

Today we're going to continue to *Part 2* of the sermon subject on *Perfection*. I'm going to do a little bit of a review here by talking about some of the scriptures we've already covered just so you can understand what is being discussed, what we're covering, and the direction this sermon is going.

In this particular sermon we began by talking about how that there is only one person who has ever lived a *perfect life*, in that respect, without sin; of course referring to Jesus Christ. And talking about that scripture we began that sermon when we started this series in **Hebrews 5:9 – And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them who obey Him**. So again, being made, that which God did, moulded and fashioned His own Son, gave Him His very being, His very mind, His very thought, His very spirit in a very powerful way, in a permanent way.

And then we went on to discuss some of those scriptures in **John 1** that talks about how that **(1) in the beginning was the Word**, speaking of God Almighty, that which communicates, that which is the Logos, the revelatory thought of God Almighty - and an awesome way of presenting this, as John did. John was inspired to write these things in exactly this manner talking about God Almighty and the very being of God, the very mind of God, and talking about how that this was what was in the beginning (which we've covered in times past in other sermons).

In the beginning was the Word/Logos, the revelatory thought, the being of God. And that really describes each one of us, in one respect, if we think about the thought process, the way we think is how we are, it's what we are. It's not our body; it's not anything of that nature whatsoever. We look at someone; it's not about that at all, it's about what's in the body, in the mind, that makes you who you are. It isn't about the colour of your skin. It isn't about your upbringing. It isn't about any of those things! It's about what you live that makes you the way you are, the way you think. And this starts out by talking about God's thinking, the way He was. And it goes on and describes some of those things about from the very beginning and finally down in **verse 14 – and the Word/Logos was made flesh**, was given to a human being in Mary as she began to have that which was in her very being, but His Father being God Almighty, something we can't comprehend.

But again here, being led and filled by God's spirit on a continuing basis, that which developed in Mary's womb, became flesh and began to live life after birth; an incredible life. And God moulded and fashioned Him in a perfect way.

Now He started out in a different way, as we talked about in that particular sermon, very different from us because the process in us begins after we're called, after we've lived at least until our late teen years or beginning twenties, it is the earliest an individual can be called and baptized into God's Church. We don't baptize babies or infants or young children. It's a matter of a choice and a decision that an adult has to make, and one is not a responsible adult for their own life until they get to 18-19, in that particular area at the very earliest. And so that process that we are already moulded and fashioned, the way we think, by the time we're that age, or whenever you're called. It doesn't matter whether you're 40-50, or whatever it is, your mind is set as a human being. It's fully set in that which is selfish in the way we live and the way we think; and so that which describes us is not good – far from perfect (as we

talked about), very, very selfish, filled with, moulded and fashioned by ‘the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.’

And so we begin a process. As God draws us by His spirit we’re able to go into a watery grave and come up and walk in newness of life, and after that have hands laid upon us by the ministry in God’s Church. And God uses that process as a means then by which at that moment in time - again, between us and God, a very private thing - but uses that as a formality to show how He works, where He works, how He leads, guides and directs us, and then that holy spirit, the impregnation of that spirit that takes place as you’re baptized in the spirit. So you’re immersed in God’s spirit from that time, and that impregnation that takes place in the mind, and then we begin to change; a lifelong process of being perfected by God. But as long as you’re in this human flesh *you are not perfect, I am not perfect*, and that’s a great deal of the thrust of this sermon today.

None of us is perfect. We’re seeking to grow in perfection, we’re seeking to draw closer to God, to become more God-like, but we are not there until our change comes; unlike Jesus Christ. He lived a perfect life, thank God, for each one of us and because of that became our High Priest, because of that we’re able to have our sins forgiven us because He became our Passover having lived a perfect life, without blemish as the lamb was when it was picked out. Without blemish, without spot, without sin.

And so we read the verses in **Matthew 5:48** where Jesus Christ said **Therefore be**, or as the word is in the Greek language, **become**; it’s a process, it’s a continuing, ongoing process that we have to yield ourselves to by choice, by the decisions we make day in and day out. And a lot of those decisions have to do with a very basic thing, repentance; to acknowledge that we’re wrong and that God is right, to not to try to justify ourselves. Human nature tries continually on a regular basis to justify itself.

Employees at work on a job have a reason why they have done something maybe a little different from what the boss has told them, or management has told them. They do it a little bit differently, and so when management comes along and says, “No, that isn’t what you’re supposed to do, that isn’t the way we want it done.” Oftentimes an individual will start to give reasons why, “But this is why I’ve done this... This is why this works for me... or This is why this is better...or...” and that’s the way we are. And we are that way in God’s Church oftentimes as well.

It becomes a very difficult process in the ministry when someone gets to that point, when it comes to a minister having to confront, discuss something with someone where they are doing something that’s harmful to them and harmful to others. And if a person is in a frame of mind where they justify themselves and will not acknowledge that they have done wrong, but instead tries to show *why*, tries to explain, “But you don’t *understand!* You don’t understand why I’ve done this! *This* is why this was done in this manner.” And that can take many different shapes, but it’s a continual thing that’s happened in God’s Church – something you don’t want to do. You should want to repent. If we’re wrong, instead of trying to tell another human being our reasons of justification, which in reality within the Church we’re really saying to God, “Yeah, but this is *why* I’ve done this differently, and this is why this is okay, because I didn’t really mean any harm, I didn’t really mean to do anything wrong...” But it is sometimes hard for us to understand how we’re hurting other people by not doing *exactly* what God says the way He says to do it.

So, becoming perfect is a process of yielding ourselves to God, and the greatest part of that process is repentance, repentance of sin, recognizing the need to change, on a daily basis crying out to God for

help to change, to live better, and acknowledging when you don't do it right, acknowledging when you have said something wrong to someone else in a wrong way, in a wrong manner, and asking God, "Please help me to change this, to turn this around, to make this right. What I'm doing, I know, is wrong." And so it's a long, life-long process to become perfect, to be made perfect by God. And it is an awesome thing, for this mind in a human being to make those changes.

I truly marvel at what God gave us at the Feast and helped us to understand it in a greater way, and you should marvel at what God is doing. That there is *absolutely no other way* for a human being to have this mind be changed, to be transformed to something different, except that God gave us a spirit essence whereby we can reason and think and make choices in life as human being. But because we're in a human body those choices, because we're physical, are always selfishly motivated – ALWAYS! ALWAYS selfishly motivated, even if it's good to someone else it's selfishly motivated! And that is so hard sometimes for people in God's Church to understand!

I was dumbfounded one time (which I mentioned before, well worth mentioning...) a minister who had been in God's Church for a *long time*, looked up to, respected, and one time we were driving together in an automobile and he asked me to give a sermon in that particular area, and after the sermon I had mentioned something that Mr. Armstrong had said about how the best of human love that we can look at as far as human beings are concerned is a mother's love for her child. It's a beautiful love, but in the world today sometimes we see things where even that isn't normal and right. But the best, as a whole, that we can see in human life would be that kind of love; he gave that as an example. But he made a comment; he said, "But that love is still selfish, it *is not* agape. It isn't God's kind of love. It's selfish because it's *her* child. It's *her* child!" And sometimes, and candidly without God's spirit, we as human beings can't really grasp that, the magnitude of it. You have to have, or be drawn by, God's spirit to even understand that, that God's love is so beyond that; because as a human being we don't love all other children the same as we do *our own*. And that's the way we are! Far from God's love, selfish by nature. An incredible thing! But that minister said that he'd never understood that all those years, and maybe, by his comments, was beginning to understand it a little bit, what Mr. Armstrong had said. Blew my mind! I thought, "Why not? That's so basic to how we are as human beings, that we're selfish!" And if you can't see that it's difficult to change then because you don't see the *need* to change.

If you don't grasp that there's a vast difference, night and day, between the way we think and the way God is and the need for that mind to be in us, then why would we change? What would be the motivation? Why would we repent? And therein is the problem. Too often we think we're okay, we're doing okay, and don't understand that love is selfishly motivated.

I remember talking to one person in God's Church at one time after the apostasy. They had become so weak that they had a very difficult time understanding how others in the world weren't a part of the Church, or couldn't have some kind of a relationship with God – like Mother Theresa. That's what she said, like Mother Theresa, because she did 'saintly' things, was very good to other people, helped out a great deal. And what comes into my mind, I think "And what did she represent? How good was that? The Catholic church?! All the evil that the Catholic church has taught mankind? Changed Passover to Easter? Changed the Sabbath that God commanded that we should keep and observe to Sunday, the first day of the week? What's so good about her?" What she did was selfishly motivated. Every human being that has done good... Ghandi did a lot of good for his people, but it was selfishly motivated, and therein lays the problem sometimes.

