

Daily Bible Study Commentary by Pastor Steve

We're excited to have you digging deeper into the Word. The best way to use this study guide is to read the Bible verse(s) first, then Pastor Steve's commentary. God bless you.

John 8:34-35

vs34-35: Jesus immediately clarified His meaning. He said, "Truly, truly (literal: Amen, amen) I tell you that everyone doing sin is a slave of sin, but the slave does not remain in the house into the age; the son remains into the age" (literal). The "house" of which He speaks is God's household or family. The "son" is the person who has become a child of God (Jn 1:12-13). The "slave" is the person enslaved to sin and who never discovers freedom from sin, so in the end that person is removed from God's house. But Jesus promises His disciples that He will show them a truth which will set them free from all sin. For that to happen a disciple must learn to escape the appetites and impulses of their flesh, the temptations of the world and the assaults of the devil.

John 8:36

v36: Jesus concluded this teaching on freedom by saying, "If therefore the Son freed you, you will be [being] free" (literal). In other words, He will enable each disciple to live in such a way that he or she will continually be free from the control of sin. That person will have the power to escape the enslaving grip of sin, and that freedom will be with them for the rest of their life. And it will apply to every type of temptation and spiritual attack. This, by the way, is the truth Paul explains so profoundly in Romans chapters six through eight. The apostle bases his entire teaching on that subject on one central truth: As believers, we have been spiritually united with Christ in His death and raised with Him in His resurrection (Ro 8:3-11). He says it is because of Christ's death and resurrection that the children of God have been given the power of the Holy Spirit which enables them to walk free from sin. Christ's death and resurrection must therefore be the "truth" Jesus said His disciples would "know" by "remaining in His word." Those who understand this truth will discover that it contains power to free us from sin. So then an essential part of our discipleship becomes learning to walk in that freedom.

John 8:37

v37: Many in the crowd believed in Jesus, including some of the religious leaders. But others didn't, and even though John doesn't comment on this, apparently those who didn't believe in Jesus reacted to that moment by growing even more determined to kill Him. Knowing this, Jesus exposed the reason for their hatred by saying, "I know that you are a seed of Abraham, but you seek to kill Me because My word finds no place [for itself] in you" (literal). In effect He told them they were so full of pride and hatred that the truth He was preaching could find no entry into their hearts. There was no place left for humility, repentance or even an honest discussion. So while some of the leaders believed, others thought of murder.

John 8:38-39

v38: Then Jesus explained that the reason they reacted to Him so violently was because they had been recruited into an ancient spiritual battle. They were being controlled by the devil (Satan), and the devil had always hated God (v44). It was not really Jesus they hated; it was the Father who sent Him. And the reason they hated the Father was because they too had a "father," but their father wasn't God. At that point in the discussion He had not yet openly identified their spiritual father, which made it possible for them to misunderstand Him. **v39:** They replied, "Our father is Abraham," and by saying this they were probably thinking of themselves as the rightful recipients of the blessings promised to Abraham, not simply affirming that they were his physical descendants. Jesus responded to their claim with a challenge: "If you are children of Abraham, do the works of Abraham" (literal). If they truly looked to Abraham as their example, then they should respond to the truth He was presenting to them with the same humility and faith as Abraham had done.

John 8:40

v40: Then Jesus said this: "But now you seek to kill Me, a man who has spoken the truth to you which I heard from (beside; in the presence of) God; this Abraham did not do" (literal). His words imply that He had personally spoken to Abraham. If we look back at the life of Abraham we soon discover that God spoke to Abraham on numerous occasions, but on one occasion (Ge 18:1-33) a Person appearing as a man but whom Moses repeatedly identifies as "Yahweh," and whom Abraham addresses as "the Judge of all the earth" (Ge 18:25), came to Abraham's camp at Hebron. That Person, accompanied by two angels, ate a meal and spoke to both Abraham and Sarah. He promised them a child, but He also brought troubling news. He would destroy the city where their nephew, Lot, lived. Abraham bargained with God in an attempt to save Sodom, but he received the warning respectfully. By saying that Abraham didn't reject Him when He spoke to him, Jesus may be indicating that He, in His pre-incarnate state, was that Person, "Yahweh," who visited Abraham's camp. Taken literally, Jesus' words here mean that as the Son of God, Jesus was active in the Old Testament. And that is exactly what John declares in the opening portion of this gospel (Jn 1:1-3, 10, 15, 18).

