

1st John: John's Salvation Test

Bro. Kory Cunningham



We are going to be taking a test in this lesson. This will actually be John's salvation test. Now when I mentioned a test, your mind probably went back to school. It might have gone to those reoccurring nightmares you've had about school where you forgot to turn a paper in, or you still need to take a test. When I went to the seminary, I had several of those nightmares. It is a panicky sort of feeling because we don't like taking test. We don't like to get into a room, be handed a sheet of paper, and then have to tell what we know. But tests are really important because tests actually reveal reality. A test will show whether or not you know the material that you have been learning. For instance, let's say you went to the hospital because you had chest pains. You go to the hospital for them to do some tests on your heart, and the tests are going to reveal reality. The tests are going to show whether your heart is ok or whether you need to have surgery for some correction to your heart. A different example of a test is a DNA test. Let's say the police have a suspect in a murder case and they collected DNA at the scene. They would do a DNA test on that suspect to see whether the identity of the murderer is the identity of the suspect. Tests reveal reality. Tests really show who we are. So we are going to take John's salvation test.

One of John's themes in this first letter is to check ourselves, as believers, to see whether or not we have eternal life, to see whether or not we are in

Christ. That is a very important thing to know. John doesn't give the test so we will be anxious and scared, but rather, he gives the tests to assure our hearts. He gives the test so believers can know they are in Christ. When you know you are in Christ, you can start living the life Christ calls you to and you can start abiding in the Lord Jesus. So if you are a believer, hopefully, when you take this test it will be reassuring to your heart and you can say, "I am in Christ, I am abiding in Him, and now I can go live my life for His glory." If you are not in Christ, I pray that the test would just wake you up to show you there is a problem in your heart, and I pray this would be a new birth moment for you.

Scripture

We are going to read 1st John 5:11-13. Here is what John writes under the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit:

"And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever 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 that you may know that you have eternal life."

There is one equation that John is going to give to us that is supposed to serve as to whether or not we have eternal life. It is a really easy question. John tells us that Jesus equals life. So when we talk about the question of whether or not you have eternal life, we are not asking if you going to heaven or not. That is a secondary issue. The primary issue when we talk about eternal life is whether you have Jesus or not, because eternal life is not something out there at some point, eternal life is right now. Eternal life is for those who have Jesus Christ. So if Jesus equals life, then, no Jesus equals no life. So when we talk about eternal life, the question, the big thought, for us to think through is do we have Jesus? If you have Jesus, you have life, if you don't have Jesus, you don't have life.

In the very front of the letter in chapter 1, John introduces this first letter in a lot of the same ways he introduces his gospel. He says, "That which was from the beginning..." So he is talking about all the way back to creation, all the way back beginning with God. He says we have seen, touched, and gazed upon Him, He has been made manifest to us from the Father, and He is eternal life. So who is John talking about? Who was from the beginning, who was made manifest by the Father, and who did John actually see, touch, walk with, and behold? His name is Jesus. So Jesus is eternal life. At the end of the letter, he actually says Jesus is the one true God and eternal life. So again, the big question we are looking at is whether or not you have Jesus. So John is going to do is give us a series of tests to see whether or not we have Jesus.

Before we get to the test, I want to give you a little information about the material. John does not write in a linear fashion, which we westerners really like. He doesn't start at the beginning with an argument and keep building his case all the way through to the end. Instead, John writes in a circular fashion. He introduces a theme like, you need to put to death sin, you need to walk with Jesus, or you need to love the brothers. Then in one of the next chapters, he goes back to that same theme about loving the brothers or loving God. He introduces a topic, leave it, and then come back to it. So it is really hard to draw one theme that John is doing throughout the whole letter. In fact, he does quite a few different themes in a very circular fashion. But I think as you put them altogether, we will see a pattern that is revealed in the book.

Belief

As we see this pattern, John is going to show us that being a true believer starts with belief. He is really big on believing the right things. He talks about the antichrist a lot. An antichrist is those who deny that Jesus is the Son of God, that Jesus was sent from God, and that Jesus was actually in the flesh. So being an antichrist is not knowing the right information. It is believing the wrong things. He continually tells the people to make sure

they believe the right things, make sure they believe the truth about who Jesus is. So belief is really important for John. The reason being that belief is going to point to birth.

