

Test Yourself, Christian

- Going to church does not make you a Christian; nor does saying a prayer, going down an aisle, passing a catechism, telling yourself that you are, or trying to be a decent person. You can only be a Christian if Christ is *in you*, which can be tested and proven according to the scriptures.

Test Yourself

2Cor 13:5 (NIV) Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you--unless, of course, you fail the test?

1Cor 11:28,31 (NAS) But a man must examine himself... If we judged ourselves *rightly*, we would not be judged.

2Cor 13:5 (Wey) Test yourselves to discover whether you are true believers; put yourselves under examination...

- God gives us instructions on how we can and should "test ourselves" in scripture, which can be grouped into five major categories: 1) Gospel Belief and Confession; 2) Born Again / Sonship / Correction; 3) Repentance / Deliverance from Sin; 4) Good Works by Grace, and 5) The Fruit of the Spirit. The first three are starting points, but can also serve as ongoing tests, as we will see. The last two are living proof of "Christ Jesus in us", or not. These scriptures should encourage those who are true Christians, and give cause for sober reflection to those who think they are but are not.

2Pet 1:10a (NAS) ...Be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you.

TEST 1: Gospel Belief and Confession of Faith

1Cor 15:1-4 (Jer) Brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, the gospel that you have received and in which you are firmly established; because the gospel will save you only if you keep believing exactly what I preached to you--believing anything else will not lead to anything. I taught you... that *Christ died for our sins*, in accordance with the scriptures, that he was *buried*; and that he was *raised to life* on the third day, in accordance with the scriptures.

Rom 10:8-13 (NIV) ..."The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, "*Jesus is Lord*," and believe in your heart that God *raised him from the dead*, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved... for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

- We must believe the right Gospel about the right One. Christian life starts with an embracing of the Gospel, but what we believe in is also an *ongoing test* as well. We are warned in scripture not to *drift away* from the faith as we go through life, which is a real danger. Do we believe in, and are we following, the simple and scripture-defined Gospel of Jesus Christ?

1John 2:24 (NIV) See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. *If it does*, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father.

2Cor 11:3-4 (Jer) But the serpent, with his cunning, seduced Eve, and I am afraid that in the same way your ideas may get corrupted and turned away from simple devotion to Christ. Because any newcomer has only to proclaim a new Jesus, different from the one that we preached, or you have only to receive a new spirit, different from the one you have already received, or a new gospel, different from the one you have already accepted--and you welcome it with open arms!

Gal 1:9 (Phi) I am amazed that you have so quickly transferred your allegiance from him who called you by the grace of Christ to another "gospel"! Not that there is another gospel, but there are men who are upsetting your faith with a travesty of the gospel of Christ. Yet I say that if I, or an angel from heaven, were to preach to you any other gospel than the one you have received, may he be damned!

Rev 3:3a [Jesus:] "Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent."

Heb 2:1 (NIV) We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not *drift away*.

Heb 10:23 (NKJ) Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering...

TEST 2: Born Again / The Inner Witness / Correction as Children

John 3:3-7 (NIV) Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God *unless he is born again*... Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'"

1Pet 1:23 (Phi) For you are not just mortals now but sons of God; the live, permanent Word of the living God has given you his own indestructible heredity.

Gal 4:6 (NIV) Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba [Daddy!], Father."

Rom 8:14-16,23 (NIV) For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God... You received the *Spirit of adoption* by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself *bears witness with our spirit* that we are children of God... Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, *groan inwardly* as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

- Those who believe in the Gospel and follow Jesus will be born again into new, spiritual life. This will result in what is termed "the Spirit of adoption" which is evidenced by the "inner witness" of "Abba, Father". This is an inner *knowing* that we are children of God, where we cry out "Daddy! Father!" with love and expectation by deep, spiritual instinct.

Rom 8:9,15-16 (Phi) You cannot, indeed, be a Christian at all unless you have something of his Spirit in you... You can say with a full heart, "Father, my Father". The Spirit himself endorses our inward conviction that we really are the children of God.

