

How Do You Know You're a Christian

Scripture: 1 John 2:3-11

Code: 2105

INTRODUCTION

A. The Definition

First John 2:3-11 tells us how we can know we are Christians. If you were to conduct a man-on-the-street interview, asking people what it means to be a Christian, you would probably get several different answers. There are many opinions of what a Christian is. The basic definition is one who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The one who does not believe is not a Christian. Jesus stated that definition very simply when He said, "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18).

B. The Difficulties

1. The appearance of salvation

The issue of determining who is a Christian becomes difficult when considering people who claim to believe. Many who profess to believe in Christ may act like Christians to a certain degree, but turn out to be impostors or are simply misinformed about the nature of salvation. Either way, it becomes obvious that they did not really know the truth. For example, 1 John 2:19 identifies some people who claimed to be Christians but eventually left the fellowship: "They were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." One way you can identify false Christians (who are called "tares" in Matt. 13:38) is when they abandon Christianity. But while they're interacting with true believers, it is difficult to tell them apart.

2. The assurance of salvation

A further difficulty comes in the lives of people who wonder if they are saved. Many of them have doubts and need evidence. Unfortunately, some of them who aren't Christians have wrongly been told that their superficial beliefs are sufficient to save them, so they assume that they're Christians when they really aren't. In 2 Peter 1:9-10, Peter explains how a believer can be assured of his salvation: "He that lacketh [the qualities of spiritual maturity] is blind and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten

that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." Peter was not talking about the loss of salvation, but the assurance of salvation. There are certain Christians who can't remember that they have been saved. They lack the confidence of knowing they're saved because they lack faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love (vv. 5-7). The manifestation of godly works in our lives assures us that something has transformed us. If we don't see those things, we may question whether any change took place. Therefore, Peter encourages us to make sure those qualities are in our lives so we can have the security of knowing we're saved.

How do you know you're really a Christian? That is a crucial question. The Scriptures give several elements of assurance that can show us we're truly saved. They can be categorized under the topics of objective assurance and subjective assurance.

a) Objective assurance

Objective assurance comes from outside us; it is based on the godly things the Spirit produces in our lives. That's what Peter was talking about in 2 Peter 1. If you see those things in your life, it will confirm in your mind that you're truly saved.

b) Subjective assurance

Subjective assurance is based on something within us, namely, the witness of the Spirit. Whereas the former type of assurance is visible, the latter is invisible. Our internal assurance is described in several passages in the New Testament.

(1) 2 Corinthians 1:12--Paul says, "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, we have behaved ourselves in the world." Paul was saying, "I know what's going on in my life because of the testimony of my conscience. Something rings true in my conscience that my behavior is pleasing to God."

(2) 1 John 5:10--"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." That indwelling witness who bears testimony to Christ is the Holy Spirit. He attests to the validity of a believer's salvation.

(3) Romans 8:14-16--"As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage [legalism] again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (vv. 14-15). "Abba" is the equivalent to daddy, a very endearing term. It implies that we can relate to God like a child talks to his loving father. Verse 16 tells us that the indwelling Spirit gives us the confidence to enter God's presence: "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." The internal witness of the Spirit in our lives is of little

help to others because no one can read our hearts. But that kind of confirmation is helpful to us.

The apostle John deals with objective assurance in 1 John 2. The visible proof to the individual, the church, and the world that you are a Christian is the attitudes and actions that are produced by the Holy Spirit in your life. When anyone tells me they have doubts about their Christianity, the first questions I usually ask are: Have you applied yourself to godliness? Are you reading the Word? Are you spending time in prayer? Are you learning the Word of God? Are you desiring to draw near to God and to obediently follow the Holy Spirit? If you can answer yes to those questions, you will have confirmation that you're a believer because the fruits of salvation are visible in your life. That is the theme of 1 John 2:3-11. He provides two tests by which we can evaluate the claims of a person who professes to be a Christian.

Two Tests That Tell the Truth

1. The doctrinal test

a) Do you confess Christ?

A person's beliefs about Christ will validate his claim to be a Christian. The Greek word translated "confess" means "to say the same thing." The first part of the doctrinal test asks about the person in question: Does he say the same thing about Christ that God says in the Bible? If he says, "I'm a Christian, but I don't believe Christ is God," then he's not saying the same thing about Christ that God said. He is not confessing Christ.

