

September 17, 2017

- I John 2:1-11 - "Assurance of Your Salvation"

Introduction:

Examinations are the living nightmares of most students. As we grow older, the exams keep getting more challenging. Often, students feel that they've been facing the most challenging tests ever taken. We all know that some exams are more difficult than others.

The top two out of the 10 most difficult exams to crack globally is based on student research and overall analysis. The first one is Cisco Networks they conduct an examination for the recruitment of Internet experts within their organization. The test is divided into 6 parts within 2 phases. Only the candidates who pass the first phase are certified to appear for the second phase. The practical phase of the exam lasts for 8 hours and has a 1% clearing rate.

Oxford University All Souls College has a fellowship exam conducted that is considered the second most challenging exam in the world. Until quite recently, the applicants were supposed to write a single essay based on just one word in the paper. It requires a tremendous amount of factual knowledge and a highly imaginative mind. Only two candidates are selected for fellowship every year. Test can become a living nightmare.

Even when we come across test questions that seem simple on the surface, they are not as simple as first perceived. For example, the answer to the question, "How long did the Hundred Years War last?" seems obvious, but the answer is 116 years. Or - "What country manufactures Panama hats?" the correct answer is Ecuador. Here's another: In which month do Russians celebrate the October Revolution? It's November. Don't you just hate those trick questions?

There are tests that are very essential. Our lives are filled with tests. We take driver's tests, drug tests, stress tests, sobriety tests, eye tests, and people in law enforcement have to qualify on the shooting range taking a test. Like it or not, tests are a part of life and it shouldn't be any different to test whether a person is on the right track spiritually? This is the most important test of all.

Transition:

The Bible speaks clearly that there is a way to know with assurance that you have eternal life. We can know for sure that we are Christians by taking and passing three tests.

I. The Lordship Test (2:1-5)

Col.1:18... that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

1. First, we need to check to see if Jesus Christ is truly the Lord, that he has the preeminence in our lives. Notice what John writes: in (2:3). Now, this verse doesn't say we are saved by keeping Jesus' commandments. It says we do know that we know him **/if** we keep His commandments. In this short epistle John uses the words know or ***knoweth*** more than 20 times. This letter was written so we can know beyond any doubt that we are Christians.

2. Note what verse 4 indicates about you & me if we say I know him, but we don't obey Christ's commandments. If we say we are Christians but aren't keeping the commands of Christ

(the Bible), God says we are liars. You may say, “Wait a minute! Does this mean if I ever break any of God’s commandments I’m not a Christian that I’m not saved?”

a) No, because we all sin in some way after becoming Christians (1:10). John wrote this epistle so we would not sin (2:1a). However, when we do sin, 1 John 2:1 reassures us with this wonderful promise: that with the father we have an advocate that is “*paraklētos*” in Greek; it is one who pleads another's cause before a judge. God made him (Christ) the propitiation “the means of appeasing; the one sacrifice as by a priest. On the one hand, the Bible says Christians do sin. On the other hand, it says if we know Him, we keep his commandments (2:3). If we always keep his commandments, we won’t sin.

3. The key to understanding this verse is the word keep. The Greek word translated “*keep*” *tā-re'-ō* means “to watch or keep your eyes upon.” It is a navigational term. In John’s day, sailors kept on course by watching or keeping their eyes on stars. If they got off course during the daytime, they could get back on course by looking at the stars at night. A ship’s helmsman might go to sleep and get off course. Or, a storm might come and blow the ship off course. However, when the helmsman recognized he was off course, he would go by the stars and get back on course. You won’t get off course if you keep watch.