It's not that man doesn't have the capacity to do good, because he does. Man has the capacity for good and evil. But the good that he does is always, always, *always*, *ALWAYS* selfishly motivated without exception! And that is sometimes very difficult for people in God's Church to grasp, but it is a reality. It is *not* to be compared to God's love. You have to have God's spirit! You have to have God's spirit to begin living that kind of love, to begin exercising that kind of mind that is not selfish. And that's a great deal about this sermon today, about growing in perfection, about the process we go through, because it has a great deal to do, obviously, with the way you think and the recognition of the need to *change* the way you think – to think differently. That's what repentance has to do with, being converted. Conversion has to do with thinking differently. That's basically what the word repent is all about in the first place - it means, 'to think differently'.

And so again, Jesus Christ told His disciples **Therefore become perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.** So again, we can never become like our Father, but we are to grow in perfection to a time when God will change us and bring us into His Family that is perfected, without sin, for eternity. And the way that's ensured is because He will be in us, His spirit – always, for eternity! Even in God's Church we have gone through a horrible, horrible, horrible experience in time, 2,000 years, that which was accentuated, magnified in a very powerful way in 1994 with an apostasy, with everyone coming to a point in time, asleep, spiritually weak in God's Church, sluggish, lethargic, lukewarm. And God will not accept that which is lukewarm. You have to be on fire, you have to be desirous of His way of life, you have to *want* His way of life. You've got to *want* it! You've got to *desire* it, and work for it, not coast. Some in God's Church, after having been baptized only a few years, are already coasting on occasion. I see it. I see that spirit. I have been around that spirit. I have *LIVED* that spirit! I know what it is, and you don't want that to happen to you! See, you didn't live the apostasy, or what led up to it – I did, and others in God's Church have. And so it's not something that's easily spotted or recognized individually when we're young, when we're growing. You don't want that to happen; so you have to desire God's life and that mind of perfection with all of your being. And that's a growing process.

So again, that definition of perfection we talked about:

Perfection - the quality of something/someone that is as good or suitable as it can possibly be.

Well, as far as God; it doesn't get any better. He's perfect in every way. That's why Jesus Christ said become as your Father, perfect, without sin, of that mind, of *that* mind, in agreement with *that* mind.

The process of becoming or making something/someone perfect.

And that is what God is doing with us, making us, helping us to come to a point where we can be brought into His Family for all eternity. Another, even better, definition....

Somebody that reaches (speaking of people or beings) the highest attainable standard.

And that is it – Elohim, to be in God's Family. So it's an incredible thing that God works with us in that fashion.

And then we went to **Matthew 5:43 - You have heard that it has been said, You shall love/show love toward your neighbour,** it's quoted out of Leviticus 19, and He went on to add (**and you have heard this) and to hate your enemy.** Which is a word that just basically means in the Greek, 'refuse to show

love, not loving'. It doesn't mean sometimes as we do as human beings, that we get to a point where we loathe and are filled with great disgust, although that's what happens in time if people refuse to love. They will go that far as human beings, they will get to where they want vengeance, where they loathe others, where they despise others, where they would like to do harm to others. That's how far that can go. But this isn't in the context of what Christ was discussing. It was just a matter of if someone is an enemy you obviously don't have to show, you can *refuse* to love them. And He went on to say, **But I'm telling you to love your enemies...** It's a different kind of mind for human beings, to love, to show love, to exercise love toward others. And that's what we should do in God's Church! We should exercise love.

Now, that doesn't mean we have to be stupid and be around certain situations or around certain people or we have to do certain things for them, but what it means is that you don't have a mind of vengeance and you want to see vengeance upon them, you (as He goes on to talk about), **I'm telling you to love your enemies, bless those who curse you**, in other words, do right toward them, that's how you bless them, **...to them who curse you, do good to them who hate/fail to love/refuse to love you**, but you shouldn't refuse to love them.

In other words like Christ did when He was dying, brought to the point of death, brought there to die on that pole, and His attitude of mind, "Father forgive them, they don't know what they're doing." That doesn't mean you have to go out and do special things for them or anything of that nature, it just means you don't act or react in kind; and that is love, because of your mind toward them. There's a difference there!

Sometimes people in God's Church think they have to do certain things for others to the point of their harm. That's not what Christ is talking about. He's just saying *don't be like them!* Don't be like them! When it said, 'when He was reviled He didn't revile back'. When He was slandered He didn't slander back! That's how you show love. You don't react in kind like human beings tend to do because of selfish human nature when their feelings are hurt or when they despise something or someone. He said, don't act like that, don't act back in kind.

It's like us in the Church, *without excuse* we should always love each other and show love to each other, be kind to each other, kind words – not cut down, not tear apart – in God's Church. It should *always* be that way, without exception, and it isn't always that way. In the world it should be the same way. As a whole, that's the way it should be in the world, in how you treat people, and not expect them to be the way you are. And I have to fight that, we all do. I have to repent of that. Sometimes we forget because we have lived this way, we think a certain way, and we expect others to be the same way and they're just not that way – surprise, surprise.

...and pray for them who spitefully use you, that can be difficult. Now, how do you pray for them? For God to bless them in what they're doing? That they might be made prosperous in what they're doing? Not at all! Sometimes it might be because you want to see them freed from their bondage. You see people, maybe sometimes in your own family, others around you in the community or people you come up into inside your business or whatever it is, your job, whatever it might be, and you find people that are just absolutely miserable in life and you look forward to the time that they're going to be able to share what you have, to be blessed like you are. You look forward to that time and ask God for help that you treat them accordingly, not as the way they are but in the way that they can become in time. And that's a hard thing to do oftentimes, it really is.

We went on to **Ephesians 4** and talked about some of those things, about why God gave the ministry, **(12) - Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man**, being perfected, in other words, a perfect person, and we never are in this physical life, but until the time we can grow and mature so that we can be born into God's Family. And that's why God gave the ministry, to mould and fashion, to work through us to teach. He doesn't do it Himself. He doesn't come to us; it's not a one-on-one situation. He does it in an organized fashion, and sometimes people in God's Church have had difficulty with that. As it says here, **unto a perfect person**, if you will, **unto/into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**: And that's exactly what God is doing so we can be a part of Elohim.

Then we went on to **Romans 12:1 - I beseech you brethren, by/through the mercies of God, that you present your bodies/your lives a lively/a living sacrifice**, a willingness to sacrifice. Every time you do right toward others and fight against your human nature *that* is a sacrifice! That's what God is talking about. When you love someone else, when you live God's love, when you ask for God's help to not respond to others with a loud voice in argument and get into debate thinking you're going to get somewhere and you get mad, and you react *exactly* like they are, then we have sinned and we're no better. And that's what God says, we have to change that, we have to become different and we have to sacrifice something. And what do you sacrifice? *Your* will... *your* will, *your* being, *your* thinking, in order to do it the right way, and ask God to do *His* will, which is not to respond like we do as human beings.

You have to sacrifice self, a living sacrifice day in and day out, because it doesn't take very long for you to get to a point where you're ready to respond to someone else, say something to someone because you're hurt and because you want to *get back* at them, you want to *hurt* them like they've hurt you. That's what we're like as human beings! They say something ugly to you, and what do we tend to do as human beings? Now if you've never done that or you don't do that... you're a strange person, okay? But as human beings, when someone attacks you we tend to very easily do the same thing back and that shouldn't happen. That's what God is showing us, we have to sacrifice self.

...holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. It's what God has called us to. That's just *reasonable* for us as God's Church, as God's people, to think differently, to be differently, to act differently toward others. And what we're talking about today... it's not a matter of how much you know, how much you've gained in knowledge because of all the stuff we have out there today. There has never been a time when we've had such ability to have so much truth and information as it is today, truly. When I came into God's Church you couldn't go to the internet, period, because it didn't exist. You had to wait a long time to get something mailed to you from headquarters in California if you had questions about something or to get a booklet. You had to wait a long time for it to get to you and then within that booklet they might dangle a carrot, advertize another book, and your interest is there so you send off for it, or have some other questions that come up. *Never* has there been a time like this, where you can go instantly and find it out for yourself, what is the present truth that God has given to us that is far more than any truth through time, in the sense of God's revelation and what He's given to us to live by. But all that knowledge, all that truth, all the things we have out there, if we understood it, if we had all that knowledge – it isn't what being spiritual is about!

Being spiritual is about what you live; it's about what we're talking about in this sermon series, becoming perfected. It's *what you live toward others* that determines whether you're spiritual. It isn't in how you speak. It isn't in the fact that you can talk about spiritual things. Sometimes in God's Church, if we're not careful, we think we have to talk in a certain way, we feel compelled to have to talk about

something and we try to push it. Now, if it comes natural and it's because it's just there because of a situation in your life, then that's good, but sometimes there's an environment or situations where people feel like they have to push certain things, or push something that's been discussed or to 'talk spiritually'. What is that? I know what it is, and I hope you are learning what it is.

