

Described below are three tests derived from 1 John. The document was compiled using *The Enduring Word Bible Commentary* by David Guzik, and *Assurance of Faith: Three Tests from 1 John* by Josh Mulvihill.

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“The book of 1 John can be summarized in one word: certainty. John writes so that we have a certainty about who Jesus is and a certainty about our own standing with Jesus. John wants believers to know they have eternal life and wants to destroy the false assurance of the unbeliever. We can have assurance of faith and John provides three tests.” (Josh Mulvihill)

### ***Test #1. The doctrinal test – What do you believe?***

*It matters what you believe about Jesus – Josh Mulvihill*

Jesus said that if you have faith as tiny as a mustard seed, you can move mountains and cast them into the sea. It is the object of our faith that matters, not the amount of faith. I can have all the faith in the world that a 2-legged stool will hold my weight, but that will not help me. While there are many, many scriptures declaring who Jesus is, I’ve listed just a few to get us started.

- He is God who became flesh (John 1:14)
- Savior of the world (John 1:29, John 3:16, Isaiah 53:5)
- Creator of everything (Colossians 1:16)
- Fully God (Colossians 1:17)
- Fully man (Philippians 2:7,8)
- He is eternal (Colossians 1:17)
- Only way to the Father (John 14:6)
- Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5)
- Sinless (1 Peter 2:22, Hebrews 4:15, 1 John 3:5)
- Judge (Acts 10:42)
- Lord of all (Philippians 2:9-12)

*It matters what you believe is truth*

We live in a culture where everything is relative.

“In the thinking of the world today, I have my truth and you have your truth. But Jesus said, ‘I am the truth’ and the Bible clearly tells us of a truth that is greater than any individual’s feeling about it.” (David Guzik)

It is important for every believer to know what the Scriptures say about Jesus, and it is equally true for every believer to know the truth about the reality and severity of sin and our sinful condition. True believers have a correct perspective of sin and a correct perspective of the Holiness of God.

“You can *only* come to fellowship with God by dealing with your sin problem through the blood of Jesus.” (David Guzik)

Romans 10:9,10 says, “*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*”

“We do not gain God’s righteousness by works. Instead, we gain it by confessing and believing in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Confession has the idea of *agreeing with*. When we confess...the Lord Jesus, we agree with what God said about Jesus, and with what Jesus said about Himself. It means we recognize that Jesus is God, that He is the Messiah, and that His work on the cross is the only way of salvation for mankind. Mere intellectual agreement with the facts of the cross and the resurrection is not enough. You must believe in your heart; and even that belief is not enough without accompanying action: confess with your mouth.” (David Guzik)

“We believe everything which the Lord Jesus has taught, but we must go a step further, and trust him. It is not even enough to believe in him, as being the Son of God, and the anointed of the Lord; but we must believe on him... The faith that saves is not believing certain truths, nor even believing that Jesus is a Savior; but it is resting on him, depending on him, lying with all your weight on Christ as the foundation of your hope. Believe that he can save you; believe that he will save you; at any rate leave the whole matter of your salvation with him in unquestioning confidence. Depend upon him without fear as to your present and eternal salvation. This is the faith which saves the soul.” (Spurgeon)

1 John 4:3 says that to deny anything about Jesus that the Bible claims is to take our place among the anti-Christ. “Anyone who does not believe what the Bible teaches about Jesus—his virgin birth, his life, his miracles, his death, his resurrection—they are an anti-Christ.” (Josh Mulvihill)

Have you put your faith in the Jesus of the Bible? Let us not be deceived into putting our faith in ‘another Jesus’ or receiving a ‘different spirit’ or a ‘different gospel’ as Paul warns in 2 Corinthians 11:4.

“We must believe the Jesus of the Bible not our own version.” (Josh Mulvihill)

## ***Test #2. The moral test – How do you live?***

*Obedience: It matters how you live – Josh Mulvihill*

“The person who claims to be a Christian is a liar if that claim is contradicted by the conduct of unbroken and unrepentant sin (1 John 2:3-4). Obedience authenticates ones claim to love God.

What is your pattern of living: righteousness or rebellion?

- While obedience to God does not make a person a Christian, it reveals that a person is a Christian (1 John 3:7; 10).
- Behavior authenticates belief. Obedience to God is reflected in holy living, which is a critical test of our Christian faith (1 John 1:6).
- John states that if you live like a non-Christian it reveals that you likely are a non-Christian.

Obedience to Jesus indicates he is Lord of our life. The word Lord means king. Just as a king desires his subjects to obey, so Jesus expects his children to obey. It is dangerous to think that you can call yourself a Christian and live any way you want. Belief in Jesus that has no effect on the rest of one's life is not true belief." (Josh Mulvihill)

What is your attitude toward sin? Can a Christian sin and still be a Christian?

"Mark it, 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 as he once was." (David Guzik)

God desires our pattern of living to be obedience to His word. We need to practice righteousness not sin (1 John 3:4, 8-9).

### ***Test #3. The Love test – How do you Love?***

*Love: It matters how you treat others – Josh Mulvihill*

God gives us an imperative to love.

"We are not commanded to love one another to earn or become worthy of God's love. We love one another because we are loved by God, and have received that love, and live in light of it. Just as our relationship to sin and our obedience is a measure of our fellowship with God, so also is our love for God's people. If we can't love each other, then we have no way to claim a real love for God. Our relationship with God can be measured by our love for other Christians." (David Guzik)

So how do we love like Jesus?

- Sacrificial Love - 1 John 3:16 says that since Jesus laid down His life for us, we ought to lay down our lives for our brethren.
- Benevolent Love - 1 John 3:17 challenges us to meet the needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

“John will not allow us to merely *talk* about love; real love is demonstrated in actions. Jesus *displayed* a kind of love never seen before, a love we are to imitate. When we see this love at work in our lives, we can know that we are of the truth – and this brings assurance to our hearts before God, that we are standing in Him.” (David Guzik)

### ***Conclusion***

So these are the three tests of 1 John – doctrinal, moral, and love. As 1 John 2:28 exhorts, let us abide in Him so that we may face Him with confidence and not shrink away in shame.

Let me conclude with one last quote from David Guzik: “When Jesus is revealed to us, either by His coming for us or our coming to Him, we shall be like Him. God’s ultimate goal in our lives is to make us like Jesus. This does not mean that we cease to be ourselves, full of the distinct personality and character God has given us. We will still be ourselves, but our character and nature will be perfected into the image of Jesus’ perfection.

The Christian should long to be like Jesus, yet remember that God will never force a person to be like Jesus if he doesn’t want to. And that is what hell is for: people who don’t want to be like Jesus. The sobering, eternal truth is this: God gives man what he really wants. If you really want to be like Jesus, it will show in your life now, and it will be a fact in eternity. If you don’t really want to be like Jesus, it will also show in your life now, and it will also be a fact in eternity.

Knowing our eternal destiny, and living in this hope will purify our lives. When we know our end is to be more like Jesus, it makes us want to be more like Jesus right now.

Having the anticipation of being with Jesus, of the soon coming of Jesus Christ, can have a marvelous purifying effect in our lives. It makes us want to be ready, to be serving Him now, to be pleasing Him now.”