➤ **Birth**

Birth is really important in the book of 1st John because true belief brings about birth from God. There is a lot of dialog about being a child, a child of God, or a child of Satan. That is the distinction for John; there is not a gray area. You are either a child of God, or you are a child of Satan. There is not a middle ground of being an 'ok kid'; no, you are either God's son, or Satan's son. So that is a big deal. John will show that birth actually points to life.

➤ **Life**

When John talks about life, or living, he says, "abiding." That is a word John uses over twenty times. He is big on abiding in Jesus, making sure that we are abiding in God, and God is abiding in us, that the Spirit is abiding in us, and we are abiding in the Spirit, and we are abiding in His Word. So he is big on this thought of abiding. What does "abiding" come from? If you look at the letter as a whole, abiding, or life, comes from a new birth. The new birth comes from believing and trusting in Jesus Christ.

So the question is do you have life? Are you abiding? If you are abiding, it is evidence that you have had a new birth and you have had correct faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you are not abiding in Jesus, then it is evidence that you have not had a new birth because you have not truly trusted and believed in the Lord Jesus for eternal life, as John tells us. So belief turns to birth which leads to a life of abiding in Jesus. Do you have birth? Do you have life? It will be evidenced in whether or not you are abiding in the Lord Jesus.

Are You Abiding in Jesus?

So how do we know that we are abiding in Jesus? We are going to see a series of tests that John gives us to see whether or not we are abiding in Jesus.

Test 1: Believers Walk like Jesus

What do believers do? Believers walk like Jesus. It is plain and simple. It is a very simple test, if you are a believer, you will walk like Jesus. In chapter 1:5-7, John says, *"This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him while we 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 His Son cleanses us from all sin."* The very first thought is "God is light." Now notice where John starts. He starts with God. He doesn't start with you and me. When it comes to seeing whether or not we are in Christ, it is important to gauge yourself on God, not everyone else. Many times when we think of whether or not we are a believer, we think of the best person we know and then we gauge ourselves on how closely we measure up to him or her. When we compare how we measure up to them, we think it will tell us whether or not we are in Christ. But John doesn't start with himself, or an apostle; he starts with God. He says, *"God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."* So the very nature of God is one of light, of holiness, and of purity. Now think about what light does; light expels darkness. Anywhere light can be found, darkness runs and hides.

Last spring we took our boys to Mammoth Cave. It was great little spring break trip. We go into the cave system and it is incredible! I have my two oldest boys and we are walking through these caves. Some of the cave systems get a little hairy, they are real close together and a little claustrophobic at times, but we are walking through these caves and it is absolutely amazing to see and behold all this cave has to offer. So about an hour in, we get to this big room, the leader tells everyone to sit down,

and they were going to turn out the lights. So the boys get a little panicked and we hold them really tight as they go to turn off the lights. If you have been in Mammoth Cave and have experienced this, you know what this is like. When the lights go out, it is absolutely pitch black. When it first went off, it was sort of alarming at how dark it was. I remember taking my hand and waving it in front of my face, and I couldn't see anything. I could not even see my hand in front of my face. We sat there for about fifteen seconds in absolute darkness; everyone was in silence. Then all of a sudden, the leader takes a pack of matches and lights one match. When she lit that match, a huge area of the cave completely lit up. You could see everyone's face, your hands, the walls, and the outline of the cave. I mean here was a place that was in utter complete darkness, and all of a sudden when light was welcomed in, that darkness started to run for it. It fled as far as it could get away from that light.

That is what light does. Light expels darkness. Light runs darkness away. John's point is if you say that you have fellowship with God who is light, then your life is going to be one that is continually getting rid of the darkness in your life. That is what you are going to do. If you fellowship with God who is light, your life is going to be continually running from the darkness because you are running to the light. John says, very bluntly, if you say with your mouth that you are a child of God, that you fellowship with God, yet you live in darkness, you walk in darkness, you are a liar. That is what John says, not me. John, the apostle, calls you a liar. If your lifestyle, your walk, the dominant factor of your life, is one of sin and darkness, then you don't have fellowship with God. If you had fellowship with God, if you walked in the light, then you would walk like Jesus. You would be walking in the light as He is in the light.

