

# The Tests of True Salvation

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# Introduction

The New Testament book of 1<sup>st</sup> John was written to people who had professed Christ as their Lord and savior, in order that a series of tests might confirm for them that the faith they professed was a faith they genuinely possessed. Through the ages, the thirteen tests found therein have accomplished one of two results in the hearts of the reader. First, these tests have resulted in great affirmation for some, who when they have examined their lives according to each test, have concluded that they gloriously pass the test of possessing genuine salvation. However, some readers have gleaned a second result, the result of conviction and concern that, having examined their lives in light of these tests, all they seemed to have was a fraudulent profession of a Christ they never knew. The same two results are possible for you today as you read these tests from 1<sup>st</sup> John. As you read, this guide will show you whether or not you pass or fail the test of true salvation.

The best way to begin this study is with a look to the end of the book, for at the conclusion of 1<sup>st</sup> John a summary verse concisely captures the purpose of the entire book.

1 John 5:13 reads...

*These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.*

Notice that when the Apostle John wrote the letter of 1<sup>st</sup> John that he had only two goals in mind; first, that all who believe in Jesus might know that they have eternal life, and second, that those who believe in Jesus would continue in the faith. Two keywords emerge from verse 13, “know” and “continue.” John made it strikingly clear that a Christian can know that he or she is saved, and can have the confidence that they are walking in true faith. All of 1<sup>st</sup> John answers the question: What evidences are in my life that I am saved? If you pass these tests, then you can be certain that you are saved, and likewise, will have the confidence to continue in true faith. But if you do not pass these tests, regardless of your church membership, baptism, role in church life, or intellectual understandings about Jesus, then you are lost and need to be saved. If John perceived a need for such a test among those who professed to be saved, then by implication we can deduce that some who profess to be saved are, knowingly or not, counterfeits. This is precisely what Jesus referenced when He taught us the sad reality that many people who profess Christianity are indeed still lost. Jesus suggested that many people who are trusting in religion will be disappointed in eternity because they never had a relationship with Christ resulting in true salvation.

Matthew 7:21-23 reads...

*"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'*

These verses describe the life of a lost, but religious person. Jesus explained that a religious profession does not equal possession. Some who were religious in the day of Christ, going so far as to prophesy, to cast out demons, and to do wonders (wonderful works) in Christ's name were still lost. The troubling result was that some would be eternally exiled from the presence of God because Christ did not know them. Religion will fool a person into thinking that he or she is right with God, but trusting in religion to save you leads to the same Hell that is reserved for Satan and his Demons. In today's vernacular, some people may claim salvation based upon church membership, catechism, tithing, a position of authority in the church, baptism, and things like these, but Jesus emphasized that knowing Him as Lord and Savior was the way to salvation, not religion. What every man needs is not religion, but to be born again...saved by a personal relationship with Christ. As you read through these thirteen tests of salvation, ask yourself the honest question...do I pass or fail the tests of true salvation?

# Test Number One:

## Repentance and Penitent Living

1<sup>st</sup> John 1:5-10 reads:

*This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.*

God's nature is one of light, not darkness. These terms are metaphors that refer to God's holiness. Indeed, there is no unrighteousness in Him. God is perfectly righteous, or to rephrase, God has a perfect nature of light free from any evil, or darkness. When a person is saved, they too become a person of righteousness. God changes us so that our desires for evil things become sources of misery in our lives. If a truly saved person stumbles into dark living, the Holy Spirit convicts and disciplines that one so that he or she will return to right living. In this way, Christ works in us to produce righteousness in us. We become people who live in the light, just as God is light.

By working backwards through this passage, we learn four critical truths. First, everyone is a sinner. To claim a sinless nature is to accuse God of being a liar. Second, if we believe that we are not guilty of sin, then we are deceiving ourselves. Certainly, living with a self-perception of deceit has fatal consequences. Third, God cleanses and forgives us when we confess our sins to Him. Fourth, confession and repentance are the keys to fellowship with God and with other believers.

Perhaps one of the most avoided topics in evangelistic presentations today is the topic of repentance. Nonetheless, repentance is critical to the validity of one's salvation experience and is the co-ingredient of faith in Christ to save that produces genuine salvation. If we profess that we are saved, but there is no repentance of our sins or change in our behavior, the Bible indicates that we are lying about being saved. A person can have a church experience like baptism or catechism, but unless there is repentance from sins, the Bible teaches that a person cannot be truly saved. To repent means, to change one's mind about sin; to turn away from our sins and toward faith in Christ and right living. Notice that this passage speaks of two kinds of walks...a walk in darkness and a walk in light. When a true Christian sins, he keeps a short sin account with God. A Christian who sins quickly confesses that darkness, desires to leave the darkness, takes steps to shine light on the darkness, and through confession recommits himself to walking in the light of Christ. By contrast, those who do not know Jesus can easily and without conviction continue to walk in darkness. Since such a one has not been truly regenerated, the old nature is content to do what it has always done, and without conviction before the lord. It is impossible for a truly saved person to profess Christ, and then to take pleasure in a life that walks in darkness. Truly, the Holy Spirit does not allow a saved person to

continue on that path. With repentance and faith, come God's grace, His forgiveness, and His divine cleansing. When a true Christian sins, he calls on the blood of Jesus, confesses his sins quickly to the Lord, receives God's forgiveness, and recommits with the Lord's help to turning away from sin to walk in the light.