It's really about what you live. It's what you live toward each other that determines being spiritual and what is spiritual.

And so it goes on to say, **And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind:** That's how we become perfected, constantly changing, constantly growing, seeking God's help. **For I say to you through the grace given unto me, to everyone among you, not to think more highly than you ought to think of yourself; but to think soberly,** that's a powerful scripture there. That's a powerful verse, because therein lies the problem. That's why we're reviewing some of these things today, to set the stage again for where we're going in this sermon series, to review some of these things and to hit upon some of these things again, just to be reminded again that we have to be careful how we think and that we don't lift ourselves up, elevate ourselves above others to where we're looking down upon them, because that's a tendency everyone tends to have. Truly is! It's a part of your nature.

So God says, we're instructed here by and through Paul; from God, through Jesus Christ, through Paul to the Church: **do not think more highly than you ought to think of yourself; but to think soberly according as God has dealt to every person/to everyone the measure of faith.** So again, it's a difficult thing to see this sometimes in self.

Then we went on to **John 17** where Jesus Christ on the Passover night, His last night, revealed so many things, gave so many truths to the disciples, such great depth of understanding for us and for them at that time. And He had this particular prayer here that's recorded where He says in **verse 14 - I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them,** and that word for 'hate' again being one of failing to love. The world doesn't love us. They fail to love indeed, in other words, even beyond that, refuse to love, which is a part of the same definition, refuse to love. They refuse to love you!

When you come into God's Church and you start living better and you quit using bad language, as an example, I've known of people that get upset because their mate quit using bad language! And sometimes it is because it puts a guilt... it's like they're being... "You're judging me." You're not doing that anymore and it's like they just feel like they're being judged, because really deep down inside they know that's not right, but that's the way the world is. So something as simple and as basic as that. And so they refuse to love you in what you're learning, indeed, and that can go a long, long way to where they can get to a point where they literally loathe and despise and will do things against you. That's how far hatred can go.

I want to read a scripture here in Luke 14 that we didn't look at earlier. I might have made reference to it but I think it's expedient that we look at it because of this word 'hate' that's used in a translation from the Greek language into English, and to understand how it's being used and understand what Jesus Christ is saying when this particular Greek word is being used.

It's in **Luke 14:26** – where He said - **If any come to Me, and hate not his father,** now, again here, we in the Church have generally used an example here, 'to love less by comparison', which really doesn't get the full gist of the word because of all these other words we're looking at right now that's the same

word – and it doesn't fit those situations. So basically this is what we're being told, but it isn't the full definition of the word, but it is what we're being told here by Jesus Christ. **If any man come to Me, and hate not his father,** What does that mean? It means *exactly* what it means in the other verses, 'refuse to love', but it is a comparison; it's about God. In other words, you have to come to a point in your life where there are certain things that you love, that you have to make choice of, "I love God first, and so I must, by definition..." this Greek word, "...**refuse to love father, mother, sister, brother.** That which I have shown to them in the past must change." That allegiance that can keep someone from coming into God's Church because they don't put first things first and obey God in what God has to say and learn how to love father and mother and sister and brother.

The greatest way one can honour their father and mother.... I've known of people, talked to people, heard of people in God's Church, who, because they go back to the Old Testament and look at Exodus 20 and say, "Yes but God says you are to honour your father and mother." Yes, you are, and the greatest *honour* you can give to them *ever*, even though they may loathe and hate what you're doing (they still have that conflict there sometimes) is to obey God. But some totally write people off in God's Church. Because they hate it so much they will write someone off, as sometimes happens in life with other circumstances when a child doesn't do what the parent wants them to do, and will totally ostracise them.

And here is an example of something, again, where God is simply saying and showing us the greatest honour you can show them is to *obey God first!* You want to talk about honouring the family name? ...bringing honour to a family name? Because people oftentimes use that, "You're bringing disgrace to our family name by what you're doing!" Well, it goes back to this thing about showing honour to your father and mother – family name, family, yes – but the greatest thing you can do is to obey God. Because you see, one day in the future those names are magnified and they'll be magnified with their parents for what they did that was right. The greatest honour is to obey God. It's a beautiful thing when done God's way, according to God's will, according to God's word.

And so sometimes in the Church we go through these things that pull at us, and this conflict of knowing what it means to love, and how do you love...? God first. Obey God first and that's how you learn to love. Do what God says the way God says to do it and don't try to come up with some different ideas about how to honour your father and mother at Christmas time, or whatever it is, "Well, if I go there I..." No, there's times where you have to say no to different things in life and that's showing love to them. See, it's a matter of knowing what the definition of love is. It's a matter of understanding what the mind of God is, of what the will of God is, of how you love others, of how you do good to others. The way you do good to others is to live God's way of life yourself and then toward them. It's not a sanctimonious Protestant thing that sometimes happens in God's Church of how people think they have to treat others.

If any man comes to Me and refuse to love, will not refuse to love **father, mother, wife and children, and brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also...** And his own life? Refuse to love self? You better believe it... because we *love* self! I can't get my hands around myself enough. We love ourselves, we truly do! That's way everything we do as a whole as human beings is selfishly motivated, because we love ourselves first. And God is saying you have to come to a point in time.... When God calls you, when you come into God's Church there are things you have to refuse in loving yourself, the same as you do in refusing to love your parent, or in other words, the carnal selfish way as human beings. It has to be because it's love toward God first, obeying God first, and all the other things will then fit into place in time. It's an awesome thing.

Going on from there back to John where it talked about, He said [in **John 17:14**] - **I've given them Your word, Your truth, Your word is truth.** And then finally down in **verse 23** where He talked about how these things were going to be accomplished – **I in them and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one.** That oneness with God that we're able to have, the perfection that can happen in no other way than that God dwell in us. If God doesn't dwell in us, if we fail to repent of certain sins in our life and we get cut off by the power of the spirit and God's not dwelling there then that perfection, that process, stops! It comes to a screeching halt!

There are *thousands of people who were baptised, had the impregnation of God's spirit and are not going through a process of perfection right now! It stopped! It came to a screeching halt, a dead end!* And only until they're awakened, some literally by a resurrection, and then awakened spiritually, primarily *because of the resurrection* and then all of a sudden the light bulb pops on and they're able to acknowledge, *"I was wrong where I stayed and what I believed and what I held onto, thus I died and now I'm alive again."* And it says 'there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth'. You know why? To look back and think, *"Why, I was so blockheaded! I was asleep!"* I don't know if you use the expression over here about 'kicking yourself in the rear-end'? It's kind of hard to do, but that's what people feel like, 'weeping and gnashing of teeth'. You wish you could just turn a boot around and give yourself a swift kick, several of them.

Then we went on to 1 John which is where we're going to continue with today here. God gave John so much understanding about Himself, the Word, the Word that was made flesh. It wasn't given to the other disciples in the same way and John was the one who lived the longest of those disciples and later on then wrote the things he did here in 1 John. Because over the span of time, from the time he wrote the book of John, there was that basic framework that God had inspired and given to him, but by the time he was an *old* man, *old*, and had gone through a period of time seeing the other disciples that had died along the way and had been killed, many of them if not all of them had been killed to this point in time, and all that he'd gone through and learned by living this way of life and the maturing process that he went through – now God gave him the ability and inspired him to write this book.

He wrote so much that most of the people of Philadelphia *never even began to grasp.* I'm talking about an entire era of God's Church after Sardis when God began to give Mr. Armstrong what He did, all the way up in time until the time of Philadelphia was over, an era of 'brotherly love'. It wasn't an era of 'agape love'. Some want to hold onto the word, *"We're Philadelphian!"* Well, get a life! ...if you understand what I'm saying, because Philadelphian doesn't quite hack it I'm afraid, you're just still filled with a lot of brotherly love, and indeed is what you should show, like a fraternal love (is what that word means), it's a fraternal type of love. And indeed we should have that in God's Church, but you can have that without God's spirit, hence the problem.

To live what we're talking about here requires agape, not philia. It requires *Godly* love. So some people sometimes have gotten lifted up by different names like that and there are people today who still would have a difficult time acknowledging that they're Laodicean. That's a toughie. *"I...I...I...I...I'm still a Philadelphian. I may be living in Laodicea but I'm a Philadelphian."* Pride. Think, *"Get a life! You're falling short if you're just a Philadelphian."* Wish to God that could be given to every person that's scattered out there. If they could *just grasp that truth* what an awesome thing that would be, because that would give them the ability (because it would require God's spirit in a very big way), to come to repent and be stirred up with God's spirit again.

1 John 4:1 – Beloved, do not believe every spirit: I’m going back through these first two verses again to set the stage. We stopped before verse 3 in the first part of this series, so a long review, but we needed it. It takes *years* to grow in what we’re talking about here. You can’t have too many sermons on this subject, truly. It took John a *lifetime* to come to where he could *write this book*, of being moulded and fashioned by God, being given powerfully by God’s spirit to write this book, to be inspired to do so.

