatred toward certain people - *you can get baptized until your fingertips prune up - or attend church more than a church mouse - or tithe until you wear out the iPad* - but if you don’t want to what’s right and love others you’re not God’s child. Here’s the DNA test for a true child of God: *do I practice righteousness* and *do I love one another*... And the DNA don’t lie.

“For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.” Of all the roads that lead to hatred, jealousy is the shortest. And it was jealousy that turned Cain into a murderer. It's been said, “A man green with envy is ripe for trouble.”

The story goes all the way back to Adam and Eve. In fact, *do you know what the first man and woman were doing after they sinned and got kicked out of the Garden of Eden?* Answer: “They were raising Cain!”***

Cain was their first son. Their second son was Abel. Abel realized His lawlessness, and that sin required a sacrifice. *God seeks justice too.* And since the wages of sin is death, Abel brought a sacrifice to God's altar.

But Cain was proud. He brought God his crops, a horn of plenty - *the work of his hands.* Rather than offer God what **God wanted**, Cain offered what was convenient for him. God rejected Cain and accept Abel.

Of course, this sent Cain into a rage. He was angry. Cain didn't get what he wanted, and took out his frustrations on Abel by attacking and killing his brother.

Understand, *men of God* like Abel, are easy targets for people *mad at God* like Cain. A man's arms are too short to box with God, so that man will often take out his anger, failure, and envy on God's representatives.

This is why John tells them not to be surprised by persecution. He writes in verse 13, “Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you.” *And neither should we be shocked if you and I are hated for Jesus' sake.*

Verse 14, “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.” Love is evidence of spiritual life! It's how you check for a spiritual pulse. Not blood, but is love pumping through your heart?

“He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.”

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught us, “You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.” Obviously, murder carries more serious consequences than mere anger, yet the *deed* comes from the *seed*. It's the same evil, just different degrees.

Murder is *uninhibited anger*. Anger may never pull an actual trigger, but folks can pull a trigger in their heart.

Verse 16, “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.” Here’s what I call “cross-think.”

And here’s how it works... **If Jesus went to the cross for me...** I can toss the ball around with the kids even though I come home exhausted... or cook a pan of lasagna to take to a needy family in the church... or sacrifice a little spending money to help a person who lost their job... or spend time with a teenager nobody cares about... *or help my wife vac...cuuuu...mmmm the carpets! I hope I can. Yes, I can help my wife!*

John 3:16 tells us how God loves us... *He gave His only begotten Son.* Now **1 John 3:16** tells us how we ought to love one another... *by laying down our lives.*

Verse 17, “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?” God’s love doesn’t close it’s eyes, and shut its heart, and sit on its hands. Verse 18, “My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.”

Notice in verse 17 three traits of God’s love: **It sees needs, it feels needs, it meets needs.** And this is how love shows up in us. First, **love sees needs**, “whoever has this world's goods, and **sees his brother in need...**”

One Sunday years ago a note was dropped in our offering box. No name was on it... *This isn’t the actual note*, but this is what I read, “Pray for me. I desperately want to end my life. I am so unhappy. Thank you.”

I didn’t see the note until everyone had left that day. And it’s always grieved me to think I may’ve passed that person that morning, and overlooked them. It’s scary, that we can be oblivious to desperate needs we don’t see. It’s love that opens our eyes to see needs.

Love sees needs, but it also **feels needs**. Verse 17, “Whoever has this world's goods... and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?” Implied is that *God’s love prohibits a shut heart*. As long as the love of God abides in me it keeps prying my heart open. I’ll stay empathetic to people’s needs.

I may not always be able to meet a need. At times, for reasons unknown to me, God may even lead me to not meet certain needs. **But He never wants me to shut up my heart to a need.** When I turn a cold shoulder - or stone-wall a legitimate need - if I ever stop caring for the person that’s hurting I’ll stop feeling altogether, and I’ll end up among the throngs of folks who go through life cold, and embittered, and lonely.

Love sees needs, feels needs, and then **meets needs**. God’s love has a git-r-done mentality. It doesn’t just talk a good talk. As we’re told in verse 18 it’s not just love “in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.”

God's love rolls up its shirtsleeves. It doesn't just do what's convenient, it helps where it actually hurts.

Stanley Mooneyham once wrote, "Love talked about is easily turned aside, but love demonstrated is irresistible." What the world needs now is love - but not "in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

Then verse 19, "And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him." In short, love breeds confidence in my relationship with God. I know I'm a true child of God *not because I pray three hours a day, or never miss church, or always give an offering, or teach a Sunday School class, or even speak with tongues* - I know that I know God because His love fills my heart, and is revealed in my actions.

Jesus said to his disciples, John 13:35, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." It's true, love is the believer's birthmark.

"For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things." If you know there's hatred in your heart, God knows it too. You can't fool God. "Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God." It's been said, "Your conscience is like a baby, it has to go to sleep before you can." If you know there's a twinge of hatred or prejudice in your heart, it's time to repent before God!

"And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." A heart that's free from hatred, and lives according to God's law - is a heart that's in harmony with God - *and from that heart will flow prayers that are very likely to be answered.*

Verse 23, "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."

