



Theology of Belonging

Recap

1 John 3:11-24

Dead Love 11-15

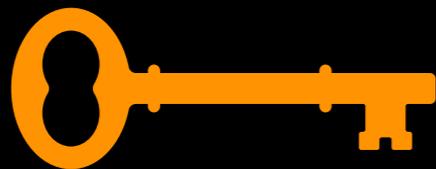
Confirmed Love 16-19

Bold (Honest) Love 20-24

Even if we feel guilty, God is **greater** than our feelings, and he knows everything. [1 John 3:20](#)

Recap

Dear children, let's not merely **say** that we love each other; let us **show** the truth by our **actions**. [1 John 3:18](#)



Our **behaviour** will justify or invalidate our **beliefs**

Recap

Beginning Christianity-believing in Jesus, His **claims** and His **personhood**

Baby Christianity-loving your **family**

Toddler Christianity-adopting the **beliefs** and **behaviour** of said family

Youth Christianity-contributing to the life of the **Body of Christ**

Young Adult Christianity-discipling **another**

Mature Christianity-loving your **enemies**

Supplemental
Christianity

YOU
ARE
HERE

Recap

If you love me, obey my commandments. John 14:15

It's not the size of the **sin**, but the **depth** of relationship

Good Ways to Develop Bad Theology, Clayton Kraby

Ignore Difficult Bible Passages: The best way to develop bad theology is to skip over passages that are confusing or challenge your understanding.

Only Read Authors that Agree with You: Avoid reading or listening to those who do not fully subscribe to your exact theological viewpoint and you'll be unlikely to grow beyond your current level of spiritual maturity.

Good Ways to Develop Bad Theology, Clayton Kraby

Compromise to Avoid Confrontation: Another theological error many make is to abandon essential truths just to avoid confrontation with others.

Only Read Books About The Bible And Not The Bible Itself: We can easily fall into the habit of reading about the Bible and failing to spend time reading the Bible itself. Doing so leaves us theologically imbalanced, especially if we commit the previous error of avoiding those we disagree with.

Listen to Celebrities: Celebrities and celebrity Christians (pastors, authors and musicians) have been given a **undue** place of prominence in culture. And unfortunately those who follow them are more likely to adopt their beliefs **unquestionably**

Anti-Christ is **anti-christian**. John uses this term to group together beliefs and behaviours that are opposite to a biblical **worldview**

"Every Christian is a **theologian**. The issue for Christians is not whether we are going to be theologians but whether we are going to be **good** theologians or **bad** ones." [RC Sproul](#)

Theology-the study of the **character and nature of God**. The pursuit of the knowledge of God. This encompasses **everyone**; atheists to charismatics

"It is significant that this **warning** comes in the midst of John's discourse about love, because false spirits tend to make a great deal of the subject of **love**. Every cult, every deviant group, every false movement makes its appeal in the name of love." [Ray Stedman](#)

John has been talking about **behaviours** for a while, but now he will shift to remind us that **"we are what we believe"**

Therapy is the revealing of what we truly believe about ourselves and others

John gives us the **reason** for discernment (1Jn 4:1); the **basis** for discernment (1Jn 4:2-3); and, the **evidence** of discernment (1Jn 4:4-6).

The Reason-Vs 1

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. 1 John 4:1

The Reason-Vs 1

Do no believe (pisteuo from pistis): is in the form of a present imperative with a negative which is a John's charge (command) to the saints to **not begin to accept** as true or worthy of their trust (every spirit). This verb form can also mean to **cease an action** (believing) that is already in process.

The implication is that John acknowledges the need to constantly **reassess** what we are believing. He is being gracious in this

The Reason-Vs 1

How do you **test** the spirits?

"the biblical balance, avoiding on the one hand the extreme **superstition** which believes everything and on the other the extreme **suspicion** which believes nothing." John Stott

Greater the claim,
greater the evidence

Rules of Discernment

Is the belief or behaviour found **in** the bible?

Is it found in **more** than one place in the bible?

Does the belief/behaviour find its place in **Jesus**?

How does belief/behaviour fit into the **Jewish** context?

The Reason-Vs 1

"to see if the **spirit they have** comes from God."

John is explaining to this beloved "little children" that there are **two spiritual spheres** coexisting in the world, one the domain of the Holy Spirit (God) and the other the domain of the evil spirit, Satan, the Devil and they are diametrically **opposed** to one another, with no possibility of compromise. The former is light, the latter is dark. The former is truth, the latter is error.