1 John 4:1 – Beloved, do not believe every spirit, Back then it wouldn’t be like today saying, “Don’t believe every spirit.” He’s not talking about, “Beware, don’t believe the Protestants. Beware, don’t believe...whatever, Catholics, Protestants,” (it doesn’t matter), “Beware, don’t believe those who claim they’re Jewish and yet accept Christ as their Messiah, Messianic Jews.” He’s not talking about being aware of those things; he’s talking about people in God’s Church! You think, “Oh, how could that be?” But that’s what he’s talking about because of problems he was dealing with, because of things he had *seen* that people could do after 40-50-60-70 years in God’s Church. He *saw* what human beings could do who came into the environment of God’s Church. He *experienced* many things through time of what human beings are capable of doing. All of us who lived through the apostasy have experienced in an *incredible way* what human beings are capable of, even with the impregnation of God’s spirit.

And so he’s giving a warning here, be careful; be careful because of what he saw happening in the Church, of what God gave to him to come to deal with. Because you know what? I *know* that John was struggling with this. He wanted answers! “*How can this be* that these things can happen with people who have God’s spirit?” The reason I know that is because that’s how God has worked with me, to help me to come to see, “*How can this be? How can we all be scattered all over the place?* Oh, the apostasy *did* happen, I understand. So how big was this apostasy? Oh, he *does* fit the man of sin. He *did* raise himself up in the Church. He *did* sit in a place of authority and power.” So you learn through that process because you’re struggling and you want answers. And John wanted answers, because you see he didn’t have a history he could go by of what human beings are capable of. He didn’t have a history of that. He lived among the first in God’s Church, walked with Jesus Christ, was taught by Jesus Christ, and then saw the Church being raised up – thousands of people come along – and many who went by the wayside.

That’s why you have to want this way of life and fight for it *all your life* and *never* give up, *never* quit fighting, *never* let down, *never* become lukewarm, because when you’re lukewarm it’s just a tip-toe away from being totally cold and *fully cut off* from God.

Beloved do not believe every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God. Now there’s great wisdom in all this, in things that take time and maturity to deal with and things within the ministry that in time people learn to deal with in a greater way. Because the reality is, as I’ve always said, every year in God’s Church as soon as the Feast of Tabernacles is over, how soon will it be before someone else goes and will not be at the next Feast of Tabernacles? And it hurts! There has never been a year go by since 1969 when I came into God’s Church when I haven’t known that to be true, that some have gone by the wayside. And it doesn’t happen instantly overnight. It *never* happens instantly overnight! Sometimes it will catch you off guard and you think it’s happened just then, but you see, there are certain things that have been going on for quite a long time that lead up to the finality of it all. Sometimes it’s the lack of full commitment, and because of not really *giving your life* as a living sacrifice to God and because there are certain things you want to hold onto and will not repent of...on and on it goes.

So John was inspired, had *learned* the hard way when he said, **Beloved, don't believe every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God:** Is God in this? Is God in the person? You have to be careful that you don't become a judge either and start going around paranoid, but when something happens sometimes you have to address certain things and say... so that you can understand why something happened in a certain way or why someone was able to do what they did and then deal with it then. But as you see, perhaps, some signs of something happening and you worry inside, you can pray about it and you can ask God, and sometimes it may lead you to being moved and motivated by God to (if need be) go to your brother alone, which God commands us to do; that maybe by an individual by being embarrassed by something, by saying, "You know, we just don't do that in God's Church and I hate to come to you and I know... I don't want to lose your friendship, but I know sometimes that..." Whatever it is that comes to your mind to say, "...but I have to do this because God tells me. I know I'm probably not dealing with it perfectly in any fashion or form, but I know we're not supposed to be doing this..." or whatever it is, "...and what do you think? Is it something we should be doing in God's Church? Is this right? Is this something that could hurt other people in God's Church? Is it hurting other people in God's Church?" If you *know* then it's sin.

So we have to be careful how we judge things and deal with things, and so often that takes a maturing process and you *won't* handle it perfectly. It takes a long time to begin to more *perfectly* deal with things, work with situations, work with individuals.

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but try the spirits...because many false prophets, as we've talked about here, **pseudo**, the word pseudo here, **false/lying prophets**, inspired speaking, false inspired speaking, in other words this isn't really from God, it's someone's opinion. We've had situations where people have come along.... I think of one situation that happened a little while ago where someone began to talk to others in God's Church about some of their ideas of certain things that they believed were true that weren't in agreement with what the Church was teaching, and they began to believe this very strongly so and others had to confront it and say, "No, that's not what we teach in God's Church and what you're saying is wrong!" And anyway, they left fully believing and magnifying themselves as a teacher, and they weren't even a babe... I mean... sad.

So a **pseudo** or a **false** or **lying inspired speaking**, in other words, some things aren't inspired by God, they're pseudo, they're false; **are gone out into the world**. Better translated '**many false prophets have come forth out of the world**' – have come forth into God's Church. That's really what it's talking about here in the Greek language. In other words, he is saying that some have come into God's Church and they're not all 100% in what they're saying led by God's spirit. And even if we acknowledge that amongst ourselves in conversation; is everything always 100% inspired by God's spirit or is it sometimes things we're thinking about and just wondering about and maybe throwing out there and it doesn't mean that God's in it, doesn't mean God's inspiring it. We converse with each other and sometimes we make mistakes. Quite often actually, because we're not perfect, and then we repent of the things we've done wrong and we learn through that process. That's the beauty of it, a willingness to repent and do it better as we grow.

Hereby, in other words, **here is how**, is what he's saying, **Here is how you can know the spirit of God:** in other words, that which comes forth of the spirit of God. **Every spirit that/who confesses that Jesus Christ is come**, again it's that word; not in the English that's translated here, it's present progressive, **is coming**, that God's spirit is coming into someone's life **in the flesh is of God**. In other words, by how they speak, by what they say, by what they live there is that which you can look at and they're reflecting

through their life that there is no other way but that God's spirit has done it. I recognize that people can't come into God's Church without God's spirit. If they can't converse with me on the same plane - not on the same level, but on the same plane - of what is true and it becomes very obvious you get it, how did you get it? I know how you got it! By God's spirit! ...because there's no other way! And so by their life they're confessing, they're acknowledging, it's showing, it's being reflected in their life that this is of God; because there is no other way.

And again here that word 'confess' to me is awesome, what it says. It's the word 'homologeō', h-o-m-o in the Greek, 'logos' – the Word. It's a compound word and literally what it's saying here when it uses the first part of that, the 'homo' part of it, 'of the same, of one/the same' logos. One and the same – it's God's Word. Logos is the Word, the Logos was made flesh. And so if we are of the word 'homologeō' it means we are of the same Word. It's a beautiful word here, this word 'to confess'. So what you live, what you think, what you say is in agreement with the Word, that's what it's telling you. So it all literally means 'to speak the same thing, to agree by what is said'. That's why it should be very clear when someone doesn't agree with doctrine and they tell it to someone else, "Oh, I don't agree with that." It shows they're not *homologeō*, they're something else. They're out of their mind... I'm sorry, it would be better if they were, because when you disagree with God, when you get to the point in time where anyone disagrees with God and willingly is divisive and will tell others the same thing and say, "No, this is why this is true..." then some people have crossed the line, they've done something that is so spiritually damaging to themselves. And if someone yields themselves to that...

I can't help but think back to the first time I began experiencing this in God's Church. The first time I began to experience it in a big way was around 1972 and Mr. Armstrong was coming out with a book called *'The Incredible Human Potential'*. In this particular book he brought out that there's a spirit essence in the mind of man, that we have this spirit essence that gives us ability to think and reason, and there were some in the Church, and even some in the ministry, who began to say, "Oh, Mr. Armstrong has really gone off into left field – he's teaching that we have an immortal soul. He's teaching, because we have this spirit essence within us, that we have an immortal soul." Now you think... "Now I'm not very long in the Church, I got baptized in 1969, this is 1972 and I didn't hear that. That's not what he said. He's not teaching the immortal soul, on the contrary, everything he's taught, everything he's teaching is the reality of life that we *don't* have an immortal soul. He says, 'the soul that sins, it can die,' and he's shown those things over and over again. But some because they had another agenda or because they just weren't yielding themselves to God's spirit in the first place, or because they weren't God's, they began to talk about these things with others and others listened and they left God's Church. How much damage does that cause?

So that's why John said, these things have been happening, people who have come in out of the world, been baptized, start changing their life.... And so how can you know? ...*always* know? They're always of the same Word. It's a beautiful thing. I've never known a time in God's Church when we've been more of the same Word. We're small, but we're more of the same Word than I've ever seen in God's Church because this is what God has brought us to at this period of time. It's a beautiful thing, truly is. And that which is not of the same Word, you know what I say? Sayonara. Auf wiedersehen. Do svidanya. And do it quickly.... be gone! God's Church doesn't need that! I've been through that too many times. If somebody's of a different mind go out and start your own church organization or go out and join one that thinks the way you do, but don't stay here in God's Church. And that's basically what John is discussing here; he's showing there's that way to know and to understand.