The next text we are going to look at is chapter 2:5b-6. It says, "*By this we may know that we are in Him: whoever says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked.*" So big statement, here is how you know whether or not you are in Christ; whoever says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked. So if you say, "I abide

in Jesus, I am a believer, I am in Christ.” John says the reality is that if that is true, you are going to walk like Jesus. If you abide in Jesus, your lifestyle is going to be like Jesus. So our basic checkpoint in this first test is a real simple check; do you walk like Jesus? Is your life a reflection of His life? When you read Jesus, when you read the gospels, when you read the New Testament and then look at your life, does any of it match up? Because if I read about Jesus’ life, I see that He was really concerned with His Father’s glory, redemption, helping the helpless, loving others more than Himself, and the mission of God. Those are Jesus’ footsteps. So if you are in Christ, then naturally, your footsteps will be like His footsteps. You would be concerned about the glory of God. You would be concerned about the mission of God. You would be concerned about your brothers and sisters all around. You would be concerned about the least of these. You would look at others as more significant than yourself. You would be investing in people because people are what really matters. You would be living in light of eternity rather than just right now. So the basic check is do you want to walk like Jesus? Do you walk like Him? Believers walk like Jesus.

Test number 2: Believers Battle Sin

That is a big marker on whether or not you are a believer. Believers battle sin. Believers don’t love sin, they don’t walk in sin, they don’t continue in sin, but they actually *battle* sin. November is me and my wife’s anniversary. It will be ten years! It just blows my mind that we have been married for ten years. (By the way, just a little side note; if you are not a married person, I just want to make a statement that marriage is the greatest thing on planet earth. I have had the best ten years of my life. It has been awesome, and I encourage marriage.) On November 26, 2005, as I said my vows to her, at that moment I didn’t only enter into a new relationship with her, I also entered into a new relationship with every other girl on the planet. At that point, I was saying that I am yours and you are mine, and I’m going to be romantically involved with only you. So when I got into a new relationship with my wife, a covenant relationship through marriage, that very moment I automatically got into no other romantic relationship

with every other girl on the planet. My relationship to her made it where I had no relationship, romantically, with any other girl on planet Earth. So a new relationship brought forth a different relationship with every other person.

The same is true in salvation. When you became a believer, you didn't just have a new relationship with Jesus, you also broke up with your old girlfriend, who is sin. You have a new relationship with it; it is different now. You said yes to Jesus, and by saying yes to Jesus, you said no to sin. Just like when I said yes to my wife, I said no to all of you girls. The same is true when you came to Christ. 'Yes, I love you Jesus; no I do not love you sin and we are no longer going to have an ongoing relationship.' So the question is do I have a relationship with Christ? One of the ways you can tell is by looking at your relationship with sin right now. If you have a relationship with Christ, then your relationship with sin has changed dramatically.

In chapter 1:8-10, we are going to see there are actually three possible relationships that you can have with sin right now. Only one of them would be that the relationship that a believer should have with sin. It says, *"If we say 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 we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us."* So I think there are three groups of people in this passage in their relationship with sin.

1. Group Who Categorically Deny Sin

The first group denies sin in general. They say they have no sin. I think it is a general denial of the fundamental problem called sin. I think this would be our modern culture. Our modern culture has dismissed this category that there is sin, and that sin is a big deal. Instead, people think they don't have sin, they just have problems, and issues and from their DNA and whatever is passed down from mom and dad. We think we have some things that might be a little bit off, but we don't have sin. We think sin is

not a real thing, that everyone just needs to get over the whole sin concept, get along and believe that everything is ok with everyone, and let's just all be happy together. So it is in our modern culture that we deny sin in general. It is just an ignoring our sins. So if that is you saying you don't have sin, then you will ignore the sin that you have in your life.

2. Group Who Personally Deny Sin

The second group in this text says they have not sinned, so it is more personal. They don't reject sin as a category, but I think they reject it as a personal issue with themselves, "Yeah there is sin, but that is not me; I am not the one that has a sin problem." I think this would mark really religious people. Religious people tend to believe in sin, but they are those people out there protesting whatever the issue is. Those are the sinners, but we in the church are ok, we are not the ones who have our own sin. Sin is the other guy. It is not us, so we reject sin, personally. We love to point out other sins, but we never look to our own sins and our own need for cleansing.