# Test Number Two:

## Keeping the Commandments

1 John 2:3-6 reads:

*Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.*

This particular text is strikingly easy to comprehend. If a person says that he or she knows Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior, yet does not obey the commandments of God found in the Bible, that person is a liar and is lost. A saved person is an obedient person. Someone who has been saved has the desire to know what God expects of them, and desires to be obedient to the commands of Christ as revealed to man in the Bible. Anything less than this is rebellion against God. As Christ was obedient to God, so a Christian is to live obedient to Christ. A professing Christian who does not obey the book may have religion, but is not truly saved.

Think of some of the great examples of the commands of Christ. Jesus taught us to love the Lord our God with everything that we have...our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Jesus taught us to love other people as we love ourselves. Jesus taught us to pray for our enemies...to bless those who persecute and curse us. When Jesus gave the great commission to His first Disciples, a huge part of it was to teach

others to obey the commandments of the Lord. True Christians realize that while we will never be sinless like our Lord this side of eternity, that day by day we ought to take upon ourselves the mind of Christ and grow more into the image of Jesus from glory to glory. A Christian should progress daily in growing more like our Savior.

This kind of growth requires an abiding in Christ, which means that we desire to be in the Lord's presence, to let His words impact our lives, and to put into practice the things that He taught. This is precisely what it means to be a disciple. If we belong to Christ, we ought to walk as He walked. In other words, a truly saved person will hold the life of Jesus as the example for how they should live. Now it is true that while we are still living in sinful flesh that we will always battle sin, temptation, and the Devil, but a true Christian seeks to live a little more like Jesus every day. Let's avoid the danger of seeing Jesus as only an example to follow. Clearly, He is our savior. Certainly though, if there ever were a model Christian example, it was Jesus, who was wholly faithful unto the Father.

A truly saved Christian will desire to know what Christ commanded of them, and will purpose to live in obedience to those commands. If a person is disinterested in obeying the Bible, or rebellious towards Christ's commands or example, then they fail this test of being truly saved.

# Test Number Three: Love of the Brethren

1 John 2:9-11 reads:

*He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.*

1 John 3:10, 14-15 reads:

*In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.*

1 John 4:7-8 reads...

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*

These verses refer to love among the Christian brethren. It is

impossible for a truly saved person to hate another Christian brother or sister. If a person says that he or she is saved, but harbors hatred in the heart towards another of Christ's children, that person is lost, and lying about their salvation. It is inconceivable that a person who has been truly saved could harbor hatred and unforgiveness in their heart towards another person. Every truly saved Christian knows that Christ has forgiven them of so great a many sins because of His great love for us. Therefore, how can one who has been forgiven of so many offenses against the Lord, and experienced the agape love of Christ, retain hatred in their hearts for another person? In other words, our vertical relationship with God empowers us to love on a horizontal level with other Brothers and Sisters in Christ. If you are truly saved, you can't hate other Christians. Even when disagreements arise, a true Christian cannot hate another Christian, and in spite of any disagreements and disappointments, will still find an unexplainable love in our heart for the other brother or sister.

This does not mean that Christians will never disagree, or that even among believing people that there will never be times when it is appropriate to disassociate. However, when Christians are separated by discord, the appropriate response is for each party to pray for the others, and to hope for reconciliation. Since sin is always at the heart of such behaviors, Christians should pray for righteousness in each other's lives. Further, each should be moved to pity for the other, and should desire the other to be reconciled to themselves and to the Lord. Christians will certainly disagree, will sometimes have conflict with each other, will occasionally become angry over divergent points of view, but under no circumstances can a truly saved person outright hate another Christian. A truly saved person cannot burn with hatred towards another person, no matter how frustrated or angry

that one may become towards another. Any person who burns with hatred towards another of God's people is not saved, and needs a genuine encounter with Christ.