(1) 1 John 2:22-23--"Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father; He that confesseth the Son hath the Father also."

(2) 1 John 4:2--"By this know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God."

(3) 1 John 5:1--"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God."

Being truly saved is a matter of confessing or agreeing that Jesus is the Christ.

b) Do you confess your sin?

A Christian says the same thing about his sin that God says. If someone comes along and tells me he's a Christian but doesn't acknowledge his sin, I don't believe him.

(1) 1 John 1:6, 8--"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

(2) 1 John 1:9-10--Verse 9 tells us that if we are confessing sin, then we are the ones being forgiven--we are the true Christians. Verse 10 says, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

2. The moral test

a) Do you obey God's Word?

First John 2:3 says, "By this we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments."

b) Do you love others?

First John 2:10 says, "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light."

The issue in 1 John 2:3-11 is the objective moral test of true Christianity: obedience and love. The Christians John wrote to were being influenced by false teachers or "antichrists," according to 1 John 2:18. Therefore, John exhorts his readers to "test the spirits" (4:1), rather than naively believe their claims. If they could see obedience and love in the lives of the teachers, those qualities would attest to their spiritual life.

LESSON

I. THE PRINCIPLE (vv. 3-5)

A. The Premise of Obedience (v. 3)

"And by this do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments."

1. The assurance of knowing

In chapter 1, phrases the "walk in the light" and "have fellowship one with another" (v. 7) are synonymous with the phrase "know him" in verse 3 of chapter 2. The Greek verb translated "know" is *ginosko*. Emphasizing its present and perfect-tense forms, the verse could be translated, "By this are we continually knowing that we have already come to know Him." Although a Christian has already come to know Christ, he needs to have confidence that his knowledge of Christ has resulted in salvation. John says we can know Christ has saved us "if we keep his commandments." Obedience is

one way of knowing you're a Christian. If a person claims to be a Christian, but is disobedient to God throughout his life, the apostle John says he's "a liar, and the truth is not in him" (v. 4). The way to be assured that we truly know Him as a child knows his father is by keeping His commandments. Obedience results in assurance. Christians who have doubts usually are involved in sin because sin breeds doubt.

2. The analysis of keeping

a) The explanation of keeping

The Greek word translated "keep" conveys the idea of a watchful, observant obedience. It is not an obedience that is the result of external pressure, which might cause someone to say, "I have to do this, because I'm afraid if I don't, I'll get whacked by the divine hammer!" The term is more than just the act of obeying the commands. It is a holy desire to obey God because you love Him. Rather than being a negative fear, obedience is inspired by love to become your heart's greatest desire. You are to keep Christ's commands in the spirit of obedience. Alford's Greek Testament defines "keep" as "guarding, as some precious thing" (Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament*, vol. 4 [Chicago: Moody Press, 1968], p. 434). The Christian can know that he knows God when the great desire of his heart is to guard his obedience. The present tense implies that we are to continually keep His commandments. The habitual moment-by-moment safeguarding of our obedience to the Word of God is a sign of our salvation. When people claim to be Christians and then live any way they want in complete disregard of God's command, they undermine their claim.

For "commandments," the apostle did not use the Greek word *nomos*, which refers to the law of Moses, but the word *entole*, which refers to the precepts of Christ. We are to keep the precepts of Christ, who is the antecedent of the pronoun "his" in verse 3. We can know a Christian because he keeps the precepts of Christ, not because he subscribes to the law of Moses. John did not say, "By this do we know that we know him, if we keep the law of Moses." But if we desire to obey and honor the precepts of Christ, we prove that we have come to a saving knowledge of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. When a person becomes a Christian, he acknowledges Jesus Christ as Lord. If His authority is gladly received, then obedience is a foregone conclusion.

b) The extent of keeping

Who can continue to keep the commandments? Since it is the ones who continue to keep His commandments who know God (v. 3), and Christians are the ones who know God (v. 13), then it follows that Christians are the only ones who can keep His commandments. The New Testament says that the unregenerate are the "children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2; KJV). You don't need a lecture on human nature to understand that people are disobedient. Just look at your kids--we all enter life that way. Conversely, 1 Peter 1:14 identifies the regenerate "as obedient children." If you're

not obedient, then you're not a Christian.

c) The examples of keeping

If you try to be obedient, you may wonder if you obey enough. Can a Christian's life ever be characterized by absolute obedience? You must understand the distinction between legal obedience and gracious obedience. Gracious obedience pertains to God's desires for us to exhibit a loving and sincere spirit of obedience. Although it is marked by defects, it is still accepted by God and its blemishes are blotted out by the blood of Jesus Christ. The obedience that our Lord is after is not legal obedience qualified by law, but gracious obedience qualified by love. It's not based on fear; it's based on friendship.