3. Group Who Confess Sin

There is a third group in this text. John says, "*If we confess our sins...*" Now we are getting to what John is going to show a believer. It is not denying sin in general, it is not denying sin personally; instead, it is admitting our own sin and confessing our own sin. These are people that embrace the gospel. They realize there is sin, they are a sinner, and they need a savior. So when you, as a child of God, understand sin correctly, it doesn't lead to pointing your finger, it leads to confessing of your own sin. Believers battle sin, they confess sin, and I think it starts with a confession for salvation. There is a point where you come under the Holy Spirit conviction and you confess being a sinner, and then you get redemption. Then after that, there is an ongoing cleansing that happens as you continue to sin and mess up by going before the Father and confess that for cleansing. You say, "God, I blew it again; cleanse me from that because I don't want to be held up in this sin any longer." In fact, Martin Luther,

one of the great reformers, said that the whole of the Christian life is one of repentance. In other words, if you sum up the entire Christian life, it is repentance. Daily repentance is the one of the markers of a true Christian life.

➤ **Do You Battle Sin?**

So the question you ask yourself is do you battle sin? That is a great thought to think through. Do I really battle sin? When is the last time I have confessed and repented of sin? If it has been years, you are probably either denying or ignoring sin. It might be evidence that you are not really in Christ, because as you walk to the light, the light continually exposes your darkness. You want to continually flee from the darkness, and that happens through confession and repentance and cleansing that comes from God.

To give you a little more help on this, you can just check your lifestyle. What does your life say about your battle of sin? John gets very blunt. He says your life is going to show whether you are in Christ, or not, by whether you battle sin, or you live in sin. In chapter 3, beginning in verse 8, he says, *"Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil..."* That is pretty blunt, right. I didn't edit this, this is what John says. He goes on, *"...for the devil has been sinning from the beginning...No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God..."* It is very pointed, very blunt Scripture text. He is saying that if your lifestyle is about practicing sin, your father is the devil. But if your lifestyle is about practicing righteousness, then your father is God. I don't know how much more blunt John's salvation test can be.

What does he mean about not sinning, or practicing sin? Notice that word, *"practice."* It is talking about your lifestyle, about who you are at your core. This is not talking about you messing up from time to time, or even daily.

No, Christians can still mess up daily. But do those mess ups turn into practices that you love and you continue in, and there is no check, no repentance, no cleansing? You just practice it, you continue to do it, you build upon it, and it is not bothering you, and you indeed sort of like it, love it, and live in it. That is *practicing* sin. John says if that is your lifestyle; if your practice, love, live in, and have no checks and balances in your sin life, then it is evident you are not of God; you are actually of the devil. If you are of God who is light, you will practice righteousness. This doesn't mean you are going to be perfect, but you are pursuing Christ, you are pursuing His Word, you are walking in Him, you are abiding in Him, and the lifestyle that you are living is one of a desire to practice righteousness. You want to be holy as He is holy; that is your desire. You don't want to continue in un-repentant sin because you know that is not who God is. You are walking in God because you are walking in the light, as He is in the light.

So the big question as we wrap up test number 2 is do you repent of sin, or do you practice sin? Do you practice sin, meaning continually? You have no check, lifestyle, you don't care, you love it, you live it, and you are going to keep doing it. Or, do you repent of it because you want to live more and more like Jesus? If you are a believer, you will live a life battling sin. You will not ignore it. You will not deny it. You will confess it because you are in a battle with it. You will want to overcome it because you want to be like your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. You know He will appear and He is purified and holy; therefore, you purify yourself and pursue holiness because of who Christ is.

Test Number 3: Believers Love Believers

We are getting into love in our third test. Believers love believers. That is a big test in 1st John. You see it continually come up about believers loving believers. You loving your brother and that being evidence of whether you are in Christ or not. So this is a big deal. Most of the letter is on this subject of love. The first two tests dealt with life (your walk and your sin).

Now we are going to deal with how your love is. Do you love believers? Chapter 3:11-14 says, *"For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death."* There is a very pointed test that you can take to see whether or not you have crossed over from death to life, whether or not you are in Christ. John says you can know for sure whether or not you are a true believer with this test: Do you love the brothers or not? When he talks about the brothers, he is talking about the assembly, (which includes brother and sisters) he is talking about the church. Do you love believers? Do you love other people who are in Christ? Now you should love people who are not in Christ, but for John's purposes, he is only going to deal with us when it comes to the church. Do you love one another?