# Test Number Four: Hatred for the Entrapments of the World

1 John 2:15-17 reads:

*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*

A love for worldly entrapments is a sure sign of being lost. Three specific worldly entrapments are mentioned in these verses. First, a saved person will not be in love with the lust of the flesh. This refers to loving those things that feed the craving appetites of sin. When a person burns in their body with carnal lusts, and lives to satisfy those lusts, that person is lost. A saved person simply cannot enjoy caving in to the desires of the sinful flesh. A saved person cannot enjoy pornography, illicit sexual relationships, sexual perversions, and things like these. Of course, Christians do sometimes cave in to temptations of the flesh, but when a truly saved person falls into those fleshly sins, the Holy Spirit convicts them of the sin, disciplines them, and they quickly confess and repent of that sin. Never can a truly saved person enjoy living a lifestyle of fleshly lusts. God will not allow a truly saved person peace in their spirit about such behavior. True Christians who cave to carnal desires will be miserable until

they confess that sin and repent before the Lord.

Second, a truly saved person will not be in love with the lust of the eyes. This refers to an unyielding hunger for things we see. So many people see something attractive, covet the object, and without restraint, pursue getting things to their spiritual detriment. So many toys are calling out to people today; fancy cars, certain clothes, new electronics devices, and everything that is attractive to our eyes. Further, some people are enticed by the standing of others, their job, their house, their influence, and desire those things for themselves. A lust to have everything we see indicates a life that has not yet been fully satisfied in Christ, for a changed life stores up treasures in heaven, and devotes the rest of our life to doing God's work and will. A person who believes that having all that they see will satisfy their thirst in life is deceived. Only Jesus can satisfy man's inner most hunger.

Finally, a saved person will not be entrapped by the pride of life. Pride is the antithesis of knowing Jesus as Lord and Savior, and is best defined as having an inflated view of one's self or self worth. The cross will humble a person by clearly illuminating their sin nature. A truly saved person knows that apart from Christ, there is nothing to brag about in our lives. Humility accompanies the life of the truly saved so that he boasts in Christ alone. By contrast, people who are proud, arrogant, and trusting in their own self-merit to impress God are opposed to God. Some people take pride in their family name, their standing in the church, their wealth, their community reputation, and things like these. If a man thinks that he has something to be prideful about, he surely has not encountered the humbling reality of the cross.

The Bible calls these three entrapments worldliness, and this passage clearly teaches that anyone who loves these worldly things is lost, and God is not in him. When we truly encounter Christ He awakens our longing to know Him, He satisfies us completely, He changes our perspective to an eternal one, and He humbles us in His very presence.



# Test Number Five: Leaving the Fellowship of the Church

1 John 2:18-19, 22-23 reads:

*Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.*

*Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.*

The Antichrist mentioned in these verses is a reference to an end times earthly leader who will oppose God and profane all things holy, even leading many people astray into perdition. The Antichrist is a frequent subject in the prophetic literature of both the Old and New Testaments. His principle role is defined by the quality of denying the Son, Jesus Christ, and he is even prophesied to sit on God's throne and to claim to be God in a yet future Jewish Temple in Jerusalem that will be erected in the last days.

Look closely at these verses though. The passage teaches

that even now there are present among the church many smaller antichrists, or persons who deny that Jesus is the Christ. Let's be clear about this; anyone who denies that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of the World is lost. A saved person cannot deny that Jesus is their savior.

The amazing reality of this text is that these mini antichrists are said to have left the fellowship of the church. John noted that these antichrists "went out from us", which indicated that they were a part of the professing church before abandoning their faith and fellowship with the church. John said that their going out from among the saints was proof that they never really belonged to Christ. They may have made a profession, but they never had possession.

This text is not saying that if a Christian leaves a church and joins another one that he or she is lost, not even close. It doesn't even mean that a person who backslides or lays out of church for a season isn't a true Christian. This text refers to people who profess Jesus as their savior, who belong to the fellowship of the church, but who later apostatize, leave the fellowship of the saints, and change their mind about who Jesus is. These, who leave the church and decide against Jesus being the Christ, John says, were never truly saved to begin with. A saved person cannot be convinced that Jesus is not the Christ, and will never abandon their faith. How could a person who has known the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, answered prayers, the moving spirit of worship, the filling that comes through the reading of the Bible, empowerment to do ministry, leadership and direction of God in day to day life, the witness of miracles in the fellowship, and things like these, deny that Jesus is the Christ? It would be impossible for a person to actually disbelieve in Christ if that person had ever truly experienced the reality of a saving relationship and walk

with Christ. Therefore, any person who claims to have believed in Christ, but who has left the fellowship of the church and abandoned faith in Jesus was never really saved to begin with. That person may have been religious, but has always been lost. Such a person needs to be truly saved.

# Test Number Six: Abiding in the Gospel Anointing

1 John 2:24-27 reads:

*Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that He has promised us--eternal life. These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.*

A saved person abides in the originally delivered apostolic gospel of Jesus Christ, that Christ was crucified to save sinners, was buried, and rose from the grave victorious over sin, death, and Hell. Man is saved when by faith he receives the invitation to partake in Christ's grace. The precondition of salvation is repentance from sin, and the response to being saved is obedience to Christ's commands. Sadly, there are people who would attempt to deceive professing Christians into believing an addition or subtraction to the original eternal gospel. Many counterfeits exist today; salvation by works, by church membership, by baptism, confirmation classes, by taking communion, allegiance to a prophet, and things like these. Nonetheless, the gospel of Christ is an unchanging truth that will never be updated by any preacher, prophet, movement, church, or televangelist. Additions or

subtractions to the apostolic gospel are erroneous and heretical, and are Satanic attempts to deceive people into the false hope of a false faith.