Hereby, in other words, here is how you can know the spirit of God: Every spirit that/who confesses that Jesus Christ is coming in the flesh is of God: in other words, if their life reflects, if by their conversation, by things that are said and how they're living, reflects the truth of God and that agreement in the Church of God then there's only one place that it can come from. God! Thereby you can know, if someone's striving to change their lives, they come together on the Sabbath, they're excited about seeing each other on the Sabbath. They want to share, even in their own lives, of things they're going through, and battles, and whatever it might be, or whatever kind of conversation comes up it's the right kind of conversation, it's pure before God, not trying to mislead, not trying to bring in some doctrine, some idea that someone's been studying about and that's what they did that last week and they're coming to share that with you. None of that kind of stuff! Because if that happens then something ought to happen – these great big red lights go off and you realize, "Man, what am I going to do here?"

And that's what John is talking about. You see, we may not have those experiences, and sometimes from area to area every once in a while something like that pops up, but as a whole we in God's Church today don't have these same things happening that I have experienced over and over and over and over again in God's Church – just as Matthew and other prophecies talk about, of things that began; 'shakings', earthquakes, events that began to happen in God's Church, rumblings – 1974 a bigger rumble... it began. It's just like what has led into the end-time; it gets greater, bigger, and bigger, and bigger until something is fulfilled. And those things began back then, 1972, with my first experience and basically the first strong experience within the Church. Still *small*, relatively small, didn't happen very many places, but it did happen.

1974, just two years later in a *bigger* way in God's Church – Pentecost. We'd been keeping it in the Church on Monday before that. Thought it should be kept on a Monday; didn't grasp, we didn't understand some of the things we've gone through of recent time. We, at that point in time before that, every one of us in God's Church could sit down with you and prove to you why we were doing it on Monday, that this was right, this is what it says, it's so clear. And then Mr. Armstrong went through a period of time of an entire year; he asked for a year. Some were impatient, some *evangelists* were impatient, some people were impatient at that time, wanted him to do it faster, some didn't want him to change it at all; but Mr. Armstrong had to address it. It was the first *big thing* of this measure that he had to address, and he wanted to be *definitely* right before God if a change was going to be made. And so he gave time for people to study, for himself to study, for all this to be brought together, and then finally have a conclusion, and the conclusion was *we were wrong* in God's Church and we must change to obey God, to recognize that *indeed* it's always, always, *always* on a Sunday; how to correctly count 50. Began to understand the wave sheaf and things about Joshua, written in the book of Joshua that we have gone through recently. But there were a lot of people, there were ministers in the Church who got upset and said, "No! You're not changing!" And they kept Monday, and they separated from God's Church.

I only know of one person that came back out of that, who died a couple years ago, lived to be a hundred, didn't he? Baptized around 1956, visited with him for several years before he finally died. Came to full repentance of what he did clear back in 1986. He was finally awakened, his mind was opened up, he read the books, he saw it, he repented of what he'd done. Incredible the power of God's spirit to awaken someone and to bring them to deep repentance so that they can continue in a process of being perfected.

And so, as the 1970's went on things would simmer down a little bit, people went through a period of time where *some* went to the other extreme, they wanted it sooner and because Mr. Armstrong wasn't moving fast enough some of them separated themselves and began to do other things that they didn't really like that the Church was doing, so they started other organizations. It was about around that period of time that there were different church areas, whole *regions, thousands of people* who left God's Church because of the influence of ministers who were *pseudo inspired*. It was false, it wasn't of God. They had their own ideas and their own teachings that they brought in and people weren't alert to it and didn't say, "Oh wait a minute! This isn't in agreement with what God has given through His apostle. I want to wait for God because I've *learned* how God works through His apostle, so I'm waiting to see what God gives through His apostle, because I've *proven* to myself how God works." Anyway, people didn't do that and left in droves in some regions like Hawaii. The entire area of Hawaii left. Washington, DC, almost the *entire* area, a little over a thousand right in that area alone. But again, shaking and rumblings still in the 1970s'.

Mr. Armstrong was becoming sick, unhealthy, and had some difficulties at different points in time there, and because of that it appeared to some that he was coming to a point of maybe dying. And so these struggles began where people began to vie for power. Evangelists! And Mr. Armstrong got to a point in time where finally God stirred him up and he came back to life in a very powerful way and became stronger than he ever was, in 1979, right in through there, on into the 80s and he started talking about 'putting the Church back on the right track', because he saw over that short length of time of a couple years when he was sickly what was happening to the Church, what was happening to the people because of different ministers and people teaching, and they weren't confessing, they weren't showing in their lives that they were in agreement with the word of God and what God had given. And you know other history of what took place in the Church as well.

So hereby we can know if someone reflects in their life by what they say, by what they're living, by what they're doing that they're of the same mind and you know it. But when they bring along something different you should know that too and you should not tolerate it, you should not allow it because it hurts people. Thousands and thousands of people have left because no one would stand up when it began to stop it.

I John 4:3 - And every spirit that does not confess, in other words at one with the same Word, who speaks the same Word, **that Jesus Christ is coming in the flesh is not of God**: by what is spoken. It can be as basic and as simple as that, by their speech, and if it doesn't reflect this, it says here **that Jesus Christ is not coming in the flesh and this is that spirit of antichrist**, even within the Church there are things that people have thought about antichrist, thought it was an individual of a great false church; "He is the antichrist!" You hear things once in a while from Protestant churches and they try to figure out, "Who is the antichrist?" And you think, "You don't even know what this scripture is about!" It's not about a single individual and it's not about somebody outside of God's Church – antichrist. But these Protestant ideas exist because people don't get the truth... and sometimes they've come *into* God's Church.

The antichrist is not a single person, there has been many over the past 2,000 years; *many* have been antichrist. It just means 'against Christ', in other words it means they have not yielded themselves to Jesus Christ coming into them. At some point, because of sin, they've cut that off. At some point because they're in disagreement and they believe something different than what God is revealing by His spirit in their life, if they will yield to that, they do something different, they become of a different mind,

they become anti – against Christ. They begin working against the very purpose of why Jesus Christ died! So that we can repent of our sins and change. And so antichrist can only apply, by definition, to someone who's a part of God's Church – and you do not want to work against Jesus Christ. You do not want to work against the spirit of God that comes in and through Jesus Christ to us, to live in us, to dwell in us. That's why we want to repent of sin quickly when we have sinned, because we cut off the flow of God's spirit and we actually begin to work against the very one who suffered to save us.

In some of my deepest prayers of repentance, bring this into reality, "Forgive me for fighting against You. Forgive me for working against You, against Christ, against Your Son." Because that's true; that's what we do when we sin.

...and this is that spirit of antichrist whereof you have heard that it should come; and even now it is already in the world. What do you mean 'it's in the world'? It's come out of the world into the Church. It's already existing! It's now existing, and John was dealing with this and asking how this can be in the Church; and he came to understand how it can be in the Church.

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them: our conquering, in other words, the spirit of antichrist. You are conquering the spirit of that which... you're fighting a battle in your own mind, in your own life, and if it pops up in the Church then you will do what you have to do. I *hate*, I have hated to have to do, over many, many years, disfellowshipping people. And I have just simply followed through with a formality of something that some people have already done in their life; cutting themselves off from God because of disobedience. I *hate* doing that! I *hate* having to go to people who have been in our midst in times past over the years and having to tell them, "Don't you know what you're doing? ...and I'm simply following through the formality of something you've already done. You've already cut yourself off from God's spirit; now you are officially, to understand for yourself, cut off from God's Church. You can't have fellowship in God's Church because that's where God is." And I know for some of you who are new that some of these things are rather difficult to grasp and comprehend when you've never had these experiences in your life. And thank God you don't have to have them as a whole.

Do you realize that? How blessed you are? That you're about to enter an age where these things will not exist. When they are they will be dealt with so quickly, so fast, so, so quickly by God, truly, when God's Church is governed by that which is perfect, fully, not by human beings. Myself, all human beings, all ministers are imperfect. I look forward to the time when we will have that which is perfect governing the Church, where that which is absolutely perfect in all judgment, because there's nothing you hide from God, and they are the God Family that will be ruling under Jesus Christ. It's a beautiful thing! And so you're not going to have to experience, in time here, in less than a year, you will *never experience* as a whole, within the Church, the kinds of things we've experienced in 1972, and '74, and '78, and after Mr. Armstrong died into the 90's then, and especially 1994. That will *never...nothing close* will happen to 1972 even, thank God. How blessed are you to not have to experience these things John is talking about, because there's another world coming that's just about here, a new age.