Illustration:

The US Navy destroyer Fitzgerald at 1:30 a.m. on Saturday, June 18, was off the coast of Japan south of Tokyo. It collided with the 730-foot freighter ACX Crystal, stacked with more than 1,000 containers. There should have been lookouts on watch on the port, starboard and stern of the destroyer Fitzgerald — sailors scanning the horizon with binoculars and reporting by headsets to the destroyer’s bridge. Radar officers working both on the bridge and in the combat information center below should have spotted the freighter’s image on their screens, drawing steadily closer. And under standard protocol, the Fitzgerald’s captain, should have been awakened and summoned to the bridge to assure a safe passage long before the ships could come near each other. But none of that happened. Seven sailors lost their lives and it will most likely be because no one was watching. As Christians, we need to keep watch. God’s commandments help us to do this.

4. Another way to know for sure we are Christians is how we feel when we break one of God’s commandments. You can still sin, but you can’t sin and enjoy it.” That’s the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian. Both can sin, but a real Christian cannot enjoy sin. True Christians want to get back on course when they sin. That’s the lordship test. **Luke 6:46** --- And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

If we can sin without any regret, without any desire to repent, without wanting to get back on course spiritually, then the Bible teaches that we are not Christians.

To know for sure you are a Christian, you must pass the lordship test but you must also pass,

II. The Likeness Test 2:6

1. If we are true Christians, nothing can make us happier than knowing we would never sin again. The yearning of every true Christian is to be like Jesus Christ and never sin again. God created us to follow his steps. John teaches that it is paramount that a believer keeps in step with God. Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did. A believer should desire to walk with God and follow in the likeness of Christ.

Paul wrote the Romans in 8:29 **For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate [to be] conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.**

Col 2:6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, [so] walk ye in him: / 2Jo 1:6 And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it,

2. When one becomes a Christian, there is a change in his relationship with sin. Sin is not eliminated in the believer until he comes to glory, but his relationship to sin is changed when he truly become a Christian. · A Christian no longer loves sin as he once did. · A Christian no longer brags about his sin as he once did. · A Christian no longer plans to sin as he once did. · A Christian no longer fondly remembers his sin as he once did. · A Christian never fully enjoys his sin as he once did. · A Christian no longer is comfortable in habitual sin. Next is...

III. The Love Test (2:7-11)

1. The love test reveals anyone, “**who saith he is light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now** (1 Jn 2:9). The word translated hateth (MISEO, mis-eh-o) means to “detest” or despise someone. We cannot have Jesus in our hearts and hate a brother or sister in Christ at the same time. A hating Christian is as much a contradiction as a loving Devil.

2. If we are really Christians, we will love our brothers and sisters in Christ and want to be around them. The Bible teaches the church is like a body, with Christ as the Head and all of us as members of His body (Eph. 5:23, 30). If we love Jesus, we must love our brothers and sisters in Christ. We can’t love the Head without loving the body. It would be ridiculous for you to say to your wife or husband, “I love your head, but I really don’t like your body.” True Christians love being around other believers at church services and fellowship. **Eph.5:25**

3. It is a basic spiritual principle that when Christians are out of fellowship with God, they cannot get along with God’s people. **Just as night follows day, if we love Jesus we are going to love whomever Jesus loves.**

4. Therefore, John writes: **He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him** (1 Jn 2:10). The word translated stumbling refers to a trap or snare. Hate is like a trap that leads to other sins, such as resentment, bitterness, gossip, malice, jealousy, etc. But, when we love, there is nothing in us to make us stumble.

You may have been hurt and have bitterness, which is a form of hate, in your heart right now. You may be thinking, “I can’t help but hate them; they hurt me so badly. They deserve my bitterness.” However, the Bible says: **But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness and is in blindness.**

If we hate someone, we have bitterness in our hearts and are wandering aimlessly in darkness. In addition, we face the prospect of letting our bitterness cause us to fall into other horrible sins, such as gossip, malicious acts, and in some cases, murder. That’s where hate leads.

Conclusion:

To know for sure that you are a Christian, you must pass the lordship test, the likeness test and the love test. John showed us the characteristics that are vital for a successful body of believers—love for one another and holiness. One reason many Christians are not the light and salt is they have doubts about their salvation. The true measure of that success is demonstrated by followers of Christ who love God, walk after Christ committed to living holy lives and love each other.