Eternal life is the result of believing the word of the gospel, apart from any additional merits or measures of man. Those who are truly saved will recognize the fraudulent salvations being peddled in the world today because God will identify fraudulent ideas in their spirit as being false ones. A truly saved person will have in his or her own spirit an anointing from God that affirms the truth of the Gospel, and that dispels false doctrines about salvation. If a person lacks that anointing from the Holy Spirit so as to be led astray into false religion, that person was never truly saved to begin with. If that one had been truly saved, the Holy Spirit would have protected that one from leaving the true gospel for a counterfeit by such an anointing from God.

By way of the Holy Spirit teaching each believer these things, the Spirit of God will protect a believer from false religion. He instructs each one in his or her spirit about clinging to the true gospel, so that when apostate gospels are unveiled, the Holy Spirit in a truly saved person prohibits falling into falsehood. When a true Christian hears a false gospel, they will have an uneasy spirit...alarm bells in our soul...that are put there as warnings from the Holy Spirit.

Subtractions from the gospel are prevalent in today's world as well, particularly the subtraction of repentance. Many gospel presentations teach the need for faith in Christ to save a person, but never mention the need for man to repent of their sins. Without teaching a lost person about their sin and the need to repent, what exactly would a person think that

they are saved from? A profession of faith in Christ without repentance is a subtraction from the apostolic gospel, and therefore, a fraudulent salvation. Therefore, religious groups that teach faith while simultaneously accepting and condoning lifestyles of sin are errant, and are leading the members of such sects down a path of destruction. The church has no authority to move the markers of sin that are identified in the Bible. If the Bible says that it is sin, then its sin. Even if the culture around us embraces what the Bible says is sin, Christians stand with a greater authority and accountability than culture. As in a court of law, true salvation depends upon a person receiving the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Simply stated, salvation is repentance, followed by faith in Christ to save, evidenced by obedient living.

# Test Number Seven: The Practice of Righteousness

1 John 2:29 reads:

*If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.*

Because the Lord is righteous, those who belong to Him will live lives generally characterized by righteousness. Notice the word “practices.” A person who knows the Lord will desire to make righteous and holy living their general practice. Many Christians actually pray daily for the Lord’s help to live a holy and righteous life.

Again, this does not mean that truly saved people never sin. Truly saved people still sin because the old sinful nature is still with us. However, a truly saved person will declare war on sin, and because God is in them, will be in the process of becoming more righteous because He is righteous. Christians should be known for holy living, for giving themselves to what is clean and right. By contrast, a Christian will be putting to death the members of sin in their lives, taking their sin to the Lord for help and deliverance, and seeking to put away the old man of sin...to put on the new man daily.

Christians aren’t saved by good works, but we are saved for good works. There ought to be a visible change in a person’s life who claims to be a Christ follower. Salvation comes with the evidence of a transformed life. This verse suggests that a truly saved person has a walk that matches their talk. If the

walk and the talk are in disagreement, always trust the walk. A person demonstrates what they really believe by what they do, not what they say. Therefore, if a person says that they are a Christian, but there is not a grasping for righteousness... a desire to live a holy life, then such a one cannot be a truly saved person. If anyone lacks the desire to live rightly before God, that person is not truly saved, even if they have a form of religion.



# Test Number Eight: The Test of Self-Purification

1 John 3:3 reads:

*And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

Our desire for holiness gives way to self work. We are absolutely saved by the finished work of Jesus alone, and yet, when we meet the Lord, it takes our cooperation with the Holy Spirit to release the besetting sins that once held us in captivity. In response to a proper understanding of God's view of sin and A truly saved person doesn't overlook, excuse, or dismiss sin, but because of the great hope of salvation that we have inside of us through Jesus, we take action steps to be free from sin. Sometimes this manifests in a lifestyle change, or in deciding to leave behind a source of temptation. Other times it means committing to attend church or a small group. Often, people who meet the Lord have to take personal inventory and "clean house" to remove those things that are not in keeping with our new identity in Christ.

When a particular sin rears its head in a the life of a truly saved person, that one attacks that sin with the full power of Heaven so that the sin is defeated in their life. A truly saved person will make personal decisions in the face of sin that have the result of self-purification, or to think of it another way, cooperating with the Holy Spirit to produce holy changes. A truly saved person will desire to be pure like God, and will make life decisions that reflect that desire. The idea of running headlong into sin and

then calling not the name of Jesus for forgiveness isn't really what the Christian life is all about.

