



SPG SERIES - Study 5

Authenticity is Required

Do you have unquenchable passion? 1 John is telling us so much about being in fellowship with the Father & the Son, being in the presence of God. This should be the greatest thrill in all of our lives and we can experience it as regularly and as often as we desire. We will never tire of it, once we experience this fellowship authentically.

Our most recent study focused on “remaining in Him”.

“so you must remain faithful to what you have been taught from the beginning. If you do, you will remain in fellowship with the Father and the Son.”

1 John 2:24

It says we must remain faithful, or in Him, in order to remain in fellowship (in His presence). In this letter, John makes it clear that the **remaining is conditional** by using the word “if”. He declares us “liars” (v.2) because we claim to know Him and be in Him. But, if we continue sinning, not confessing, hating our brothers, not obeying His commands, then we are not “in Him”. We must come to the reality, and be authentic to ourselves and those around us, as to whether we really do love Him and are “remaining in Him by following His prescription/plan. In this study, you will find how we quench our passion for God in some very obvious ways. So let’s first become acquainted with what John is saying in his “if statements”. Then we will go to Isaiah 58 to examine God’s view of the Israelites hearts. Allow this to reach deeply into your heart and respond authentically with truth, because we will not be in His presence to ask anything we desire if we are unable to deal with the truth.

1 John “If” As you read through these verses on “if”, record at the end what the Spirit of God is saying to you:

1 John 1:6-8 So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness; we are not practicing the truth. 7 But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth.

1 John 1:9,10 But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts.

1 John 2:1 My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous.

1 John 2:3-4 And we can be sure that we know him if we obey his commandments. 4 If someone claims, "I know God," but doesn't obey God's commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the truth.

1 John 2:9 If anyone claims, "I am living in the light," but hates a Christian brother or sister, that person is still living in darkness.

1 John 2:24 So you must remain faithful to what you have been taught from the beginning. If you do, you will remain in fellowship with the Son and with the Father.

1 John 3:13-14 So don't be surprised, dear brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. 14 If we love our Christian brothers and sisters, it proves that we have passed from death to life. But a person who has no love is still dead.

1 John 3:17 If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God's love be in that person?

1 John 3:20-22 Even if we feel guilty, God is greater than our feelings, and he knows everything. 21 Dear friends, if we don't feel guilty, we can come to God with bold confidence. 22 And we will receive from him whatever we ask because we obey him and do the things that please him.

1 John 4:1-3 Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world. 2 This is how we know if they have the Spirit of God: If a person claiming to be a prophet acknowledges that Jesus Christ came in a real body, that person has the Spirit of God. 3 But if someone claims to be a prophet and does not acknowledge the truth about Jesus, that person is not from God. Such a person has the spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard is coming into the world and indeed is already here.

1 John 4:6 But we belong to God, and those who know God listen to us. If they do not belong to God, they do not listen to us. That is how we know if someone has the Spirit of truth or the spirit of deception.

1 John 4:12 No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.

1 John 4:18 Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love.

1 John 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," but hates a Christian brother or sister, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see?

1 John 5:2 We know we love God's children if we love God and obey his commandments.

1 John 5:16 If you see a Christian brother or sister sinning in a way that does not lead to death, you should pray, and God will give that person life. But there is a sin that leads to death, and I am not saying you should pray for those who commit it.

Record here your thoughts:

In verse 1:6, it says: "if we say we have fellowship", how often do we say we have fellowship and yet we have sin abounding in us. Isn't this convicting? If sin is alive in us, there is no hope of unquenchable passion. As it says in 5:21 "keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts".

As you can see, John is very clear that **if** certain things are not real in our lives, then we are not authentic and sin is alive within us. I really believe that the enemy has blinded us from seeing ourselves as we truly are. We say and do the right things but we do them out of spiritual activity vs. love. We will find, like the proverbial onion with many layers, that for us to be in the

presence of God with high regularity, being like Jesus in every way; it will take authentic living before God to purify our hearts.

Look at the Israelites as Isaiah discusses in Chapter 58. You will see in v.2 that it tells us we act so pious...pretending that we want to be near our God, but we have much hypocrisy because of a lack of authenticity and confession (covenanting not to sin).