(1) John 14--Before He ascended into heaven, Jesus might have said, "Now, men, I'm leaving. One false move in My absence and you're going to get it!" If He had, they might have spent the rest of their lives in spiritual apoplexy. What He actually said was, "If ye love me keep my commandments" (v. 15). Obeying the Lord is not connected with law or fear; it is connected with love. Verses 21 and 23 say, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me If a man love me, he will keep my words."

(2) John 15--"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.... Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatever I command you" (vv. 10, 13-14).

(3) Psalm 116--The psalmist expressed the spirit of obedience when he said, "What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?" (v. 12). God is not expecting absolute perfection. As a Christian, you don't need to live under the fear that if you ever do something wrong, you're going to be severely punished and lose your salvation. God is looking for a spirit of obedience. True Christians have a desire to submit to Jesus Christ even though they can't always make that desire come to pass. God understands that.

B. The Pretense of Faith (v. 4)

"He that saith, I know him [Christ], and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

1. Explained

The word "truth" refers to Christ. The person who doesn't obey Christ's commands doesn't have Christ or His truth in his heart. John's point here is that Christians obey; non-Christians do not. Nonbelievers do not submit to the lordship of Christ; they fulfill their own desires at their own pace.

John says they may claim to know Him, but if they do not keep His commandments, they are liars.

2. Expressed

a) Titus 1:16--"They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient." False believers fail the moral test. They make a profession of faith, but their lives don't support it. Disobedience refutes the validity of such claims.

b) Luke 6:46--Jesus said to the multitudes, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

c) Matthew 7:22-23--There are going to be many people at the great white throne judgment (Rev. 19:11-15) who will say, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out demons? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will [Jesus] profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me."

3. Exposed

Any claim to know Christ that is not accompanied by a spirit of gracious obedience is a lie. John exposes the vain pretenses of Gnostics or anyone else who makes this claim. He also gives a fatal blow to antinomianism, which is an extreme abuse of grace that sets all commandments aside because Christ already paid the penalty of sin. But John says a true Christian desires to obey Christ. Many claim to know God but I doubt they really do. I'm reminded of a New York nightclub owner who said, "I wouldn't be where I am today if it weren't for the Big Man upstairs." All kinds of people claim to know God--but proving it is something else.

C. The Perfection in Love (v. 5)

"But whosoever keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; by this know we that we are in him."

The word "whosoever" is important because it refutes the Gnostic heresy that claimed spiritual union with God was just for the elite. It doesn't restrict the ability to keep the Word to a select few. The verb "keepeth" implies a continual guarding of the Word. Whoever's life is characterized by a spirit of gracious obedience has the love of God perfected in him. "The love of God," if understood to be an objective genitive in the Greek text, refers to our love for God, which is perfected in obedience. We make our love for God obvious by keeping His commandments.

1. Stated

Our love for God is made visible by our obedience. True love for God is not sentiment or some mystical experience. It is moral obedience. John said this about our love for God and His love for us: "No man has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.... And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:12, 16). Love is made manifest in our obedience and is evidence that we are saved.

2. Illustrated

There was a man whose profession was religion. He was a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin and his name was Saul, better known to us as Paul. He became very indignant because there was a new heresy around by the name of Christianity. Its central doctrine was that Jesus Christ--apparently a criminal who was crucified a few years before--was alive. Paul approved the stoning of Stephen, the first Christian martyr. From then on, he decided to make it his business to imprison and kill Christians "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord" (Acts 9:1).

One day, while he was on his way to Damascus with special papers from the religious leaders of Jerusalem giving him the right to incarcerate and persecute Christians, God struck him flat on his face. Saul of Tarsus said, "Who art Thou, Lord?" (Acts 9:5). He recognized that whoever spoke was clearly superior to him. After Christ revealed Himself to Saul, the humbled persecutor said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (v. 6). There is no such thing as Christianity without obedience. The very first thing Paul thought of when he submitted to the lordship of Christ was what he should do. Later in Romans 7, he stated that in his heart he delighted in the law of God (v. 22).

