

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

Chapter 16- The Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error

167. Testing the Spirits- Part 18

WAOY Thursday 03/13/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to continue to examine what John taught about "Testing the Spirits". So let's open our Bibles and read **1John 4: 1-6-** again together:

- 1 Beloved, 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.**
- 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;**
- 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.**
- 4 You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.**
- 5 They are from the world; therefore they speak *as* from the world, and the world listens to them.**
- 6 We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.**

Now on the last broadcast- we were looking at verse 5- so I want to read that verse again together:

They are from the world; therefore they speak *as* from the world, and the world listens to them.

Now in this verse- John is talking about the antichrists- specifically the Gnostic heretics who have infiltrated the Church and are teaching and preaching things contrary to sound Doctrine. And here John says that these antichrists are "**from the world**" meaning that they are not

saved; they have not been born from above and when they speak- they are not speaking from Scripture; they are not desiring to teach people what God actually meant in the inspired, inerrant, infallible Words of Scripture; they are not speaking God's Truth- they are speaking what John terms, **“from the world”**.

Now here is where we have to ask several questions. What does it mean when John says that these heretics were speaking, **“from the world”**? Just when is someone speaking **“from the world”** and when is someone speaking the oracles of God? What is it that defines what is **“from the world”** and what is it that defines what is of Heaven?

And this issue has to do with an even *larger* issue of the great difference between the lost world and the Church and the issue of worldliness in general.

You see, there are very few people in the Church today, who are 30 years old or younger, who have ever heard of any teaching about the danger of worldliness. Worldliness, in many circles today, is even thought of as being a good thing and something that is actually *useful* to the believer- especially in evangelism. It is very common today to believe that the more like the lost unsaved world that the Church can be- the more people we can win to Jesus- and I can understand that logic because I was a part of that effort for several years.

But I beg you to hear me about this, brothers and sisters because that effort- as noble and sincere as it may be- is exactly the opposite of what Scripture teaches and is contrary to what the Apostles taught about how the Church is to be.

Worldliness is being like the world; it is having the mindset of the lost pagan world. Worldliness is believing what the world believes and teaching what the world teaches and handling life and solving problems in the same manner that the unsaved world handles them.

Worldliness is behaving like those who do not know Jesus; it is laughing at what they laugh at; it is accepting the logic of people who have not been born from above; it is trusting in things that people who have never known Jesus or who absolutely reject Jesus trust in.

Worldliness is a terrible sin because it denies that we have a better way of living than those who are lost; it is a rejection of Divine Truth; it is the acceptance of things and concepts and ideas and patterns of behavior that God condemns and yet the world promotes.

For a believer to be worldly is for him to know Truth and yet reject Truth and live as though he does not know Truth. This can never in any way bring honor and glory to God. Let me give you some real concrete examples.

For example- the Apostle Paul wrote down these inspired words in **Titus 2:1-6:**

1 But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine.

2 Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance.

3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good,

4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,

5 to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.

6 Likewise urge the young men to be sensible;

So we see here that God the Holy Spirit commands old men; old women; young women and young men to behave in certain ways so as to bring honor to God and so that God's Name may not be blasphemed among those who do not believe God.

But our public school system; our television programs; our colleges; Hollywood; and our Business Corporations promote a lifestyle that is far different from what Paul laid out here.

We see commercials, for example, that teach that if only a young man drinks this certain beer- he will have bikini clad beauties hanging on his arms. We see situation comedies today which show men and women shacking up together without any regret or embarrassment and with no emotional distress. We are taught that as long as a person is sincere- it really doesn't matter what he believes. We are told that as long as you make a lot of money- God is with you. And it goes on and on.

We have an entire generation of young ladies in America who are not being taught how to be godly mothers and godly wives by older ladies primarily because neither the older nor the younger ladies see this as being important. Older ladies are not instructing the young ladies to love their husbands and love their children and they are not teaching

them to be chaste and keepers at home and to obey their husbands in direct violation of what the Holy Spirit had Paul write here.

