

# 1 JOHN: DISCERNING TRUE FROM FALSE SPIRITUALITY

## Part X: True Spirituality's Resulting Assurances

(1 John 3:19-24)

### I. Introduction

- A. False spirituality was a problem in John's era as it is today (Dave Hunt & T. A. McMahon, The Seduction of Christianity, 1985, p. 7), so we believers need to understand how to discern false spirituality from the true.
- B. A key guideline in such discernment is the difference in what true spirituality produces in terms of blessed assurances versus the lack of such assurances in false spirituality, and we view them in 1 John 3:19-24:

### II. True Spirituality's Resulting Assurances, 1 John 3:19-24.

- A. One blessed assurance of true spiritual fellowship is our active and thus true love for other believers, 3:17-21:
  1. When John wrote in 1 John 3:19 KJV that "hereby we know that we are of the truth," he was referring back to 1 John 3:17-18 that directed his readers to love in truth by laying down what they possess of their earthly lives to meet the needs of fellow believers (cf. our last lesson; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 897).
  2. Thus, John meant that a believer's works of laying down what he possesses of his earthly life to meet the needs of other believers (1 John 3:17-18) is an evidence that he truly fellowships with God (1 John 3:19).
  3. However, believers can suffer from false guilt either laid upon them by other legalistic people or by their own misguided consciences, clouding this evidence of true spiritual fellowship with God and leading the believer to doubt if he truly fellowships with God regardless of his truly loving works (1 John 3:20a).
  4. However, the believer needs to **rely** on God's claim that truly laying down what he possesses of his earthly life for the good of other believers indicates that he is truly in fellowship with the Lord, 1 John 3:20b.
  5. If one's heart does not condemn him because he **believes** God's claim through John that his sacrificial laying down of his life's possession for the good of other believers indicates he truly fellowships with God, then he has confidence before God that he actually spiritually fellowships with the Lord, 1 John 3:21; *Ibid.*
- B. A second blessed assurance of true spiritual fellowship is answered prayer, 1 John 3:22-24a:
  1. If a believer gains answers to his petitions in prayer, he is assured of the fact that he truly keeps God's commandments, performing what is righteous in God's estimation, 1 John 3:22.
  2. [Such requests must of course be made in alignment with God's will (1 John 5:14-15) and without one's harboring unconfessed sin in his life (Psalm 66:18-19), both qualifications that fit the definition of doing what is Biblically upright in God's estimation as John noted in 1 John 3:22b.]
  3. John then mentioned two major commandments God has given that are necessary for believers to heed to gain answers to prayer, the command to believe the name [the word "in" does **not** appear in the Greek text here, *Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., N. T.] of His Son Jesus Christ, that is, to have faith that God will answer the prayer that is given in Jesus' name (cf. Jn. 14:13-14), and the command to love one another, 1 Jn. 3:23.
  4. In summary, then, (a) if a believer does not harbor sin in his life, (b) if he asks for what aligns with God's Biblically-revealed will, (c) if he trusts God to answer his prayer due to its being given in Jesus' name and (d) if he loves the brethren by giving of his life's possessions for their welfare when voicing his prayer, he **will** have his prayer answered, what in turn assures him that he truly fellowships with God! (1 John 3:24a)
- C. A third blessed assurance of true spiritual fellowship is the Holy Spirit's subjective assurance, 1 John 3:24b:
  1. John added that we also know that God is abiding (*meno*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p. 820 with 390 and John 15:7) in us in fellowship with us by the Holy Spirit which God has given to us, 1 John 3:24b.
  2. The Holy Spirit subjectively ministers to the believer in regard to assuring him **either** (a) to produce His fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23 ESV) in the believer's heart **or** (b) to makes him uncomfortable by convicting him of sin (Psa. 32:1-4).
  3. If the Holy Spirit convicts the believer of sin in highlighting his violation of a Scriptural command, he is out of fellowship with the Lord, but if the believer has no such conviction and witnesses the Spirit's "fruit" in his demeanor, he has God's subjective assurance that he is truly in fellowship with the Lord.

***Lesson:*** *When the believer is in true fellowship with the Lord, God provides him the resulting blessed assurances of that fact as seen (1) in his Biblically-sanctioned acts of laying down what he possesses of this life for the welfare of other believers, (2) in his answers to prayer and (3) in the Holy Spirit's subjective ministration of nurture to the believer's heart. Failure in these areas indicates one is out of fellowship with God and needs to adjust accordingly.*

***Application:*** *(1) If we possess these evidences, may we rejoice. (2) If we lack them, may we adjust for blessing.*