II. THE PATTERN (v. 6)

"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."

The Bible often gives us a principle and then a pattern of someone we can follow. The apostle Paul told the Corinthians to follow him because he was following Christ (1 Cor. 11:1).

A. Identified

Whether John says "abiding in him," "knowing him," "walking in the light," or "being in the fellowship," he is referring to salvation. If we say we are Christians, we ought to be patterning ourselves after Christ. Verse 6 doesn't say we will be exactly like Him, but it does say we ought to be. We owe that much to Him. The word "abideth" is a Johannine term used repeatedly in John 15, where the apostle tells us that the true branch abides in the vine. In other words, true Christians remain in vital, living relationship to Christ. We ought to live like He lived. As a Christian who shares Christ's eternal life,

you can live like Christ because the same Holy Spirit that empowered Him lives in you.

B. Illustrated

1. In the humility of Christ

a) The precept

Philippians 2:2 says, "Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded." Paul wanted the Philippians to quit arguing and have "the same love, being of one accord, of one mind" (v. 2). In verses 3-4, he told them they could do that by being humble: "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." Humility breeds love. Now he could have stopped there with the principle, but he went a step further to give his readers a pattern.

b) The pattern

Verses 5-8 say, "Let [the same] mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself." Look at the pattern of Jesus. Never did anyone of such high position stoop to such a low position. Jesus is the greatest illustration of humility there ever was.

2. In the submission of Christ

John says that if you claim to be a Christian, you ought to live like Jesus lived. The word "walk" refers to one's manner of life. Your manner of life ought to be Christlike. That requires obedience to God's standards. Did you know that Christ was obedient? He obeyed the Mosaic Law to the very letter. He obeyed the divine stipulations of His messiahship. John's gospel emphasizes Christ's obedience to the Father's will.

a) John 6:38--Jesus said, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will but the will of him that sent me."

b) John 8:29--"He that sent me is with me. The Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him."

c) John 10:18--"No man taketh [my life] from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

d) John 14:31--"That the world may know that I love the Father, and, as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." Jesus' submissive obedience is the pattern we are to trace our lives upon. The kind of obedience that characterized Christ is to be true of us. Do you think it was burdensome for Jesus to obey the Father? Not at all!

III. THE PRECEPT (vv. 7-11)

John gave us a general principle of obedience and then gives us the specific precept of loving others in verses 7 through 11. The primary issue of the moral test is obeying the command to love. You may wonder what's so important about loving. Jesus revealed its high priority in Matthew 22:37-40 when He said, "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." If you keep the commandments of loving God and others, you don't have to worry about any of the rest. That is the essence of the Christian life. If you do that, then you can do what you want because you will have automatically fulfilled the law. Romans 13:8-10 says, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to its neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law." If you love your neighbor as yourself, you don't need a command that says not to kill your neighbor or commit adultery with your neighbor's wife. Love precludes it.

A. The Commandment (vv. 7-8)

1. An old message (v. 7)

"[Beloved], I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning."

The last three words of the verse do not appear in the best Greek manuscripts. The word translated "new" is not *neos*, meaning new in time, but *kainos*, meaning new in quality. It refers to something that would replace what has been worn out. John is saying, "I'm not giving you something you've never heard of before. I'm just telling you an old commandment that you've heard from the beginning--from the first time you heard the gospel.

2. A new meaning (v. 8)

"Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you, because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth."

Verse 7 sounds like a contradiction of verse 8. After stating that he is giving his readers an old commandment, John now says he is writing a new commandment. Since the commandments are similar, knowing what one is can help us identify the other. In John 13:34, Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." Loving one another is not a new commandment because the Old Testament instructs believers to do that. However, Jesus gave it new meaning by qualifying that love with the phrase, "As I have loved you" (v. 34). It's one thing for God to say, "Love one another," but when God personally demonstrated that love by coming to earth as a man, it became a fresh commandment. The Old Testament commandment to love others received new meaning from Jesus.

There are two tests of a true Christian: the doctrinal test (Does he confess Christ and sin?), and the moral test (Does he have the spirit of gracious obedience and does he love the brethren?). The new commandment that Jesus spoke of is part of the moral test. John says that the new commandment of loving others was seen in Christ and should also be evident in us. Romans 5:5 tells us that "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts." Love is a new commandment only in the sense that Christ raised it to a new standard in the church. Jesus showed us what love is and said we are to love like He did. Then He planted that love in us by His indwelling Spirit. If you say you are a Christian, I have two questions for you: Do you have a spirit of obedience toward Jesus Christ? Do you love your Christian brothers? Those are not suggestions, but necessary qualities in the life of a true believer.