The Reason-Vs 1

Behind this warning is a situation of which we in the modern church know little or nothing. In the early church there was a **surging life of the Spirit** which brought its own perils. There were so many and such diverse spiritual manifestations that some kind of **test** was necessary. Let us try to think ourselves back into that electric atmosphere. [William Barclay](#)

Christian Prophets Are on the Rise. What Happens When They're Wrong?, Ruth Graham

"In my lifetime – 49 years as a follower of Jesus – I've never seen this level of interest in **prophecy**," said Michael Brown, an evangelical radio host and commentator, who believes in prophecy but has called for greater accountability when prophecies prove false. "And it's unfortunate, because it's an **embarrassment** to the movement."

The past year has been riddled with prophecies that did not **pan** out.

Christian Prophets Are on the Rise. What Happens When They're Wrong?, Ruth Graham

We are more ripe for cult leaders

As denominational Christianity declines almost across the board, **magnetic independent leaders** have stepped into the void. "There's this idea that you can't trust anybody except these trusted individuals," said Brad Christerson, a sociologist at evangelical Biola University. "It's a **symptom** of our time. People don't trust institutions, and people think that all mainstream institutions are corrupt: universities, science, government, the media. They're searching for **real** sources of truth."

The Reason-Vs 1

But any prophet who falsely claims to speak in my name or who speaks in the name of another god must die. "But you may wonder, 'How will we know whether or not a prophecy is from the Lord?' If the prophet speaks in the Lord's name **but his prediction does not happen or come true**, you will know that the Lord did not give that message. That prophet has spoken without my authority and need not be feared. [Deuteronomy 18:20-22](#)

The Reason-Vs 1

The Didache, The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, is the first service order book and is to be dated not long after A.D. 100. It has regulations on how to deal with the wandering apostles and prophets who came and went amongst the Christian congregations. "Not every one who speaks in a spirit is a prophet; he is only a prophet if he walks in the **ways** of the Lord" (Didache 11 and 12).

The Basis-Vs 2-3

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. 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. [Vs 2-3](#)

The Basis-Vs 2-3

Jehovah's Witness: "He was a spirit person, just as "God is a Spirit"

Mormons (Latter-day Saints): they consider every person divine in origin, nature, and potential.

Christian Science: "The spiritual Christ was infallible; Jesus, as material manhood, was not Christ.

Islam: for Muslims, Jesus is neither God nor the Son of God

The Basis-Vs 2-3

Incarnation is connected to **mission**. Jesus **flesh** validates God's love for a fallen, broken world. Incarnation is also connected to **discipleship**. We are called to be transformed in our flesh by means of placing our bodies in the disciplines of **holiness**.

But I discipline my **body** and keep it under control [1 Corinthians 9:27a](#)

The Basis-Vs 2-3

This High Priest of ours understands our **weaknesses**, for he faced all of the same **testings** we do, yet he did not sin. [Hebrews 4:15](#)

The Evidence-4-6

But you **belong** to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world. Those people **belong** to this world, so they speak from the world's viewpoint, and the world listens to them. 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. [Vs 4-6](#)

John starts with a **test**, shows the **true** Christ (in the flesh) but ultimately brings us to his true "north", **belonging**.

"**I belong**—body and soul, in life and in death—not to myself but to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ." **Heidelberg Catechism**

Belonging is our **primary** human need. Beyond food and shelter, nothing promotes human **flourishing** like having a people and place of belonging. Research confirms that income level, marriage and children, and perceived security all pale in comparison to belonging in promoting sustained happiness. **We long to belong.** **Jeremy Linneman**

My dear **children** 2:1 I am writing to you who are God's **children** 2:12
I have written to you who are God's **children** 2:14 Dear **children** 2:18
And now, dear **children** 2:28 are God's **children** 2:29
for he calls us his **children** 3:1a we are God's **children** 3:1b
we are already God's **children** 3:2 Dear **children** 3:7
they are **children** of God 3:9b been born into God's **family** 3:9a
So now we can tell who are **children** of God
and who are **children** of the devil 3:10a does not **belong** to God. 3:10b
dear **brothers** and **sisters** 3:13, 14, 15, 16, 17 Dear **children** 3:18

Family of God

Transformation

Test-We are what we believe

Basis-Centres around the authentic Jesus

Evidence-Nothing will separate us from God

Who do you **belong** to?

What makes you **question** this?

I am **yours**; rescue me! [Psalm 119:94a](#)

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So let's not get **tired** of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing **if we don't give up**. Therefore, whenever we have the **opportunity**, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith. [Galatians 6:9-10](#)