The result of course is that because the older women will not obey the Bible and teach and because the young women will not submit themselves to the Bible and learn- someone else is teaching the young women. But what these *other* people are teaching is not what Scripture says to teach and the result is that young women are not learning how to love their husbands and children- they are learning how to love their careers. They are not learning how to keep their homes and their homes are being destroyed. They are not obeying their husbands because Gloria Steinem and others told them that they were free and didn't have to be under subjection to their husbands. This is being worldly.

Finances are another area where we have become worldly. We are told that we need to follow the pattern of pagan ungodly financial experts who do not love God and who do not see giving as an intelligent part of any financial plan. So we thought that their advice was better than God's commandments and we listen to them and we ignore what God says about money and we are now worldly.

To view life and death and money and marriage and business and child rearing and all of these areas through the lens of the world is to be worldly; it is to be "of the world" and it is to say that God's ways don't apply to you; it is to say that the world's way of doing things; the world's way of seeing things; the world's logic is better and more beneficial than God's and it is a terrible sin against God.

The single biggest way that we hear what the world says about life and absorb what the world teaches about these issues and the biggest way that what the pagan world says begins to make sense to us is through the instrument called television.

When you feed on television and you begin to accept what it tells you about money and about marriage and about children and about right and wrong- the less what God said about these things will attract you. And you can argue with me about this till the cows come home- but it is the truth.

Television could have been a wonderful tool to educate and inform us about Truth- but what it has become is poison to our soul. Television makes sin look attractive; it causes us to laugh at things that we should be ashamed of; it brings in filthy words and filthy behavior and filthy

ideas and filthy living into the minds and hearts and mouths and souls of God's people and it is just wrong.

I ask young people all the time where they get their information about serious issues like the War against Terrorism and about how to pick a husband and how to formulate their lives and they tell me from MTV; Facebook; Oprah; Dr. Phil; and TV shows and movies and songs that are not even real. How can you possibly get godly advice and Scriptural Truth and Divine Guidance from people; and shows and avenues that are pagan and sinful? How can we not be worldly if all we feed on is the world?

But what is sad is that there has also been a corresponding decline in older people being available to teach the younger generation because now they too are glued to the TV.

Now that is bad but what we have to understand dear friends is that the lost world has never had it right. The lost pagan Babylonian world has never promoted godliness and it never will. The Bible says in **1 Corinthians 2:14:**

But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

Notice that Paul said here that the lost people “cannot” know about the things of God. Now the word, “cannot” means that they do not have the ability or the power to know about the things of God because to the lost world- the things of God are foolishness to them. Now as I have said many times before- the word “foolishness” does not mean a silly, “hah- hah” kind of foolishness- but the foolishness that Paul was speaking about here means that lost people look at the things of God with hostile opposition because to them God and the things of God are ridiculous to the point of scorn.

And that is bad but what is really bad is when this kind of teaching comes into the Church and when we actually believe that being more like the lost world is a good thing rather than the sin that it is. This is what the antichrist were teaching.

So for a believer to ignore what God has said and to accept what people like this say is to be worldly and it is to live in a way where we are saying that what God says either doesn't apply to us or that because

we are so advanced today that the things of God to us are as foolish as they are to the lost world. That is what it means to be worldly or to be what John says here- “of this world”.

So suffice it to say that if we love the world- the love of the Father is not in us. If our minds are constantly on this life and not on the life to come- we are worldly and we have fallen from the place where God wants us to be. Beloved we need to remember that we have a home in glory land that outshines the sun and this world is not our home.

John says here that the antichrists speak “**from the world**”; they teach about this life; they teach about what matters to people who are not saved and they have been successful over the centuries to get God’s people to turn their eyes away from the hills from whence cometh their help and to seek to bring Heaven down to this earth and we have listened to them and we are now worldly.

I encourage you, dear friends, to read about the sin of worldliness. I have some information about the great danger of loving this world that I would love to share with you if you would write or call me- but I’m out of time today- so please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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