B. The Contrast (vv. 9-11)

"He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not where he goeth, because darkness hath blinded his eyes."

This verse attacks the hypocrisy of the Gnostics, who claimed to be in the light, but didn't love the Christian brethren. That revealed they were still in darkness. Your claim to be a Christian is valid only if it's verified by a life of love. The Gnostics believed that only the elite had the necessary knowledge for salvation and they lorded their supposed superiority over others.

Verse 9 does not mean you're going to have affection for every Christian you meet every time you see them. It just means that you have a spirit of love toward your Christian brothers. False Christians (tares) won't exhibit that kind of love. In fact, tares can't put up with Christians very long: They eventually begin to resent true believers and despise everything they stand for. However, true Christians love the brotherhood. The Christian who loves knows where he's going. He walks in the

light and doesn't stumble. That is evidenced by his obedience and his love. The one who does not love is in the darkness. If you habitually conduct yourself in a sphere of darkness that is void of love, you are not saved.

How do you know who is a Christian? The doctrinal test asks: Is he confessing Christ and sin? The moral test asks: Is his life characterized by obedience and love? You better examine your heart to see if you are a true Christian or if you are only deceived into believing you are saved. Consider these penetrating words from Jesus: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father, who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:21-23).

Focusing on the Facts

1. What is the basic definition of a Christian?
2. Why is it hard to identify who is a Christian? What is one way you can identify false Christians, according to 1 John 2:19?
3. What does Peter exhort Christians to do so they can be assured of their salvation (2 Pet. 1:5-10)?
4. Compare the objective and subjective types of assurance of salvation. What type of assurance does John deal with in 1 John 2?
5. What is the visible proof that a person is a Christian?
6. Identify the two parts of the doctrinal test of salvation and support each part with a verse from Scripture.
7. Identify the two parts of the moral test and support each part with a verse from Scripture.
8. Why do Christians who are sinning have doubts about their salvation?
9. Explain the type of obedience the word "keep" conveys.
10. Explain the difference between legal and gracious obedience.
11. What does the apostle John say about the person who does not obey the commands of Christ (1 John 2:4)?

12. What did the Gnostics claim about spiritual union with God? What one word refutes that in 1 John 2:5?
13. How should the true nature of our love for God be expressed? How should it not be expressed?
14. What was Paul's response when Christ revealed Himself on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:6)? What is the significance of that?
15. After first giving us a principle, what does the Bible often give us next?
16. What do the phrases "abiding in him," "knowing him," "walking in the light," and "being in the fellowship" refer to?
17. What enables the Christian to live like Christ?
18. Identify the precept and the pattern that are given in Philippians 2:2-8.
19. How did Christ show His submission to the Father? Support your answer with Scripture.
20. How did Jesus give an old commandment new meaning (John 13:34)?
21. Identify the hypocrisy of 1 John 2:9-11.

Pondering the Principles

1. It is important to evaluate whether a person is saved. If someone is self-deceived into believing he is a Christian, you may be able to discern that and lead him to a true saving knowledge of Christ. If you need to select someone to serve on a decision-making committee at your church, you had best choose a true believer, who can be led by the Spirit. Suppose you hear a guest speaker at church or hear a preacher on television. How will you discern the validity of what he is saying unless his claims and life verify that he is truly a servant of God? Paul warned the Ephesian church that it would be attacked by false teachers from within and without (Acts 20:28-30). John encouraged his readers to "test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1; NIV). Memorize the questions on pages 3-4 for both the doctrinal and the moral tests? Don't be naively misled by someone who claims to know the truth but really doesn't.
2. Do you love God? Do you love the children of God? These questions demand a soul-searching examination because it is easy to assume the answer is yes. Meditate on 1 John 3:14-18; 4:7-11, 19-

21; and 5:1-3. What proof is there in your life that you love God and His children? When you read Scripture, or are instructed by your pastor, do you act upon those truths? When you see needs that you are able to meet, do you seek to meet them? Commit yourself to expressing your love for God and others on a daily basis. In so doing, you will never lack assurance of your salvation (1 John 3:14; 5:2).

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