**Lessons from a Lockdown**

**Volume II**

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**Day 74**

**1 John 4:1-6**

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. What would be false prophets today? Am I affected by them?
2. How do I recognize false prophets?
3. How do I protect myself from false teachings?
4. Is it possible for me to become a “false prophet”? How or Why?
5. Do I really know everything the Bible says about Jesus?

***Insight:***

We need to be careful what we choose to believe. We need to make sure what we believe in comes from God. Douglas Jacoby explains that the term “spirits” refer to “prophetic messages.” He points out that the same Greek word is translated as “prophecy” in 2 Thessalonians 2:2. We should test all alleged prophecies (1 Thessalonians 5:21) or messages from claiming to be from God.

We no longer have prophecies today in the sense of “foretelling.” But there are many people who claim to speak for God. How do we test if what they say is from God? Every message must be validated by the Word of God. If the message is inconsistent with the Bible then it does not come from God. That is why we need to know the Bible very well so that we can evaluate what is preached to us. We can easily be fooled by false teaching if we do not know the Bible very well.

During this time when there are many preachers speaking online, we may be exposed to different religious groups. This may not be advisable if we are still young in the faith or struggling in our faith. If we do find ourselves confused about doctrinal issues, we should first pray for wisdom from God and search the scriptures for answers. After we have exhausted our own resources to understand, we can consult with teachers in our churches, many of whom have websites we can search answers from.

Those of us who preach or study the Bible with people, must make sure that what we are preaching comes from the Bible. We should not simply copy lessons from books or internet sources. Every lesson should be a product of our convictions from the Bible. Every principle, no matter how logical it sounds or no matter how popular it is, is false teaching if it is not based on the Word of God. It is therefore wise to make sure that what we preach or share with others is founded on the Word of God.

One basic test for knowing whether a preacher or religious group is from God is their teaching about Jesus. A person cannot be a Christian and yet have an unbiblical view of who Jesus is. That means we ought to know what the Bible teaches about Jesus. Ever since our baptism, have we undertaken a serious study of who Jesus is in the Bible? Have we studied his life by studying every gospel? Have we meditated on what the epistles say about him? How can we study everything and everyone else and yet not study the author and perfecter of our faith? How can we fix our eyes on Jesus if our knowledge of him is incomplete?

Do we have enough wisdom to be safe from these false teachers and teachings? Yes, we can overcome false teachings because God is in us. The devil may be stronger than us, but the devil is no match for God. Peter warned the early Christians that there will be false teachers among them (2 Peter 2:1). Jesus taught that we could recognize false prophets by their fruit (Matthew 7:15-20). It does not matter how great their preaching is if their lives do not display the fruit of the Spirit. The same can be said of us who preach. When our lives do not match what the Bible teaches, then we become false teachers even if we preach the truth. The solution is not to preach less truth, but to live more truth.

There are certain teachings we can now understand because we belong to God which people in the world cannot understand. This should not frustrate us. Instead it should motivate us more to help them become Christians because this is the only way for them to understand what we know. The world is ignorant about the wonderful truths God has graciously taught us. It is our duty to share these truths to others.

Let us learn more about Jesus and be better equipped to teach others about God.