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He who is in you, I've read that many of times, **greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.** It's a beautiful scripture. God Almighty, if you'll repent and continue to yield yourself to the process of God living in you, it's an awesome thing, and that's your hope, that's your strength. **They are of the world: therefore they speak**

of the world; Who's it *talking* about? It's really talking about, in context here, antichrists – those who do not yield themselves to God's spirit living and dwelling within them.

They are of the world: therefore they speak of the world: in other words it isn't inspired by God. They do that which is worldly, in other words, sometimes their own ideas, their own doctrines, their own things that come in in the midst. And we're not through all this yet. We're not through this yet by any measure. I don't know what trials are going to come your way, toward God's Church as beings are stirred up far, far worse than what they already are, when they realize, when they know they're going out, screaming and hollering and causing as much destruction as they can, when they're actually given more power to do some of the things they're going to do. I don't know because God hasn't shown. I do know that the more we yield to God, the more we yield ourselves to God, seek God, that He will protect us. '...greater is He that's in you,' that is your strength, that is your power, and that is your hope.

Therefore, it says, **they speak of the world and the world hears them.** In other words, that which is of the world, the spirit of the world in reasoning and thinking.

Verse 6 - We are of God: whoever knows God hears us; that's a beautiful thing. That's something that's just automatic. That's something God gave me even as I was writing some of, especially the second book. You don't have to try to convince anyone, that's God's job. You don't have to try to justify anything, it is what it is, the truth is the truth, and someone will either accept it and receive it (because there's only one way they can) because they're being drawn by God's spirit, or they're just going to be blinded to it. I don't have to take that personally. You don't have to take that personally. It's not a problem. And so if someone is brought into our midst, it's because God has done it, and there's a lot of peace in that, there truly is.

We are of God: whoever knows God hears us... If someone's listening to you or if they have a desire to know more, it's because of being drawn by God first of all, but especially in the Church, if someone is brought into the Church, **whoever knows God hears us;** because of God's spirit; **and whoever is not of God does not hear us.** It's true. That's why when it finally comes down to a point in time, sometimes when it's happened in God's Church even in the last couple of years, when someone comes along and has different ideas and they won't listen to what is true you know what's happened – they've cut themselves off - and you hope they can come to repentance.

We are of God: whoever knows God hears us; and whoever is not of God does not hear us. Hereby, in other words, **this is how you can know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.** What is the 'spirit of truth'? It agrees with God, it's at one with God; it's that word 'homologe' – of the same Word. It's truly a beautiful word. Of the same Word...that's how you can know, that's the confession that's there by God's spirit. The only way you can be of the same Word is by God's spirit being in you. You don't do this on your own. What you live, you don't do on your own. Your ability to know the truth, you didn't do on your own. Your ability to continue in this truth, you didn't do on your own. You have to yield to the process, you have to make the choice of desiring and wanting it, but you know how it comes about. It's because you yield yourself to God and you pray to God to *continue* to give of you His holy spirit because you know how you're able to hold onto the truth. The only way you could hold onto the truth is by God's spirit continually coming, living, dwelling within you. It's a beautiful thing.

Whosoever knows God hears us; that's why when ministers are out here, and different ones, can talk to someone and it doesn't take very long to know – "Hey, they're almost there. They're almost there to

baptism,” and sometimes you know they’re ready for baptism, they just don’t quite know it yet, but they’re there. Their mind is opened up and that’s their next step. And sure enough, after a while, “I’d like to talk to you about baptism.” Because you know where God’s spirit leads. If someone follows God’s spirit as God is drawing them and then someone continues in the Church they continue to grow and the longer you’ve been in God’s Church you know certain things that people are going through.

I have things where people come and start telling me certain things, sharing certain things with me and, “I know, I understand where you are. I know what you’re going through. Been there done that.” ...or whatever.

Beloved, the admonition that he has then through all of this; **Beloved, let us love one another**: to be of the same Word and the same mind; it’s expressed this way to one another in the Church. **Let us love one another: for love/agape is of God**; God’s spirit is of God. The ability to *love* with the *mind* of God comes from God through His spirit. We recognize the need for God’s spirit, and the more that God’s spirit will live within us, the more we can exercise this kind of love toward others; **and everyone who loves is born/begotten of God, and knows God**. That’s how this all takes place; it’s because you’ve been impregnated with God’s spirit and if you continue to yield yourself to God and Jesus Christ is continuing to come into your life on a continuing basis because you’re not being cut off because of sin, because you’re repenting of it...you may fall flat on your face several times a day and have to repent of the same thing several times a day, but you keep repenting and you don’t quit, you don’t give up the fight because you understand what’s at stake. And that’s a process of your mind. Every time you repent you acknowledge, “God is right and I am wrong! I’m selfish again!” And that’s how God moulds us.

Whoever does not love does not know God; so, someone after a period of time who is being cut off from God’s spirit can’t hold onto the same mind. If you get cut off from God’s spirit after a while you’ll start to *think differently*, you can’t help it. Differently from what the Word of God is. You begin to come up with your own ideas or your own thinking about things. You’ll begin to have more battles in your relationships with people in God’s Church – that’s the way it works! **Whoever does not love does not know God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love/agape of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him**. How far do you go in loving? ...in loving someone else? Sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice! And God was willing to give His own Son and His own Son was willing to do the same thing, give His own life. And we are called to give our own lives to a different way of life, to stand up for a different way of life, for what is true – regardless of what anybody else thinks, says, or does to you, no matter how much they tear you down. It doesn’t matter! Those things don’t matter because you hold onto something that’s far more precious and you see it, you know it. That’s what everyone of God in the past has had to do.

Herein is love/agape, not that we loved God, but that He loved us...So what is this love? Again, there are so many counterfeits in the world of this very thing here, that people talk about ‘loving Christ’ and ‘give your heart to the Lord’, those pseudo kinds of things that exist in the world, because that’s all the world can have in the first place. But sometimes those things have infected God’s people too, to understand what true love is, what God’s love is.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, sometimes people come in the Church and they talk about how that (in times past, I’m going way back in time here), talking about certain things and individuals might come along or have come along and they’ll talk about how that they just love God, they’ve always been looking for God, they’ve always been searching for Jesus Christ. And I think, “Bull, bull, bull, bull, bull!

Bull!" Now, unless God was drawing you to a certain point in time, which God does, and maybe over a longer period of time, if you recognize it's because of God's spirit that was drawing you... because the reality is that's the only way it could ever happen, that maybe... *maybe* you began to... but what did you love? What did you see that was true that you loved about God? The Sabbath? The Holy Days? You've *always* loved God?! You've *always* loved Jesus Christ?! Give me a break! Nobody has. Nobody ever has! You didn't come into God's Church (except you grow up in the Church and you're drawn for a longer period of time and that which is special), I'm talking about out of the world into the Church...that's a different thing, a different process, and the reality is God does it, God does it all, He truly does. We just have to yield ourselves to it.

Herein is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, then we ought also to love one another. Again, sacrifice! To sacrifice! If God has loved us, to sacrifice, if we live God's love then we're going to sacrifice our own will, our self in the sense of self, to get your way, to *get your way*. Are you willing to do things to give to someone else? ...to let them have their way? ...as long as it's not harmful or hurtful? Or do we insist on something being done *our way*?

No man has seen God at any time. If we love, and so it's this word again here, **one another, then God dwells in us;** so if we're able to live this kind of love toward others it's because of God. We don't take the credit! It's not because we're good! God's good; we're *not* by nature. And sometimes people have been offended by such things, and you think, "Why? What is it you're holding onto? Is there some standard for yourself that you think you're so good, or better?" Do we not just acknowledge to God, "I know what I am and I'm thankful that You dwell in me, because I know it comes from You." Everything that's good comes from God. ...**and His love is perfected in us.** So that word there, 'His love', it's perfected in us; it's a process of growing and becoming matured.

So a lot of things in your life, that which is spiritual, has to do with how you treat each other! How you treat your wife! How you treat your husband! ...in the Church first I'm talking about, in that environment, because that's where it starts, in the Church first; that's how we learn about it. Or how you treat someone else in the Church, sister, brother, mother, father...and then that's within relatives, and then it spreads throughout the Church, because we're all brothers and sisters in the Body, in the Church of God. So how do we love each other? How do we think about each other? How do we talk about each other? Is it done with fondness? Is it done critically? Is it done sometimes in concern maybe? But be careful who that concern is shared with, and not just with one another, because then it's nothing more than gossip and tearing down somebody. So you have to be careful how you do what you do in loving people and loving each other.