Now why is this in evidence for true salvation? It is because when we understand what kind of love we are talking about, we understand that this kind of love can only be produced if you have a born again experience from God. This is a love that is not a worldly love; this is a distinct love that is only true of Christians. The world claims love, but they don't have God's love. The world's love is selfish. It is loving others for what you can get out of the relationship. In other words, as long as my loving of you brings me happiness, brings me success, brings me an advantage; then I am going to love you because loving you benefits me. That is how most marriages work. You love your spouse because you think it is going to benefit you. You love very selfishly, because ultimately you want them to do the things you want them to. You want to be served and you want the whole home to be about you. You love them and do nice things for them, so they will do whatever you think should be done in your home. That is not love. That is especially not Christian love. That is worldly love; that is selfish love.

We see in the Scriptures that true love is selfless love. That is the kind of love John is talking about, not selfish love, but selfless love. It is love that doesn't say I love you for what I can get; it says I love you for what I can give. It says I am in this relationship for you. I'm in this relationship to love you, with no ulterior motive for it to come back to me and I am going to be happier and more fulfilled. I'm coming to you because I have God's love, and God's love is 'others' centered. That is how you know whether you are in Christ or not. You have that kind of love flowing through you, and that kind of love you can't muster up. It is only love produced by the gospel and lived out through Jesus Christ.

➤ **Worldly Love**

So the question is do you love like God loves? Do you love the brothers? John said that jealousy actually kills love, and he brought up Cain. He said don't be like Cain who murdered his brother. Why did he murder his brother? It was because his brother did what was right. His brother was good before the Lord. He did what was right and he got rewarded, while Cain got punished. So Cain killed his brother because he was jealous of what his brother did that was good. Worldly love is jealous. It wants to always be in the right, and it can't celebrate when others do right. It can't celebrate when others get things that you feel like you deserve. Worldly love says I don't love you; I want to be you. Cain didn't love his brother; he wanted to be his brother in that moment. He wanted to take his reward, to take his good deed. He didn't celebrate it; instead, he killed him for it. That is what worldly love looks like. You don't love people and celebrate their success; you are jealous and you want their success, you want what they have, and you long to be like them. You want what they have instead of loving and celebrate the goodness that God has given to them. Worldly love is jealous, and jealousy kills love.

➤ **Godly Love**

But the gospel actually creates love. That is why John says we know we have passed from death to life if we love the brothers. The gospel creates love, *agape* love, godly love, love that is 'others' centered, and not jealous.

~God is Love~

Why is this the case? First of all, it is because God is love. John 4:7-8 says, *"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love."* We are supposed to love one another because the foundation is that God is love! It is actually who He is. It is part of His nature. If you are connected to God, then you should be one who loves like God. If you have been beloved by God, then you are going to love others. That is what the gospel does to you. If you know the love of God, who is love, then the most natural thing you can do is love others the same way God loved you. So love starts with God, God is love, therefore, we should love out of a relationship with Him.

~God Shows Love~

God not only is love, He shows love. Chapter 4:9 says, *"In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him."* So it's not that God is simply love, He is that. He also demonstrated, He showed His love, in that He actually sent His Son to live the life we couldn't, die the death we deserve on the cross, and to raise Him three days later, so that in Him we might have life. So God actually showed His love through radical sacrifice. He sacrificed His own Son to show how much He loves His creation, how much He loves His children. That is what God did. Love is sacrificial; love absolutely sacrifices, because that is exactly what God did. Love shows itself. Notice the order, God is the one who starts love. The worldly order is if you love me, then I'll love you. If you show me good, then I will show you good. No, God's love is the opposite; you didn't love Me, but I still love you. You didn't do good to me, but I am going to do good to you. That is Christian love. We see in verses 10-11 how God starts, *"In this is love, not*

that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." The order here is that God loved you first. You didn't love Him before He loved you. In fact, you hated Him. But He pursued you, loved you, and redeemed you so that you might love Him.

~The Church Reveals God's Love~

That is how gospel love operates. It doesn't wait for people to love you; instead, you go and love people. Love starts with you. Then as the church, we get to reveal love. We get to reveal God's love. Verse 12 says, "*No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected in us.*" I think John is saying that no one has ever seen God, He is invisible, but if we, as a church, would love one another as He has loved us, then the world could see the invisible God by the way we, as visible people, love one another. The world might actually see God by looking at us and seeing a love that they have never experienced before, a love that gives first, a love that pursues first, a love that is sacrificial, a love that is selfless, a love that is so alien to their experience, that they would have to say, "What is going on with these people?" And we would have to say, "God is love; this is what love is, and you are experiencing is God." We can actually show the world who God is through the way we love.