- Christians do not habitually remain in sin, as we will see in the following test. Yet we all can stumble, we all can fall into sin. Hopefully, this is not deliberate, but even if it is on occasion God can still use it to encourage us that we are His children. For if and when we sin, the correction / rebuke / chastisement of the Lord will train us into the righteousness of Christ--*if we are His*.

Heb 12:5-8 (Wey) And you have quite forgotten the encouraging words which are addressed to you as sons, and which say, "My son, do not think lightly of the Lord's discipline, and do not faint when He corrects you; for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines: and He scourges every son whom He acknowledges." ...God is dealing with you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? And if you are left without discipline, of which every true son has had a share, that shows that you *are bastards, and not true sons*.

- This is a very clear-cut test: if you can continue in habitual sin and "get away with it", no matter what you say, you *are not a child of God*. On the other hand, if we really are His children, this will be proven by the fact that He will not allow us to remain in sin--or go far wrong--through His active correction in our lives.

Rev 3:19 (NAS) [Jesus:] "Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent."

Heb 12:9-11 (Wey) Our earthly fathers used to discipline us and we treated them with respect, and shall we not be still more submissive to the Father of our spirits, and live? It is true that they disciplined us for a few years according as they thought fit; but He does it for our certain good, in order that we may become *sharers* in His own holy character. Now, at the time, discipline seems to be a matter not for joy, but for grief; yet it afterwards yields to those who have passed through its training a result full of peace--namely, righteousness.

TEST 3: Repentance / Freedom from Habitual Sin

2Tim 2:19 (Wey) God's solid foundation stands unmoved, bearing this inscription, "The Lord knows those who really belong to Him." And this also, "Let every one who names the Name of the Lord renounce all wickedness."

Jude 1:4-5 (NIV) For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only *Sovereign and Lord*. Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe.

Eph 5:6 (Wey) Let no one deceive you with *empty words*, for it is on account of these very sins that God's anger is coming upon the disobedient.

Heb 10:26-27 (NIV) If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.

1John 3:5-10 (Phi) You know that... Christ became a man to *take away sin*, and that in him there is no sin. The man who lives in Christ does not habitually sin. The regular sinner has never seen or known him. You, my children, *should not let anyone deceive you*. The man who lives a good life is a good man, as surely as Christ is good. But the man whose life is habitually sinful is spiritually a son of the devil, for the devil has been a sinner from the beginning. Now the Son of God came to earth with the express purpose of undoing the devil's work. The man who is really God's son *does not practice sin*, for God's nature is *in him*, and such a heredity is incapable of sin. Here we have a clear indication as to who are the children of God and who are the children of the devil. The man who does not lead a good life is no son of God.

1John 2:3-7 (NIV) We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did. Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning.

Luke 6:46 (Wey) [Jesus:] "And why do you all call me 'Master, Master' and yet not do what I tell you?"

1Cor 6:9 (NIV) Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? *Do not be deceived*: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you *were*. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

John 8:34-36 (Wey) "In most solemn truth I tell you," replied Jesus, "that every one who commits sin is the slave of sin. Now a slave does not remain permanently in his master's house, but a son does. If then the Son shall make you free, you will be *free indeed*."

Titus 2:11-15 (NIV) For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. These, then, are the things you should teach...

TEST 4: Good Works by Grace

2Tim 2:19-21 (NIV) ..."Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord *must turn away from wickedness*." In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, *made holy*, useful to the Master and prepared to do any *good work*.

- When speaking of good works, it is important to note that such can never save us, and this is a serious deception often warned about in scripture. Rather it is the other way around: if we are really saved *then we will do* good works. These are produced in us by the ministry gifts of the Holy Spirit, given by the grace of God.

1Pet 4:10-11 (NAS) As each one has received a *special gift*, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ...