A Christian takes frequent inventory of one's life, and with sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, determine what issues of impurity are still present, so that those issues may be submerged in the full power of God for life change. Another Bible verse puts it this way...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. The Bible isn't advocating for a works based salvation. It is an art term...to render out, like an artist might do on a sketch pad. Christians ought to be erasing the lines that aren't right, and drawing new ones so that the bigger picture of our lives is living for God. If a person is nonchalant about sin, taking no responsibility to work with the Holy Spirit in promoting personal purity, then this verse indicates that such a one is lost and needs to be truly saved. The desire to be pure before God comes from God, because He lives in us when we are truly saved, and His nature is pure. The purity of God in us after salvation produces the desire in us to be pure as He is pure.

A lost person does not possess a desire for purity because the pure God is not in that person. A person who is truly saved however will take the necessary steps to promote purity in their life, even though it may come with a great cost. A lack of desire to be pure, or a lack of motivation to work towards purity is a sure sign that a person is not saved, and needs to repent, put their faith in Christ to save them, and follow that decision with obedient living.

# Test Number Nine: The Test of a Sinless Lifestyle

1 John 3:4-9 reads:

*Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him, and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.*

While a saved person is no more immune to temptation to sin than anyone else, a truly saved person will no longer live a perpetual lifestyle of sin. Elsewhere, the Bible makes it clear that even true Christians do sometimes sin, and this particular passage does not intend to indicate that if you are truly saved, you will never again commit a sin of any kind. This passage really speaks of running to sin without any restraints. When the Bible says that whoever sins has neither seen Him or knows Him, it is not saying that if a Christian sins after being saved then they aren't really saved after all. In the original language of the Bible, the idea is running to sin without restraint...making a practice of lawless living after claiming to have met Jesus. Whenever a person meets the Lord, the Holy Spirit indwells them. One of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is to keep us from sin, and to bring us back when we do sin through the power of conviction, which leads us to repentance. So if a person can continue running without restraint...no warnings from the Spirit, and can live in lifestyles of sin...no conviction of the Spirit which

leads to repentance, then clearly, that person does not possess the Spirit of God.

Some people claim to be saved, but persist in sinful lifestyles. Many of our gospel presentations give people the idea that salvation is saying a prayer. A preacher may ask if anyone wants to go to Heaven and if so, "repeat this prayer after me." Well, who wouldn't want to go to Heaven? All that I am saying is that saying a prayer because we want to go to Heaven can create a false sense of security with God if the person praying doesn't truly comprehend the gospel. Jesus never asked anyone to pray the sinner's prayer! He called them to repent, believe on the Lord, and follow. Many people who have said a prayer, who have been declared saved by a preacher, persist in deception and lostness because the true gospel of repentance from sin, faith in Christ, and a life of followership and obedience unto the Lord has never been fully explained to them. They pray a prayer, but where is the repentance...where is the saving faith...where is the obedience?

This passage makes it absolutely clear that if a person has truly been saved, that they cannot continue in lifestyles of sin because God's seed is in Him. Just like in a garden, the seed that is planted at the beginning of the season grows quickly to produce fruit that reflects the kind of seed that has been planted in the soil. In the same way, when a person is truly saved, Christ is planted in their lives, and the fruit that follows will reflect the seed of Christ living in them. For this reason a person who claims to be saved, but who continues to live in a lifestyle that is opposed to Godliness is absolutely lost. Not only is such living in opposition to the teachings of scripture, but to the teachings of the Holy Spirit living in each believer. Even if a person did not know anything about the Bible, the Holy Spirit would still purify that person, because the indwelling Spirit of God knows the moral standards of God and would direct the believer into righteous living.

This passage means that a person who is truly saved, for example, cannot continue in a lifestyle of sexual promiscuity, homosexuality, adultery, criminal behavior, murders, and things like these. Christ purifies us from those things, through conviction of sins, so that each truly saved person abandons sinful lifestyles for righteous ones. Simply put, God does not allow a truly saved person to abide in sin, but calls us to abide in Christ. A person who can live a sinful lifestyle, who has no conviction from God over it, who is not miserable in a sinful lifestyle, who is happy in lifestyles and patterns of sin is absolutely lost, in spite of any prior religious encounters. A truly saved person will come out from sinful lifestyles, and must do so, because God causes it to be so in his or her life.

Finally, understand that even in these days of popularized diversity and acceptance of alternative lifestyles, that God's standards are the same for everyone. The idea that what is right for you may not be right for me, and conversely, what is wrong for you may not be wrong for me is absurd. A truly saved person will determine what God has condemned and what God has endorsed by recognizing the Bible as the authority from God regarding right and wrong. God's Word is the standard, and only that, because God's Word reflects God's immutable character. A truly saved person makes their life conform to the Bible, and will never twist the Bible to make it conform to their twisted life.