Read through this chapter and at the end record:

- What God has against the nation of Israel.
- What is God's remedy?
- What are God's blessings: "then you will receive/experience...?"

Pay special attention to v.2. You may look at other translations.

Isaiah 58

58:1 "Shout with the voice of a trumpet blast. Shout aloud! Don't be timid. Tell my people Israel of their sins! 2 Yet they act so pious! They come to the Temple every day and seem delighted to learn all about me. They act like a righteous nation that would never abandon the laws of its God. They ask me to take action on their behalf, pretending they want to be near me. 3 'We have fasted before you!' they say. 'Why aren't you impressed? We have been very hard on ourselves, and you don't even notice it!' "I will tell you why!" I respond. "It's because you are fasting to please yourselves. Even while you fast, you keep oppressing your workers.

After reading all of Isaiah 58, come back here and record what God is saying to you about being "pious"...seem delighted...pretending...fasting to please yourselves. _____

4 What good is fasting when you keep on fighting and quarreling? This kind of fasting will never get you anywhere with me.

5 You humble yourselves by going through the motions of penance, bowing your heads like reeds bending in the wind. You dress in burlap and cover yourselves with ashes. Is this what you call fasting? Do you really think this will please the Lord?

6 "No, this is the kind of fasting I want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you. Let the oppressed go free, and remove the chains that bind people.

7 Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help.

8 "Then your salvation will come like the dawn, and your wounds will quickly heal. Your godliness will lead you forward, and the glory of the Lord will protect you from behind.

9 Then when you call, the Lord will answer. 'Yes, I am here,' he will quickly reply. "Remove the heavy yoke of oppression. Stop pointing your finger and spreading vicious rumors!

10 Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon.

11 The Lord will guide you continually, giving you water when you are dry and restoring your strength. You will be like a well-watered garden, like an ever-flowing spring.

12 Some of you will rebuild the deserted ruins of your cities. Then you will be known as a builder of walls and a restorer of homes.

13 "Keep the Sabbath day holy. Don't pursue your own interests on that day, but enjoy the Sabbath and speak of it with delight as the Lord's holy day. Honor the Sabbath in everything you do on that day, and don't follow your own desires or talk idly.

The other issues described in this chapter are clear. Let's expand on this idea of the Sabbath. It was one of the original 10 Commandments. What God had in mind here is that it is a special day of intimacy with Him and sharing that intimacy with others. If we enter the presence of God on the Sabbath, we will find rest like we seldom experience. On this day, we will be able to be in awe of Him, be in humility before Him, comforted and blessed by Him, exalted by Him, freed by Him. This will be the most precious part of any week. This is contrary to how we treat the Sabbath now: most often built around our own desires. It is not an issue of whether we can have fun that day, but whether we are enjoying His presence and feel His supernatural hand in our lives, concerns, and hopes. If we can't enjoy His presence on the Sabbath for the whole day, when the day is under my control; how will we ever enjoy His presence as we should throughout the week? I can't believe that after this many years of seeking to have my heart pure, I am not honoring the Sabbath the way God intended. I say I want to have fellowship with Him and yet on His day of the week, my day is not built around having intimacy with Him and sharing Him with others. How could I have unquenchable passion when I keep overlooking this obvious concept of keeping the Sabbath holy and delighting in the intimacy and power it brings to my life?

Think through this Sabbath issue on what God would have you do differently. Record the thoughts that come to you regarding the Sabbath, being authentic. _____

14 Then the Lord will be your delight. I will give you great honor and satisfy you with the inheritance I promised to your ancestor Jacob. I, the Lord, have spoken!" (NLT)

Record

- What God has against the nation of Israel.
 - What is God's remedy?
 - What are God's blessings: "then you will receive/experience...?"
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Go back to v.2 and record your thoughts on the lines provided above.

What is God saying to you now on how you treat the Sabbath? What is He saying regarding the exploitation of workers, dealing with the poor in giving food, clothing and shelter, pointing the finger in malicious talk, loosing the chains of injustice and breaking the yolk of oppression?

What do you plan to do about what God is saying to you? _____