And these, again, are things we learn through time. We don't learn them overnight. And you know how we generally learn? Because we do it the wrong way and then we get hurt by it and then we have to repent and then we finally see what God is showing... "You told me how to do it..." And so again here, I mention this because you see, I know, I *see* it, I *see* it from area to area at times in people's lives where even in marriage sometimes, when both people are in the Church, sometimes people do not do the right things toward each other. And certain things that might happen within the Church, within the fellowship then... It hurts to see people who don't get along in God's Church and I know we're working at those things and fighting at those things and that's good.

Verse 13 – His love is being perfected in us; this is how we can know that we dwell in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His spirit. It's by His spirit that we're able to do what we do, think the way we do towards others, willing and able to catch our tongue before it does too much hurt. **And we have seen and do testify/witness that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.** And so what does this mean, 'and hereby we have seen and do testify'? Everybody in God's Church, everyone who's ever been called by God is a witness to what is true, testifies by their life to what is true, to what is of God's spirit.

In so many ways that's all the two witnesses are about. It's about what we witness at the end of an age. It's about certain things that take place, about mankind and the resistance in the mind of man and how defiant man has *always* been toward God for 6,000 years, it's just magnified in the short length of time at the end to how far man will go to fight and resist God. And we're *all* witness of that in the Church of God at the end of an age, we truly are. And so this is a part of what it's talking about here; **and we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.** What does that mean? It means that if you're able to live right toward each other, you know the truth and you're able to live that truth toward each other, live and exercise God's love toward each other, change the way you talk and speak and treat one another, you realize this comes from God and this is what your life is witness of, the truth that God sent His Son. Because there's no other way except that you're able to be forgiven of your sins and continue in this way of life so that God will give you more and more of His holy spirit.

And so, **we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.** **Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God,** of the same Word, the same *Word*, of the same mind, by the way they think, by the way they live, **God dwells in him, and he in God.** Because there's no other way to be, to have unity, to have oneness, to comprehend that God is bringing millions of different ideas and ways of life into one is an awesome thing to understand. God says there is absolutely *no* other way.

If everyone who was ever a part of the Church before 1994, before the apostasy, could grasp that single truth, how powerful would that be? That would tell them quickly we can't be in different groups, and God *can't* be in different organizations bringing us all through this, He's just doing it in a different way. God doesn't work that way. Different ways? That's what the Protestant world kind of believes. It's kind of like, "Well, we don't agree with you but..." and that's why they have different organizations, because they really don't agree anyway, but they kind of, when it comes down to it and they're talking to different ones of different organizations and different beliefs, "Well, God's kind of working with all of us to bring us to the same thing...to heaven... *heaven*...and ever how we get there, ever how God does it through all these different ways, because we're all so different and so He does it through all these different means and organizations." Think... "Baloney!" There's only *one* way, only *one* truth!

Verse 16 - And we know and believe the love/and have believed and known the love, the agape that God has for us/to us. In other words, made available to us because of His giving His Son and the process of what we live through. It goes on to talk about how that **God is love.** Incredible scripture here: **God is love; and he who dwells in love dwells in God,** that's what God is, the mind, the Word, the Logos, the revelatory thought of God is this specific way of thinking, and He shares that with us. We begin to learn it, we *know* when we're doing something wrong. I know in my conversation, in my thoughts, in my thinking, when I'm doing something wrong. I *know* when I have to have help to get a hold of myself and my thinking, of what I'm allowing to come out of my mouth. I realize this isn't the way it's supposed to be; and I have to repent of that, and you do too. Through time you grow in that, you begin to spot it

more quickly, sometimes we don't catch it until it gets to a point where there's a problem in a relationship and you feel badly, then you catch it and then you repent.

...and he who dwells in love/agape dwells in God, and God in him. Because there is no other way to experience this, there is no other way to share this with one another, this way of life, this kind of being, this kind of unity.

I know this is difficult sometimes; even in the beginning of the series I talked about a bit of a frustration because I can't give to everybody the same ability to see, the same ability of experience. *Why?* Because it takes a lifetime to grow in experiences that give us wisdom, that gives us the ability to see things; and so God works with us where we are, to see where we are at that time and to learn from this process. And I would say as a whole, those who were around before the apostasy, there is a great chasm of difference, obviously, between the ability of seeing certain things there and in the last two and three years, but you will in time. And so we receive different levels of even what's being spoken of... **God is love; and he who dwells in love dwells in God and God in him...**and the appreciation that goes with that, the joy that goes with that.

See, in my just talking about this I have an incredible joy that goes with this, an excitement that goes with this, because I realize that God has given us the unity we have because of what He's done with us. The ability to be structured like we are, the ability to have the kind of technology we do. The ability to function the way we do is an incredible blessing in God's Church, it truly is, so that we can experience this with each other. And we're able to experience this because of what we're getting ready to go into – especially in less than a year from now toward the end of all this.

Herein is our love, in other words that which is reflected in and through us, agape, **being made perfect**, perfected in us so **that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in the world.** Pretty powerful what it's saying here, pretty tall order that you can't fulfill of and by yourself. Only God in you can accomplish and fulfill this and grow in this, and that's what this is all about, it's a matter of God dwelling in us and acknowledging that. It's not us. We should not be lifted up with pride. On the contrary, we should see what we are and repent and want more of what God says He will grant us.

It goes on to say in **verse 18 - there is no fear in love/agape**; no fear in the sense of the consequences of sin, where there is that which gnaws away at us if we are unrepentant and failing to obey God. That's what it's talking about here; it's talking about the blessing of just being free, because you know that you are repenting of sin, you know that when sin comes along you repent of it immediately, quickly, that you know you don't want to be cut off from God, and you know that God's promise to you as you do that and your willingness to do that is how you're purified and remain clean. It's a beautiful thing that we can be forgiven immediately upon repentance and no longer is it a burden on you, no longer do you have to carry it. It simply is a matter of doing it no matter how many times it takes, and you keep doing it until you've conquered it. And if you don't do that then there's that which gnaws at you in your mind that you know is wrong and it eats inside like a cancer.

1 John 3:18 – let's look at that and back up here a little bit and then we'll come back to 1 John 4, because this is the context of this, talking about there is no fear in God's love by living this way of life. On the contrary, it's being of the same mind, living the same thing. Back here in **1 John 3:18** let's notice some of the context in what it says. It says, **My little children, let us not love in word, neither in**

tongue, in other words not in thought and thinking only, neither in what we say, in other words what is spoken; **but in deed and in truth**. So it's easy to talk about certain things, it's another thing to live it. It can be an easier thing talking about things that are on the website, truths that are there, knowledge that we have. It's easier to talk about some of those things but it's another thing to understand it, to live it, because every bit of it has to do with a way of life which has to do with love, God's love.

Verse 19 - And this is how we know that we are of the truth, and can be assured in our hearts before Him. There are times that some question will come along, you perhaps let down, something will happen, someone will hit you with something you don't have an answer for right away in your mind, in your thinking, and you're caught off guard, you get wrapped up in the world and it jars you. It's like a shock, and for a moment, however long that moment is, it might be a moment in time in the sense of very short or it might be a little longer. It might gnaw away at you for a while until you come to the answer. That's why I continually talk about knowing the truths and the strength of that boldness in the truth. And so again here, there's a confidence here that God says you can have by what you live, a boldness you can have because of your ability to live it. Why? Because you can't do it any other way except that God is in you.

Sometimes I try to remind people when they get to a point where they're just kind of negative and down and they're not sure about certain things in life – we start talking about what truths do you know? Because they feel so low because of certain things they've gone through or certain things they've done. Basically, have you repented of it? Yes. So what truths do you know? People start listing off different things. And how do you know that? How are you able to continue knowing that? Because God's working with you. God loves you. God doesn't give up on us! If you'll continue to do what God says and you're able to have this way of life then that's where your confidence and a boldness comes from.

I know who I am. I know what I am. I know what my sins are. I know what my battles are. I know them well, all too well. God knows them a whole lot better; He's helped me to see them through time. He's helped me to see the *spirit* of certain things in life; why we choose the things we do, why we think the way we do. And then we struggle with and battle with those things. But I know that immediately upon repentance I don't carry any of it. I don't carry it around, you don't have to. And it takes time to come to that point in our lives where when you sin you don't continue to beat yourself up. It's like we don't forgive ourselves! Well, if God's forgiven you are you greater than God? Don't you understand? Don't you grasp the magnitude of what it means to have a Saviour? ...to have a Passover? Don't you understand and grasp that when God says it's forgiven, it's gone, and you're not to carry it? Because if you carry it you're sinning, you're still sinning and you're not really trusting in and believing what God said about His Son. You just repent and you're free until the next time you have to repent again, which may not be too long. But in the process, hopefully by acknowledging such things, you're becoming stronger, you're wanting more of God's spirit, you have a burning desire to do what's right, to get away from the evil, to hold onto the good. Because as human beings you will always have 'lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life'. It's just the way you are as a human being. That's your battle! That's you! It's who you are! But this is what we can become, this is what we can live, and blessed to live.