# Test Number Ten: The Test of an Un-condemned Heart

1 John 3:19-21 reads...

*And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.*

A truly saved person has peace in their heart regarding one's standing before God. The heart of a person will either have confidence before the Lord, or will have concern before the Lord. When a truly saved person sits in church, for example, and hears the gospel message that Christ died for sinners, was buried, and rose on the third day, that salvation comes through repentance and faith followed by obedience, that person has confidence in their heart that the issue of salvation has already been settled. By contrast though, a person who is not saved will lack the confidence in their heart that they have truly been saved. In the lost person's heart, the gospel message elicits all sorts of thoughts in a person's mind that are driven by uncertainty and a lack of confidence. Thoughts such as "I am ok...I said a sinner's prayer", or "I am already saved and do not need to be concerned about this invitation to receive Christ", or "I think I am alright in this department" are all indicators that the heart of a person is not confident towards the Lord about his or her salvation.

When a person is truly saved, the heart knows that the person is truly saved. A truly saved heart will not need convincing by the mind again and again that he or she is truly saved. A truly saved person will have no need of an internal campaign to convince themselves that they are saved when the gospel invitation is given. Thoughts like the ones mentioned here are certain

indicators that the mind is trying to deceive the true knowledge of the heart in order that a person may justify and rationalize indecision at the call of the Spirit of God.

If the mind and the heart disagree in this regard, trust the heart. When a saved person hears the gospel message, that person's confidence increases towards the Lord because the gospel message solidifies the means to salvation again in their heart. A lost person though will try to fall back on some form of religious experience as the confidence of their salvation. Some look to a time when they walked a church aisle, or when they said a sinner's prayer, were baptized, joined a Sunday school class, became a member of the local church, and things like these. None of these things though are mentioned in scripture as means of confidence that a person is truly saved. In fact, the sinner's prayer, church membership, and Sunday school are not even mentioned in the Bible. What gives a person confidence in the heart before God is the reality of a time when they repented of their sins, put their total faith and trust in Christ to save them by His grace, and purposed to live a life obedient to Christ's commandments. If we have followed these steps to salvation, then we have confidence in our hearts that we are truly saved. But if all we have is a religious experience, and not a viable relationship with Jesus Christ, then we lack confidence that we are right with God. In such a case, the gospel message provokes fear, doubt, turmoil, and conflict between the mind and the heart.

If you have to convince yourself anew that you are truly saved each time you hear the gospel, then chances are you are not truly saved. If you must talk your heart into believing that you are truly saved, then chances are you aren't. The heart of a truly saved person has confidence that he or she is truly saved, and there is no need for the mind to enter into combat against the heart in order to defeat a lack of confidence in the heart. The heart of a truly saved person does not condemn one as lost, but confidently affirms a person as being truly saved, when a person is truly saved.

# Test Number Eleven: The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

1 John 3:24b reads...

*And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.*

The Bible is clear in a number of texts that from the moment of salvation the Holy Spirit enters into the life of a truly saved person to assist and empower the believer in Godly living. The Holy Spirit is manifest in a truly saved person's life by several means. First, the Holy Spirit disciplines a saved person when they sin. The purpose of His discipline is that we should repent of our sins and turn back to right living. Second, the Holy Spirit guides and leads truly saved people into truth. He gives the believer discernment regarding truth and error, so that we have help in determining what is right and wrong in various encounters of life. Third, the Holy Spirit leads a truly saved person to do things that an unsaved person would not do. For example, He will lead a truly saved person to share their faith with particular people at particular times, or to invite a person to church. An unsaved person does not have the impulse to share their faith because the Holy Spirit is not in them to lead such an impulse. Fourth, the Holy Spirit equips a truly saved person for ministry. He provides confidence that we can do things we otherwise could not do because God is with us and in us. Additionally, He calls us into particular areas of Christian service in the church and community, and provides the equipping we need to fulfill our call. Fifth, the Holy Spirit gifts each believer with a unique and specific spiritual gift. A spiritual gift is not merely a learned talent, but a unique previously unknown ability manifest in us by the person of God for the specific purpose of performing a unique personal ministry. Sixth, the Holy Spirit is a well of replenishment who indwells the believer and fills the believer with an overflowing freshness in



times of worship, prayer, study of the Bible, and other Christian disciplines. Seventh, the Holy Spirit works in a truly saved person towards the goal of sanctification. A person's worldview, conduct, and speech will consistently change to more aptly resemble the worldview, conduct, and speech of Jesus Christ. These changes are called the "fruits" of the Spirit.

