

FORMATION • COUNSELING • CHRISTIAN LIVING

15 Evidences of a True Christian

By Matthew Steven Black

The essential point of 1 John is that there are certain evidences and marks whereby you will definitely know if you have experienced the new birth. John Piper summarizes the purpose of 1 John “At the heart of his reason for writing is the desire to help them know they are born again—that they now have new spiritual life. Eternal life.” The marks that follow are evidences of the Holy Spirit. They are like “God’s fingerprints” on our lives.

Are these fingerprints of God in your life?

1 – I FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD | Every Christian has within the spiritual compulsion and hunger for God’s holy presence. It’s like food! To look into the face of Jesus through prayer and the Word is a thrill! 1 John 1:3-4, “that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.”

2 – I CAN NO LONGER LIVE COMFORTABLY IN SIN | If spiritual intimacy is like a food for the Christian, then sin is like a cancer. All you want to do as a child of God is get rid of it—keep it as far away as possible. 1 John 1:6, “If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.” 1 John 3:9, “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.” 1 John 5:18, “We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.”

3 – I OBEY GOD FROM MY HEART | Our feelings and our circumstances change. As true Christians, we choose to glorify God no matter what we feel like.

1 John 2:3, “And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.”

1 John 2:29, “If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.”

4 – I HUNGER FOR GOD’S WORD | True Christians hunger for God and his Word like a newborn baby craves milk (1 Pet 1:2-3). Before a person is saved, there may be a passing hunger, but once a person is born again, the hunger is unquenchable. 1 John 2:14, “you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.”

5 – I LIVE SEPARATE FROM THE WORLD | If you are a believer, you have rendered yourself dead to this world of sin. Specifically, you do not live for, and thereby worship the world’s pleasures, possessions, and pride. The world offers a false happiness. We know that true happiness is found in our holy fellowship with Christ. 1 John 2:15-17, “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 in possessions—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.” 1 John 5:4, “For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.” D. L. Moody put it best: “The man that is popular with the world is not a friend of Jesus. You cannot serve two masters. The world hates Christ, and if you are a friend of the world, you cannot be a friend of His. You may be sure that something is wrong with you when everybody is your friend.”

6 - I CONFESS CHRIST BOLDLY TO THE WORLD | True Christians openly confess that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven. A true believer not only believes that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Ancient of Days come in human flesh to redeem guilty sinners, but each believer has the deep desire to confess the Person of Jesus Christ boldly. 1 John 2:23, “No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.”

Jesus said the same thing, “So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknow-

- ledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven” (Mt 10:32-33).

7 - I LONG FOR JESUS TO COME AGAIN | The genuine child of God knows that one day, we shall be like Jesus! Our unsaved neighbors are looking for the next great thing in fashion or among the celebrities or the movies or games or technology or the next great job opportunity. As Christians, we want to use all that God gives us for the glory of God (including our technology, how we dress, our job, our family), but our great focus is the return of Christ. The focus is so consuming that it will actually purify the one who hopes in His return. We are very soon going to see Jesus, our great God and Savior, face to face. 1 John 3:1-3, “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are... Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.”

8 - I AM REJECTED BECAUSE OF MY FAITH | Every true Christian should expect that his new pattern of life will be rejected in some way by the world. The apostle John says we should not be surprised. 1 John 3:13, “Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you.” Jesus said, “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you” (Jn 15:18).

9 - I LOVE FELLOW CHRISTIANS | Christ Himself had said earlier to the apostle John and the other eleven disciples, “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (Jn 13:35). There are over 35 commands in the New Testament for Christians to live life together and serve “one another.” 1 John 4:7, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.” 1 John 5:1, “Everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.” 1 John 1:6, “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.”

10 - GOD ANSWERS MY PRAYERS | One who is genuinely born again has such a union and closeness with the Lord that he is constantly breathing out prayers

to God and seeing those prayers answered on a continual basis. It is God’s indwelling Spirit, the Comforter, who compels the Christian to pray instead of fret in times of great trial. 1 John 3:21-22, “We have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.”

11 - I DISCERN TRUTH BY THE BIBLE | True believers have the God-given discernment capability to tell when someone is teaching falsely especially when it comes to who Jesus is and what He has done on the Cross. The Bible - not feelings, trends, or what is "cool" - determines the standard of truth and practice. A person without God's indwelling presence cannot discern the things of the Spirit of God (1 Cor 2:14) and is often drawn into error. 1 John 4:6, "We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error."

12 - I ENJOY THE COMFORT & CONVICTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT | "By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit" (1 Jn 4:13). It is through the Spirit of God that we can believe and repent. He gives us a new heart and a new spirit by His Spirit (Eze 36:26-27). Through the Spirit, Christ's presence is within me, and He says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Heb 13:5). What comfort this is for the true Christian.

13 - I TRUST JESUS CHRIST AS MY KING | Believing Jesus means to trust Him your King to direct your every thought and action. Belief is more than intellectual understanding, but actually surrendering to Him as Christ ("the Anointed One"). To be anointed as Christ in the Bible is to be the Almighty King. As born-again people, we trust Christ as King to control and direct us. 1 John 5:1a, "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God."

14 - I PERSEVERE IN VICTORY OVER THE WORLD | "For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world." (1 Jn 5:4). A Christian will persevere in the love of God and holiness because of the Holy Spirit living in him or her. A justified person may fall, but they keep getting up by the grace of God.

15 - I HAVE ASSURANCE OF MY SALVATION | "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" (1 Jn 5:13). It is one thing to believe sound doctrine, but sound doctrine is not the goal, but the pathway to the goal, which is knowing Christ who is eternal life. When a person has this walk with God through Christ, they have a sweet assurance that they are God's child and have eternal life. It's just as certain as a person who grows up with their mother and father. You know God is your Father and will not forsake you. You will live with him forever.

These Fingerprints Don't Save Us

No Christian has all these marks perfectly, but they are the picture of holiness all Christians long for. These marks of God in our life do not make us God's children, they show that we are God's children. The children of a mom and dad did nothing to gain the family likeness. Being "born" is a gift. And being "born again" into God's family is a gift from God. The apostle Paul explains this in Titus 2:4-7, "For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

If you are missing the marks, don't look to yourself, but look to Jesus Christ alone for salvation. Look at how perfect his payment for your sin is. Turn to him, and he will transform you and make you what he wants you to be. Look to Jesus alone to be saved.