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John 8:41

v41: Jesus said to them, "You do the works of your father" (literal), and by now they realized He was saying that their spiritual father was the devil. So they defended themselves by pointing to the fact that they were the descendants of an unbroken family line going all the way back to Abraham. At no point in the past did their ancestors marry Gentiles (Ezr 9:1-4; 10:10-11). In their minds they meant the blessings promised to Abraham and his "seed" belonged to them. They were the rightful heirs of his covenant (Ge 12:1-3). That meant God was a "Father" to them, so they replied, "We have one father, God" (literal).

John 8:42

v42: What Jesus said in reply is very important. He made a distinction between people who are genetically descended from Abraham and those who are truly his spiritual descendants. Paul makes this same distinction: "For they are not all Israel who are [descended] from Israel; nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants" (Ro 9:6-7). He defines the true children of Abraham as those who have the same faith in God that he had. v42 (continued): To His opponents who refused to believe the truth He was proclaiming, to them Jesus said, "If in fact] God were your Father, you would have loved Me, for I came forth from (out of) God, for I have not come from Myself, but He sent Me" (literal). In other words if you really loved God as your Father, you would also love Me because He sent Me, and I do and say exactly what He tells Me to do and say.

John 8:43-44

vs43-44: If it were possible to confuse something Jesus said, then invariably that's how His opponents interpreted His words. And Jesus will now explain that there is a spiritual reason for this. To expose the cause of this confusion He began by asking them a question, "Why do you not understand what I am saying?" Then immediately He answered His own question. He said it was "because you cannot hear My word" (literal). Some influence was at work which prevented them from being able to understand what He was saying, and that "influence" was the devil. Satan had taken control of their minds by lying to them, but they could not claim to be innocent victims. They had fallen under Satan's control because they desired the same things he desired. Jesus said, "You wish to do the desires of your father." And what are the devil's desires? Jesus exposes two of them and says they are a fundamental part of Satan's character. The first is murder. He said, "From the beginning that one was a murderer." We have no way of knowing all that the words "from the beginning" mean, but Jesus is clearly pointing to an event in the distant past, certainly before the creation of humans. We learn that it has always been the devil's (Satan's) nature to murder whatever or whoever is alive, especially those who belong to God. Therefore nothing could be more natural than for him to want to kill Jesus. And because these opponents shared with the devil this same desire, they too wanted to kill Jesus; they had fallen under the devil's control so completely that they were no longer able to comprehend God's truth.

John 8:43-45

vs43-44 (continued): To this group of human opponents Jesus had said, "My word has no place in you" (v37). Now when describing the devil, He said something similar. He said, "And [that one] has not stood in the truth because truth is not in him" (literal). Just as there was no room in the hearts of these men for truth, at some point in the ancient past the devil's heart had also ceased to have room for truth. Jesus seems to be describing a process by which truth is squeezed out of a heart as wrong desires fill it. And once truth has been completely squeezed out, unless those desires change, no place is left for truth to enter. The devil lies because the truth is not in him; and the truth is not in him because he is full of wrong desires; and the most wicked desire of all is his desire to oppose God. Because God is holy and pure, the devil must lie to convince others to reject Him. Therefore he is a liar and the "father of lies." **v45:** Then Jesus made a remarkable observation. He said, "And because I say the truth, you do not believe Me" (literal). He's pointing to the fact that liars become self-deceived. They become so confused that when they hear truth they think it's a lie, and when they hear lies they think it's truth. In other words, Jesus is telling His opponents that if He had lied to them about God, they would have believed Him, but since He told them the truth, they didn't.