A lost person does not experience any of these things. For a lost person, sin brings no conviction or discipline from the Lord because that person does not have the Holy Spirit living in him or her. If a person can sin without God's discipline or conviction in their heart, then that is a strong indication that the Holy Spirit is not in their heart. Additionally, a lost person is more easily lead into falsehood and error, because the absence of the Holy Spirit leaves a lost person to his or her own sense of judgment about truth and error alone, apart from the leadership of the Spirit. Further, a lost person has no experiences of God leading them to do anything. The Holy Spirit doesn't lead them to do the works of God because He isn't living in them. Next, a lost person lacks any evidence of new power or abilities from the Lord. There is no equipping in their lives to serve the Lord, and thus, a total lack of confidence about serving the Lord because the Holy Spirit is not in them. Furthermore, a lost person has no spiritual gifts, and thus, will have no part of a personal ministry from the Lord. The absence of a spiritual gift prevents a lost person from being effective in spiritual endeavors, and they learn quickly that they cannot serve the Lord in a spiritual sense, but only in the flesh. A lost person can sit in church services, sing worship songs, but never has an experience of replenishment from the Holy Spirit because singing and church attendance can regenerate no one. There is never an overflowing freshness in their life from the Holy Spirit, because a lost person is, spiritually speaking, still dead inside and void of the new life in Christ. There is no spiritual refreshing in the life of a person who has not passed from death into life. Finally, a lost person has no evidence of transformation or sanctification in his or her life. To be sure, a lost person can self-improve to a degree if he or she consistently emulates the company of the

truly saved, but such improvements are merely an external fraud, a façade, a put on, a counterfeit. It isn't difficult to learn theological words, to fabricate a character role to play on Sundays, to put on a show so that others might think you are truly saved, but a truly saved person will experience God changing them, not just self-improvement, and will not have to fake it. The Holy Spirit at work in the life of a truly saved person will drastically change the way a person thinks, behaves, and speaks. If these marks of the Holy Spirit are missing from your life, you are likely lost and need to be truly saved.

# Test Number Twelve: Confession of Jesus Christ

1 John 4:2-3 reads...

*By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.*

1 John 4:15 reads...

*Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in Him and he in God.*

Salvation depends upon a proper view of who Jesus is. Many falsehoods and errors are prevalent in our world today about Jesus. Some people are adamant that Jesus was a great teacher, but not the Christ. Others claim that Jesus was one in a line of prophets, but not the Christ. Still some claim that Jesus was a popular moral teacher, but only a man like you and me. Another popular view is that Jesus was a man who achieved the rank and stature of a god by his personal merits. Each of these views is a compromise or distortion of the true revelation of Jesus Christ in the Bible.

The word Christ simply means “deliverer.” A truly saved person will confess that Jesus is the one in whom they are trusting to deliver them from sin, death, and Hell. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who existed with God from eternity past, without beginning, just as the case with the Father. His beginning was not at the time of His birth to Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem. That event only marked His coming to Earth to temporarily dwell in human flesh. This He did so that

He could redeem human beings from their sins. He lived a perfect and sinless life, confirmed His deity by miracles, signs, and wonders, died in the place of sinners on a cross, was buried, rose again three days later victorious over sin, death, and Hell, and ascended to Heaven where He now sits at the right hand of the Father. Jesus Christ stated while here on the earth that He had come to save sinners from the penalty of sin, and that anyone who would repent of their sins, put their faith in Christ to save them, would be saved. The proper response to being truly saved is to purpose, with God's help, to live a life obedient to Christ's commandments. This is the heart of the Christian message. Without a proper understanding and belief that Jesus came to save sinners from the penalties of sin, and that He did so by His vicarious atonement on the cross before returning to the Father in Heaven, and without embracing the idea that a person can only be saved by His grace, when we put our faith in Jesus to save us, a person cannot be truly saved. Our confession of who Christ is matters.

A compromised or distorted profession of who Jesus is will not produce salvation in a person's life. Unless you understand and believe in the Jesus of the Bible, confessing Him as the deliverer from sin and death, to life and righteousness, you cannot be saved. It is not enough to believe that Jesus was a good man, or that He was a great moral teacher, or that He was an important religious figure in world history that should be respected. In order to be truly saved, you must confess that Jesus was God made flesh, come to Earth to save sinners, crucified at the cross in our place, resurrected to victory over sin and death, and present now with the Father. To be truly saved, you must truly understand who Jesus Christ is, and confess the Christ of the Bible.

Any person who denies the Biblical Jesus is not born of God. A person may have an intellectual belief that Jesus existed, and may have a partial belief in who He was, but salvation demands that a person accept Jesus according to the Biblical revelation, as Lord and Savior of one's life. This passage teaches that

anyone who denies the reality of the Biblical revelation of Jesus as Lord and savior of humanity, sent from God to redeem man at the cross from sins, resurrected unto victory, is lost. Further, this passage teaches that a person who denies the Biblical revelation of who Jesus Christ is has fallen prey to the spirit of the Antichrist, a Satanic spirit opposed to everything good and Godly.