The question is do you love believers? Do you love other people in the body that way? We are to sacrifice, it starts with you, it is selfless, and it is not about what you can get, it is about what you can give. Is that how you love? If it is, it is evidence that you are in God, because only God loves that way. If you don't have any ways of loving like that, it might be evidence that you are not in Christ and you only have the capacity to love like the world loves.

Test Number 4: Believers Love God

The last test is be pretty obvious; believers love God. Chapter 5:3-4 says, "*For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His*

commandments are not burdensome. For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith." He says if we are in Christ, if we know the love of God, if we love God, we will keep his commandments. In other words, believers love God. That is the theme all throughout the book. How do you know whether or not you love God? How do you show that to God? You keep his commandments. How do you show love to an invisible God?

We have three little boys. Yesterday, we were out on the lake and it was beautiful. My wife and my oldest boy were out on the back deck of the boat, and he just comes and snuggles into mom and actually snuggles for like an hour and a half, takes a nap on her, gets up, and keeps snuggling with her. She said, "This never happens, this is awesome!" She felt such an overflowing of love from him.

It is very easy for a kid to show you how much they love you. They can give you a kiss or a hug, but how do we love God? We can't give Him a kiss or a hug. So how do we show we love God? How do you know you are actually showing God you love Him? John makes it very simple. Here is how you know; do you obey God? That is how we love Him. That is how we show our love to Him. We obey His Word. We obey what He has laid out for our life. How do I know that I love God? I stay in His word and I obey His word because I love and want to be like Him. How do I know if I do not love God? I not in His Word and I could care less about His commandments. I say I love Him, but I never actually do anything when it comes to loving God. You see, our love will be displayed through our obedience towards God. That is how you know you love Him or not. Do you obey Him or not?

So we know we love Him because we obey Him, but we also know we love Him if we do not love the world who is against God. The world is the evil system that is going on right now on our planet. It is not that the globe; it is the evil system that is against Christ. Back in chapter 2, John said, "*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 desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.” John says don’t love the world. John sums up the world for us; it is the desires of the flesh. Life is about your pleasure, about your happiness, just doing whatever makes you happy regardless of what God says, that is idolizing pleasure. The world is about the desires of the eyes, which is idolizing possessions. Life is about your stuff; the more you can have, the better you are, and life is about a continual journey of getting more and more stuff. John says that is the world system. The last one is pride in possessions, which I think this is idolizing power. When you get all this stuff, then you feel this power. And now you have ego, you think you are someone important, someone others should want to be and bow down to. Then life is really about your ego, it is about you.

John says that is the world’s system, and the problem with the world’s system is it is passing away. So, all that you build in the worldly system is all passing away. John said the world is passing away with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. Those who love the world and give themselves to the world only have one life and that is it. All of it passes away and their life passes away. But John says those who do not love the world but love God will abide forever! It is not temporary; it is forever.

So check the gauge in your heart as to whether you love God. Gauge one is do you keep His commandments? Do you follow His Word? Do you pursue Him through His Word? Do you obey him through His Word? Gauge two is do you love the things that are against God, the system that is all about you, your pleasure, your stuff and you ego, or do you use all of that for the glory of Christ? And then the very last thing John says in the whole letters is to keep yourself from idols. Idols, false gods, are the things that keep us from the true God.

Let us review the test and the four things: True believers walk like Jesus, battle sin, love believers, and love God. John is laying it out here. Are you in Christ? ...Take the test... Are you in Christ? How do you measure up to these things? The theme is that belief turns into birth, which turns into life. So the question is do you have life, do you have eternal life? The answer is in the question, do you have Jesus? Then how do you know whether or not you have Jesus? That is a great test to evaluate your heart. If you have Jesus, you will walk like Him, you will battle sin for Him, you will love believers in Him, and you will love God because you know you are going to spend forever with Him. That is what your life is like if you are a believer.

The test is over and the question is how do you think you did? The goal of John is wanting everyone to pass and have assurance that you truly are in Christ, assurance so now you can start living the life God has called you to. So if you have passed, then my prayer is that you abide in Him, because that is what the book is pointing to, abiding in Jesus. If you failed and realized you are not in Christ, then repent and believe in the gospel. Repent and believe in Jesus Christ and have a true belief, a new birth that leads to eternal life.