

Birthmarks of Salvation

Study in First John

Introduction

First John was written so:

- 1.) We might enjoy fellowship with the Lord Jesus (1 John 1:3)
- 2.) That our joy might be full (1 John 1:4)
- 3.) That we sin not (1 John 2:1)
- 4.) That we might have confidence (assurance) of our salvation (1 John 5:13)

John repeats four "tests" of salvation throughout the book of First John--the test of a changed heart, obedience to Christ, a love for Christ and the things of God, and a correct understanding and belief in the Gospel message and doctrine taught in the Bible.

Faith: "To live out; in accordance with."

To truly believe, one must choose to live in accordance with that belief. Believing is not mere mental consent. The root meaning of faith includes action. That which the mind accepts, the will must obey, for no one spontaneously acts inconsistent with what he believes. If there is no evidence, or action, that demonstrates a genuine belief, we may conclude we do not really believe.

James 2:19-20 ¹⁹Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. ²⁰But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

James 2:26 ²⁶For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Test One - Have you had a change of heart?

Do you have a desire to understand spiritual things?

1JO 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

Are you aware of personal sin and does it grieve you?

1JO 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Do you still enjoy the same pastimes, lust, vices, humor, and ambitions as those who are unsaved?

1JO 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Are you able to justify a life without church attendance?

1JO 2:19 They went out from us, but 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.

Test Two - Have you the birthmark of obedience?

Do you have a desire to please and obey the Lord?

1JO 2:4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

Do you have a desire to be holy?

1JO 2:29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

Do you strive to overcome personal sin in your life?

1JO 3:3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Does it give you delight to keep God's commandments?

1JO 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; an this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

Test Three - Do you have the birthmark of love?

Do you enjoy the company of other believers?

1JO 2:9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

Do you have special compassion for other believers?

1JO 3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

Do you have a desire to share your material possessions and wealth with missionaries and other believers in need of financial assistance? Do you desire to tithe?

1JO 3:17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

Are you able to love others enough to forgive their sins and imperfections?

1JO 4:8-10 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Can you say you love God (Jesus said, If you love me, keep my commandments.) Can you say you love Christians who want to live a holly life?

1JO 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

Test Four - Do you have the birthmark of correct doctrine?

Do you know who Christ is? Have you acknowledged His deity and right to govern your life?

1JO 2:23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

Do you know and believe that God Himself came to earth in the form of man to die for your sins, in your place?

1JO 4:3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

Do you believe everything that is written in the Bible?

1JO 4:6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

Do you believe the Lord Jesus paid the full price/penalty for your sins because He loves you?

1JO 4:15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

Have you trusted Christ alone to save you and nothing else? Do you understand salvation must be personally received from God, not simply acknowledged as a historical fact?

1JO 5:10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.