Notice also that John speaks of Jesus having come in the flesh. Jesus did not merely appear to come in flesh...He was not an apparition. Jesus came bodily to the earth, was crucified bodily on the cross, and rose bodily from the grave. Just after the resurrection, Jesus invited Thomas to put his fingers into the wounds in his hands that Thomas, who doubted the bodily resurrection, would believe. If you are denying that Jesus is the Christ, the redeemer of sinful humanity, as the Bible reveals Him to be, the Bible indicates that you are not truly saved.

# Test Number Thirteen: Exclusive Trust in Christ to Save Us

1 John 5:10-12 reads...

*He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given His Son. And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

Salvation is the result of repentance of sins, faith in Christ Jesus to save us, followed by obedience to His commandments. The Bible is clear that salvation is in Christ alone, apart from any merits of man. This passage states that we must believe in Christ, and whoever believes has eternal life. By contrast, anyone who does not believe does not have eternal life. But what does it mean to believe? Believing in Christ is more than having a mere intellectual understanding about who Jesus is. In the Bible, the word “believe” means that man must put his total faith, hope, and trust in Christ to save us. Believing in Christ is like believing that a parachute will open when skydiving. We jump from the plane on faith, and if the parachute does not open, we are done for. We have all of our hope, faith, and trust in the ripcord, and if the ripcord does not work, we are done for. To believe in Christ means that we put all of our faith, hope, and trust in Jesus Christ to save us from our sins. If Jesus is not the Christ, we have no other hope of salvation.

Many fraudulent variations of this clear Biblical principle abound in our world today. Any addition or subtraction from faith alone to save us is heresy. Some false teachers insist that faith is not enough to save a person, but in addition to faith in Christ a person must also have, good works, baptism, speaking in

tongues, church membership, religious observances, adherence to Old Testament law, and things like these. The Bible is clear however that Christ alone saves us.

Some people are trusting in fraudulent things for salvation apart from Christ. Some people for example believe that God's grace comes through the church, and that if they are not a member of a specific religious sect or denomination, that salvation is unavailable to them. Others have been taught that through things like baptism, confession of sins, taking the Lord's Supper, tithing, missionary service, and the like, that God's grace is dispensed to them. If you are trusting in any of these things to save you, then you are going to be disappointed in eternity. The Bible is clear that eternal life is the result of a relationship with Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and in Him alone. We must trust fully in Christ alone to be saved.

In addition to these views, many people today are attempting to blend Jesus with other faiths. One religious leader in the national spotlight captured the attention of the church world when she claimed to be an Episcopalian Muslim pastor. Others are claiming that Jesus is one of multiple ways to get to Heaven. These false teachings are destructive to the church and to souls. The Bible is clear in passages like John 14:6, and Acts 4:12 that salvation is exclusive to Jesus Christ. Only a relationship with Jesus Christ can save you. The church can't do it, Mohammed can't do it, meditation can't do it, a priest can't do it, infant baptism can't do it, being a good person can't do it, giving one to charity can't do it, and anything else man tries to add to faith in Christ cannot save us. If you are trusting in another so called god, or in your church membership, baptism, good works, or anything other than Jesus Christ to save you, you are lost and need to be truly saved.

A truly saved person is trusting in nothing more than Jesus Christ crucified, buried, and resurrected to save them, and a truly saved person knows that putting one's faith, hope, and trust in Jesus Christ to save them is the only way to receive the

free gift of God's grace. Your soul and eternity rests on this principle: whoever has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son does not have life.



# Did You Pass the Test?

These thirteen tests of salvation comprise a pass or fail examination of your salvation. If you are truly saved, then you will have passed each of these tests. If you failed some of these, then you should examine yourself to be sure that you are truly in the faith. God's plan of salvation is simple to understand, and by following the direction of the scriptures below, you can have the assurance that you are truly saved. If God is tugging at your heart as you read through these thirteen tests of true salvation leading you to make a response of repentance and faith, would you please take a moment to settle this issue with God once and for all? Consider these scriptures that will lead you to a true saving faith in Jesus Christ.

*Romans 3:23-For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

*Romans 6:23-For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*Romans 5:8-But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

*Acts 4:12-Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under Heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*

*Luke 17:3-I tell you...unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.*

*John 1:12-But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.*

*John 3:36-He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.*

You can be truly saved now by confessing your sins to Christ, repenting of those sins, putting your faith in Jesus Christ to save you, and purposing to live obedient to His commandments, with God's help, from this point forward.

If you have become a truly saved person by reading this booklet, let me encourage you to speak with your Pastor as soon as possible so that he may advise you regarding the next steps in your new Christian faith. If you do not have a church home, we would be glad to assist you in finding one. Please contact us and we will make every effort to connect you with a God loving and Bible teaching church.

Thank you for taking the time to read this booklet. Do you know someone who might also benefit from reading this booklet? If so, please feel free to share it with your family and friends.