

# Is your faith real or bogus?

## 1 John

### Introduction:

John's purpose in writing this message was to proclaim to his followers the essence of eternal life – fellowship; fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ and fellowship with other believers. To John, when believers fully realize this fellowship, his joy and theirs is full and complete.

John declares to us that if we say we have fellowship with God and we walk in darkness, we are liars and the truth is not in us. Because God is light and in Him is no darkness at all – we can have no fellowship with Him; neither can we have fellowship with true believers if we do not walk in the light. John 3:19; Acts 26:18; 2 Corinthians 6:14

Anyone can claim to walk in the light and anyone can say that they do not walk in darkness, after all God's Word says that the people who walk in darkness are blind to their condition. So the Holy Spirit leads John to give us the most complete set of tests to determine for ourselves whether we walk in the light or not.

Now all of the rest of the book of 1 John is an elaboration, an expansion on this one truth – We only have fellowship with God, His Son and other believers if we walk in the light; conversely we have no fellowship with any of these if we walk in darkness. All of these tests are tests of genuineness of our faith – in other words we can't fake faith with God with ourselves or even with true believers – our lives will display either the realness or falseness of our profession.

Notice also that a profession of faith is not a true test of genuine faith. It is not an accurate determiner of true faith and belief in Jesus Christ. Anyone can make a profession of faith. All scripture passages are from 1 John unless otherwise noted:

### 1. Test #1 - with regard to sin. 1:9-10

- a. Walking in the light means constant confession of sin.
  - i. This is the #1 mark of a true believer – ongoing repentance. Since walking in the light reveals more and more sin in my life.
  - ii. A true believer says what God says about their sin, they see their sin the same way God sees sin.
- b. Conversely, walking in the darkness means deceiving myself about my sin.
  - i. Not only deceiving yourself and declaring “I don't have sin” – but also making allowances for your sin, not seeing sin the way God sees it. Not confessing sin and seeing its destructive elements.

### 2. Test #2 - with regard to the Word of God 2:3

- a. Walking in the light means keeping His Commandments
  - i. Actively attempting every day to be obedient to all God's commands. There is a desire to ABIDE & WALK WITH HIM 2:6
- b. Conversely, walking in the darkness means consistent disobedience to His Commandments
  - i. Ignoring or being apathetic to His commands. There is no desire to be obedient. That is why this man is a liar. The spirit of God does not live in him.

### 3. Test #3 - with regard to Believers 2:9-11

- a. Walking in the light means loving believers
  - i. Not just “I love people, I am a people person.” BUT “I love God's people! I want to fellowship with God's people more than others!”
- b. Conversely - walking in the darkness means “hating” believers
  - i. Not – “I hate believers” but rather “I would rather hang with unbelievers” there is no desire for fellowship – there is a “lack of love” for believers.

**4. Test #4 - with regard to the “world” 2:15**

- a. Walking in the light means NOT loving the world or the things of the world
  - i. The true believer is seeking to rid himself of embracing all the things that the world has to offer and that it claims brings happiness and fulfillment. He is trying his best to find all of his joy and pleasure in the things of God. Though he may stumble and still has worldly fleshly desires – those desires are heartache to him and he is ashamed of them.
- b. Conversely - walking in the darkness means loving those things
  - i. A person who walks in darkness delights in the pleasures of the world. They get their jollies from the lusts of the flesh – that is being satisfied and seeking satisfaction for whatever brings pleasure to your body – being “mastered by your belly”. The lust of the eyes – seeking pleasure in what you see and wanting everything you see. The pride of life James 4:13-16 determining your life and your future without regard to God.

**5. Test #5 - with regard to faithfulness to the church 2:19**

- a. Walking in the light means being a part of the body of Christ
  - i. There is a need, a desire to be a part of the body of Christ, when you are not here, you miss it. You have a sense of belonging and a sense of responsibility to the body.
- b. Conversely - walking in the darkness means neglecting the body of Christ
  - i. There is no need or desire for being with God’s people. No sense of desire for corporate worship, no sense of responsibility or belonging.

**6. Test #6 - with regard to Jesus Christ 2:22-24**

- a. Walking in the light means ongoing confession of Christ
  - i. All of the Christian walk can be summed up in two thoughts
    1. Continual Repentance
    2. Constant Abiding – Christ is my center and my circumference, he is my whole world. Being in Christ is my desire.
- b. Conversely - walking in the darkness means a denial of Christ
  - i. I don’t mean a verbal denial that Jesus is real; but rather a denial of His Lordship in my life by ignoring his commands, disregarding Christian fellowship, loving the world and the things in the world, being unfaithful to the church, etc.

**7. Test #7 - with regard to righteousness 2:29; 3:4-10**

- a. Walking in the light means continual practicing of righteousness
  - i. Every day I am seeking to become more like Jesus. I want to change my bad habits, my sinful desires. I want to find all of my joy and happiness in the things of God. I want to find joy in reading the word, prayer, worship, fellowship with believers, and push out of my life all other pleasures and desires.
- b. Conversely - walking in the darkness means continual practicing of sin
  - i. Just read the scriptures 3:4-10.
  - ii. This person allows for sin in their life, doesn’t seek to get rid of it, actively pursues sin and its enjoyment, has a “disconnect” between church/worship and their personal life of sin.

So, now that you have taken the test, how did you fare? Does your life “prove” that you have truly been born again? Or does it appear that you are indeed deceived and “walking in darkness”? Anyone can say that they are a Christian, but at the end of this letter John says this in 5:13 *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.* I can know that I am saved by examining my own heart and life and determining if indeed the spirit of God lives in me and he is causing me to “walk in the light.”