

Finding *Renewal* in the Love of God

Unit 3: Discovering Renewal in the Presence of the Spirit Study Questions

Read 1 John in the New Living Version. As you read, **keep John 14.16-17, 26 in mind.** (You might want to use a different colored pencil to mark ideas related to each of the three questions you considered in the introduction.) When you have completed this task, respond to the questions below:

1. How does 1 John further interpret, clarify, or expand upon the teachings of Jesus found in John 14.15-17, 26? (The following questions will help you answer this question, but before you proceed take a moment to jot down your own observations, feelings, or thoughts. Even writing things like, “I am wondering if..,” “It seems to me now that...,” “I have the sense that...,” and “I think I have experienced this when...” will be helpful in your exploration.)
2. Read these verses and make brief lists to include the different names or images that John uses in 1 John to speak of the **Spirit of truth** and the **Spirit of falsehood** (4.6). (Scriptures may or may not contain images for both Spirits.)
As you write these names/images, consider what they teach us about these two spirits. Jot down a few notes, if you need to.

Spirit of truth

Spirit of deception

2.18

2.22

2.27(in view of 2.20)

3.9

3.24

4.1

4.2

4.4

Any others you found:

What can you discern about the possibility of **any** common ground between these two spirits?

3. Can one...should one attempt to identify these two spirits? (4.1-6)
4. Using the verses noted below, what “tests” might one use to correctly identify each of the two spirits?

Spirit of truth

Spirit of deception

2.22-23

3.1

3.7-8

3.8-10

4.1-3

4.5-6

Any others you found:

5. Why is it so important that the recipients of this letter “test” the spirits of the teachers they encounter? (2.19, 26)

Should we—can we—test the spirits today? Why? Using the tests you noted above, write how you think these might apply to those who would presume to teach us today

6. What about this “anointing” these Christians received? What earthly good is it to them? Reread (a-gain) the passages below. This time, look for ways that this “anointing” will serve these Christians.

2.20-28

3.24

4.4-6

4.13

5.5-6

Any others you found:

7. Consider the Spirit of God that dwells in you. How well do you hear his testimony? How much comfort do you receive from him? Have you experienced “teaching” from Him? What was it like? How did you recognize it as the Spirit of God?

Do you think that we as a church trust one another to hear the Spirit? What would it look like for me to trust you to possess the His Spirit? What problems could we encounter if we attempted to trust one another in this? In whom must we trust to actively believe that God dwells in, works through, testifies to and teaches each one of His children? Explain your answer based on teachings from 1 John and personal experience.

8. In the mid-80s, I taught a ladies Bible class in San Antonio on the Holy Spirit. The title was not advertised, yet on the day that I taught, we had visitors from three different congregations—an oddity. I'll never forget one woman who caught me by the arm. She said, "Honey, at our church we teaches about God, and we teaches about Jesus, but honey, we just leave that Holy Spirit alone." How true it is; yet I am struck by 4.13, 15, and 17. *"And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us.... All who confess that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God.... As we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the Day of Judgment but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus in this world."* **Here's my question: If the spirit of God were as illusive as many seem to think, as difficult to hear, and as easy to misunderstand, why would John continue to offer his presence, testimony, and actions in us as the way we can KNOW that He is with us—that is, the proof of His presence, therefore the peace of our lives with Him? What might be a likelier reason that we "think" these things about the Spirit?**

Once—just once as a child—I thought I heard my dad call me, but failed to answer. I wasn't sure, and I was busy. Shortly, he entered my room, took off his belt and spanked me. I had to spend the rest of the day alone in my room. He said, "Young lady, you will answer me when I call!" I never made that mistake again. From then on, if I **thought** my dad was calling, I was right there to check, and you know, the older I got, the better able I was to tell. As my three sons became men and their voices changed, they began to sound to me very much alike on the telephone. Yet failing to recognize a voice can hurt, minimize, and offend. I had to work hard to recognize them, but today I rarely mistake one for another. I hear the inflections; I know their greetings, the time of day they are most likely to call, the pet name they might use...I know my children.

9. This week, determine to dedicate yourself to responding to the urges of the Spirit within you. What if you respond to an urge that could be the Spirit, but you misunderstood? Might that experience lead you closer to a truer understanding, making you better able to recognize Him the next time? Take a moment to pray that God will teach you to recognize His voice within so that you might gain the peace, the proof He intended from the possession of His Holy Spirit.