Rom 12:6-8 (Phi) Through the grace of God we have *different gifts*. If our gift is preaching, let us preach to the limit of our vision. If it is serving others let us concentrate on our service; if it is teaching let us give all we have to our teaching; and if our gift be the stimulation of the faith of others let us set ourselves to it. Let the man who is called to give, give freely; let the man in authority work with enthusiasm; and let the man who feels sympathy for his fellows in distress help them cheerfully.

Eph 2:10 (NIV) For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

2Tim 1:6 (NIV) For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God...

2Cor 9:8 (NIV) And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

Jas 2:17b-24 (NIV) Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. ...I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe... Even the demons believe... Do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?... Abraham's... faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did... You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

Acts 26:19-20 (NIV) [Paul:] "So then... I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven... I preached that they should repent and turn to God and *prove their repentance* by their deeds."

Col 1:10-11b (NIV) ...That you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every *good work*, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might.

TEST 5: The Fruit of the Spirit

Mat 3:7 (NIV) "...Produce fruit in keeping with repentance."

Mat 7:16-23 (NIV) [Jesus:] "By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

Mat 12:33 (NIV) "Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit."

Gal 5:22-23 (NIV) The fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control**. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

John 13:35 (NIV) "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Col 1:6 (Wey) Just as it [the Gospel] has also spread through the whole world, yielding fruit and increasing, as it has done among you from the day when first you heard it and came really to know the grace of God.

Plp 2:12-13 (NIV) Therefore, my dear friends... continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works *in you* to will and to act according to his good purpose.

John 15:4-5,8,16 (NIV) [Jesus:] "Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing... This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit,

showing yourselves to be my disciples... You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last..."

Mid Term Exam

2Cor 13:5 (NAS) Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!...

- Now then; let us reflect on these "tests" and give ourselves an honest self-rating of "Christ in Us" in these five areas.
 1. **Gospel Belief and Confession:** Do you believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Have you held fast to sound doctrine against the *many* false prophets offering a different gospel?
 2. **Born Again / Spirit of Adoption / The Lord's Correction:** Are you born from above? Do you have that ongoing "Abba, Father!" instinct within, that *inner knowing* of your relationship with Him? Is God treating you as His child when you fall into sin?
 3. **Repentance / Freedom from Sin:** Have you resolutely turned away from sin? Do you habitually sin, or can you praise God in spirit and truth that He has truly "set you free indeed?"
 4. **Good Works by God's Grace:** Have you been given a grace-gift of ministry to serve others with? Is your life living proof of Christ in you, or have you only "mere words" and self-delusion to cling to?
 5. **The Fruit of the Spirit:** Are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control manifesting and growing in your life? Are you producing fruit in keeping with repentance?
- As we go through the various seasons of life we might well find ourselves deficient in one or more of these tests. Seeing the whole of them can illuminate where we have stumbled, and encourage us to deal honestly and urgently with any problem areas.

Col 1:27-29 (NIV) ...God has chosen to make known... the glorious riches of this mystery, which is *Christ in you*, the hope of glory. We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy...

Gal 4:19 (TEB) My dear children! Once again, just like a mother in childbirth, I feel the same kind of pain for you until Christ's nature is formed in you.

1John 5:12-13 (NIV) He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God *so that you may know* that you have eternal life.

2Pet 1:10-12 (Phi) Set your minds, then, on endorsing by your conduct the fact that God has called and chosen you. If you go along these lines there is no reason why you should stumble. Indeed, if you live this sort of life a rich welcome awaits you as you enter the eternal kingdom of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. Therefore I shall not fail to remind you again and again of things like this, although you already know them...

Eph 3:16-21 (Phi) I pray that out of the glorious richness of his resources he will enable you to know the strength of the Spirit's inner re-enforcement--that Christ may actually live in your hearts by your faith. And I pray that you, rooted and founded in love yourselves, may be able to grasp (with all Christians) how wide and long and deep and high is the love of Christ--and to know for yourselves that love so far above our understanding. So will you be filled through all your being with God himself! Now to him who by his power within us is able to do infinitely more than we dare to ask or imagine--to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever, amen!