It's the human tendency to complicate. It's been said, "America has 35 million laws trying to enforce 10 commandments." But God keeps His commandments simple... just two: *believe in Jesus - love one another.*

Chapter 3 ends with a reminder of the Holy Spirit, our connection to God. Whereas Chapter 4 begins with the acknowledgement of *other spirits*... "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... 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." Along with love, another source of assurance for the believer is the inner

witness of the Holy Spirit. No one becomes a *child of God* without the *Spirit of God*. The Holy Spirit births God's nature in us.

Yet here's the problem we have in the spiritual realm. Love is demonstrated objectively - we love in deed and in truth... yet the leading of the Spirit is very subjective.

Our human spirit is like a satellite dish - it picks up *all kinds of signals* from *all kinds of sources*. God speaks to me - the devil can plant thoughts in my mind - the world sends messages - emotions influence me - my own conscience and sub-conscience are active - even a late night pizza can cause disturbing impressions.

This is why John cautions us to *"test the spirits, whether they are of God."* And in these next few verses John tells us how to run a spiritual identification check.

Verse 2, *"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."*

Simple enough! To peel back the spiritual façade of any impression, **discover what it says about Jesus.**

A spirit, or inner influence, that isn't *correct about* or *honoring of* Jesus, and what He taught is evil and must be rejected. If it doesn't exalt Jesus; it's not of God!

So let's say your boyfriend tells you he's been praying, and he believes it would be okay with God if the two of you had sex tonight... you need to test the spirits, *and how would you do that?* *"What did Jesus teach? Would He agree?"* The obvious answer is *"No."*

In particular, John was dealing with a deception that had been introduced to his readers. In his day the truth was under attack from a heresy called **Gnosticism**. These false teachers denied that God had come in human form. They believed that matter was intrinsically evil, thus God would never have taken a physical body.

Of course, they couldn't deny Jesus had actually walked the earth. Jesus of Nazareth was a fact of history. There were too many eyewitnesses who saw Him. Thus, the Gnostics tried to skirt the obvious. They made wild claims that Jesus appeared, but not in flesh and bone. He was a phantom. They concocted tales of Him walking on the beach and leaving no footprints.

Other Gnostics believed the Spirit of God rested on the man Jesus until just before He crucifixion - at which point *the divine spirit* departed from *the human Jesus*.

They couldn't bear the thought of God actually being crucified. In various ways Gnosticism rejected the biblical truth that **Jesus was fully man and fully God**. Thus

John writes, *“Every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God.”*

In John’s day the heretics denied Jesus’ *humanity*. It’s interesting that today, the heresies concerning Jesus have largely flipped. Today, they deny His *deity*.

Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Mormons, and other cults affirm Jesus’ humanity, but they deny His Godhood. He was an angel, or just “a god” - less than “*the God*.” Yet John’s teaching applies to both denials. **If you’re not right on about Jesus - you’re all wrong about God!**

Verse 3, *“And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.”* Revelation 13 speaks of a global leader, who leads a last days revolt against God. He’s Anti-christ. But his spirit has been in the world since *John’s day*.

Even *today* there’s a strong spirit of antichrist in our world. Transgenderism and Gay Marriage are blatant attacks on Christ’s order. The Anti-semitism we’ve seen recently is Anti-God and Anti-Christ. In addition, you can’t watch a movie or cable TV show without hearing the precious name of Jesus taken in vain. Today’s society advocates free speech for every ideology, except those who speak for Jesus... *The evil Antichrist has yet to appear, but his spirit is already at work.*

Yet we need to remember verse 4, *“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.”*

As Christians we face an evil trifacta: **the world, the flesh, and the devil**. *The world wants to beat us up. The devil attempts to rip us off. Our own flesh tries to drags us down...* Needless to say, the Christian life is not a sheltered life. Christians **undergo hardships, but in all we undergo God promises to help us overcome.**

And here’s how, read again verse 4, *“Because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”* Remember, **One plus God equals a majority!**

At times it may appear as if the world is stacked against us. *Our opponent’s hand is loaded with Aces and Kings*, but just remember you have the trump card! **Greater is He in you, than all that’s in this world!**

When you **need strength** - Recall the God who hung the heavens dwells in you... **Need wisdom?** Keep in mind the mind of God that knows all mysteries abides in you... **Need calm and composure?** Hey, the God who commanded the sea rides in your boat... And when you **need love** - Don’t forget the love that sacrificed itself on a tree, now lives in your heart.

Let me suggest we all put this verse to memory, *“He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”*

Verse 5, *“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.”* Our ears hear what we’ve tuned them to hear. Let God train your ear and you’ll hear God. But tune your ear to this world and you’ll be deaf to the voice of God through His people.

And note verse 6, when the Apostle John says, *“we are of God”* the *“we”* refers to himself and the other apostles. Then he says, *“He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us...”* He’s claiming for himself and his fellow apostles a special authority.

John is affirming the position the first twelve apostles occupied in God’s plan. In Ephesians 2:20 Paul says the Church was built on the foundation of the apostles! Thus, those led by God’s Spirit will pay attention to the apostles, men God authorized to speak on His behalf.

This is how the Church has always designated divine Scripture, and judged truth from error. *Was it written by an apostle, or was it written under the authority of an apostle?* This was part of the litmus test for inspiration and the criteria for how we compiled the biblical canon.

In closing, let’s not love in word only, but in deed and truth. For love *sees needs, feels needs, meets needs*. **What the world needs now is love, sweet love!**