Verse 19 - And this is how we can know that we are of the truth, and can be assured in our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, then we will have confidence toward God. Even when it comes to repenting and being free. There's no fear in love. When you're clear, when you're free, you

are free. And sometimes we sin by not allowing that in our own lives, in our own thinking, and not really fully *believing* what God says. You are free when you repent of sin! It's a beautiful thing, but you must repent of sin and you must work to make things right. In relationships, when you say things that are wrong and do things that are wrong, you must seek to gain control of that, you must ask for God's help. If you know your weakness you must ask for God's help to fight that, and if you slip then you repent quickly, but you ask for God's help to fight that because you know who you are, you know where your weaknesses are... Because we're all different and we all have *many* different kinds of weaknesses, we truly do, but you've got to fight the fight.

Verse 22 - And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, that's our heart, that's our desire, that's what we're striving to do. We don't do it perfectly but we're striving to, and as we grow in time we do it more perfectly, **and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.** Especially what comes out of our mouth toward others! That is true spirituality; that judges, that determines that true spirituality in our life, where we are spiritually in other words, in our life.

And this is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, isn't it amazing? I've given so many sermons about love because God's Word is about love. That's the reason the commandments are there, it's because it's about love. It's how to love God, how to love each other. That's what this way of life is about, it's about how you do it God's way. And we have to have it because we slip and fall down and we say things and we get into attitudes toward others, just because we're inconvenienced, just because things aren't going our way, just because...just because...just because....

...and love one another as Jesus Christ gave us commandment. That's why sometimes I get quite upset inside and stronger sometimes in the things that I say; that it is without excuse that any of us sin towards others in the Body of Christ, that we speak *harshly* to one another in the Body of Christ. And if you're in the Body of Christ and it's in family it starts there first. Always without excuse, in the Body of Christ, and we have to repent when we do wrong. And then when we have opportunity to be together.... See, one thing about it is different for the Church today than what it used to be because we're so spread out, and you don't get that many opportunities to be with each other, and so you're not tried in these things, but you're tried in the world as to whether you're striving to live this. And if you can't live in the world, you're definitely not living it in the Church, because it should be a whole lot easier in the world; you know why? *They don't get it!* They don't understand! They don't have the slightest *ability* to grasp what you grasp! So there's no excuse that we should treat them wrong. But if it's easy for us to treat them wrong, if we're not careful it becomes easy for us to treat each other wrong in the Body in how we talk and what we say.

And he who keeps His commandments dwells in Him, and He in him. Again, that reminder over and over and over again, that if you're doing these things, if you're doing what is right, it's because God's in you. That's the only way you can do what's right. It's the only way you can conquer and overcome your battles, your weaknesses, your faults. **And this is how we know that He abides in us, by the spirit which He has given us.** It's a confidence you can have, a boldness you can have in what you're living!

Let's go back to **1 John 4** and finish the chapter here at least. You know what? It wouldn't even hurt to go back and ask God to help you to see these things in a greater way, because of maybe so many sermons in the past, at different times we go through this every few months in a more in-depth way of focusing on something like this, but it can become like a story if we're not careful. It can become like a...

“I’ve heard this before.” And yet every time I go through this, every time I’ve gone through John God gives me a little bit more to add to it, and that’s what you have to cry out to God for, for the ability to be excited about seeing a little bit more. Because if you see a little bit more it means you have a greater ability made available to you to live it *a little bit more* before God, because there’s nothing more spiritual than what we’re talking about here in this sermon. All the things I could go through in prophecies, they don’t mean diddly-squat compared to this, truly! All the knowledge of everything in history that’s ever happened to people and things, and God’s people through time in 6,000 years doesn’t mean a thing if you know it all, except that you live it, because it’s what you live.

I say these things again and again and again because over and over and over again in God’s Church I see where people have abused and misused what God has given them, His holy spirit, to *love* each other, especially in *marriage*! *Especially in marriage*! ...that if you don’t love each other and you’re in God’s Church *what in the earth is wrong with you* that you’re not yielding yourself to do things right to love your mate. And if only one is in the Church, well, again, you have to deal with that according to their response to you and their love toward you in life, but you should still have a certain way of treating them and that is not in kind. In other word, you don’t get worked up when they get worked up. If they throw something at you, you don’t throw something back. If you can see that literally, hopefully you can see that in words. That’s where you’re different.

Verse 18 - There is no fear in love; but perfect love, perfected love, the love that God gives to us as it grows within us, casts out fear: because fear has torment. A lot of people in God’s Church, and it’s just a natural thing that happens because of a process you have to go through, but sometimes people have torment in their life because of sins, because of things that are taking place in their life and their life not being at peace yet. You know, peace comes from God, being in unity with God; and if we’re not in unity with God you know what that should tell us right away? ...if we’re not at peace? I’m doing something wrong! What can I change? What has to be changed in *my* thinking?

You see, it’s not other people! It’s not other people that make you react badly. It’s you that makes you react badly, and that’s a tough thing for human beings to see. You’re the only cause of your unhappiness! Someone else didn’t *cause you* to be unhappy. Someone didn’t *cause you* to be angry. Someone didn’t *cause you* not to love. You did it. You went by yourself, for how you react and respond to things in life. But to do it God’s way and to deal with it properly, again, is a matter of maturity in time. But you are to blame for your own problems in life in the sense of how you deal with things and how you react to things. And when we accept that and repent of that then God helps us to grow and become more at peace with Him and with what He’s doing in our life; we become more stable, more sound, more excited, more fulfilled in the truth.

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear has torment. He who fears is not made perfect in agape. And so if there is torment we have in our life it’s because there are still things that need to be addressed; and there’s *nothing wrong with that*! That’s not a *bad thing*! It’s a good thing if you acknowledge it, “I *need* help! I *need* God’s spirit. I *need* to see what I’m doing wrong in my life so I can do it better, so I can respond to things the way God wants me to, according to His perfect plan.”

We love Him because He first loved us. If a man says, I love God, and hates, in other words, does not love, refuses to love his brother, it says he is a liar: for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And if we can’t love a mate, that to me is the

sickest of all! If two people are in God's Church... it's just dumbfounding to me! Because that's the first arena where we have the opportunity to live it, and if we can't experience it there, please, please, please, please understand, you're not experiencing the Church of God. If you can't live it there in the arena where God has granted the greatest potential to live it in a greater way, in a fuller way, then you are not living it! Don't kid yourself! You're not living it in the Church of God by any measure or means. Sometimes people kid themselves! And I say these things because these problems *do exist in God's Church today!* They exist! And so if we can understand that, all of us, then we can understand that every one of us has things to address in our life in our relationships with each other.

If a man say I love God but hates/refuses to love his brother he is a liar. God doesn't mince words, He calls things what they are so that we can get the point and say, "That's what I am! I've been lying to myself!" ...and then repent of it.

For he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, constantly, continually, not once in a while, not when things are going well, not when you're feeling good, but even when you're *not* feeling good, even when things haven't gone well in your day, or whatever it might be, or on the job, or whatever it is; things just didn't go your way... well boo hoo hoo, give me a towel. There's no excuse for mistreating someone else that we should love, there truly isn't. Failing to show love? Failing to live the way God says toward someone else? Never an excuse for that – never, never, never!

Again, **If a man say I love God and hates/fails to love his brother he is a liar. For he who does not love his brother whom he has seen,** lives with perhaps, **how can he love God whom he has not seen?** We kid ourselves sometimes as human beings thinking we're right within the Church, we're doing well within the Church, that we're 'spiritual', we do 'spiritual things'... "I listen to a hundred sermons a week!" Well, I hope you're living a hundred sermons a week too. I'm kidding there in part, but it's great if we're hungering and thirsting and striving, but we better be living it too – that's what it's about! What's the good of listening to all the things and studying and praying if we're not living it? Because *this, this above all things* is what it's all about: what you live day by day by day with others whom you rub shoulders with day by day by day. And if you love someone and you're showing love to them, they may do it and they may do it for a long time, but it's pretty hard to continue to hate and show hate to that which is showing love to you. Doesn't mean it doesn't happen, because it does sometimes around God's Church because of a demonic world and so forth; but as a whole, you can change things on the job often times, in time, and we don't maybe have that kind of time but you keep doing it regardless of if you don't have that kind of time. You keep doing it and keep treating people in a right way and after a while it's kind of hard for them to keep throwing eggs at you, because every time you come back to them and you're right toward them and good toward them. Because see, *they know* how others respond to such things and you're *different* (or are supposed to be).

And we have this commandment from Him, That he who loves God, a commandment, love his brother also. And sometimes that brother is the very one that lives in our own house that's closest to us, that sleeps beside us. That above all things should be addressed in people's lives, and then carry that on through the Body in the Church of God, examining our relationship with every member in the Body and saying, "How do I treat my brother?"

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