

How To Identify A Christian

Part 3

Characteristics of a Child of God

How can we really know that we are a “*born again*” child of God?

1 John 5:11-13 [NIV] *“And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. **He who has the Son has life**; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.”*

If we believe in the lifesaving sacrifice of Jesus Christ and continue to live a life that is yielded to Him we can be assured of eternal life in the created family of God.

How do we “*have the Son of God?*”

John 14:15-18 [NIV] *“If you love me, you will obey what I command. **And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth.** The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and **will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.**”*

If we live by the words of Christ, He will ask the Father to send the “*spirit of truth*” [the Holy Spirit] to be with us and if we yield to Him, and allow Him to direct our lives.

Note Jesus said “*I will come to you*”.

If we yield to the will of the Holy Spirit and deny our own wills Jesus will live again in us through the person of the Holy Spirit.

What will the indwelling Holy Spirit do in us and through us as we yield to Him.

John 16:5-15 [NIV] *“Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.”*

- (a) Show us and through us the world its sinful way of life.
- (b) Show us and through us the world the righteousness [holiness] of God.
- (c) Remind us and through us the world that there will be a time of judgement for all humanity.
- (d) Will guide us and through us the world an understanding of God’s Word, the truth, by being Christ’s spokesperson on earth.

(e) Will help us to glorify our Creator God through the worship of a life surrendered to God's Will.

Romans 12:1-2 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to **offer your bodies as living sacrifices**, holy and pleasing to God, **this is your spiritual act of worship**. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

The word translated “bodies” is the Greek word “soma” indicating our total life force of our body, mind and spirit.

This is how we can worship God in “spirit and in truth”.

John 4:23-24 [NIV] *“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.”*

1 John 2:29 [NIV] *“If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.”*

Every “born again” child of God will be practicing a life of righteousness, not a life governed by sinful acts.

1 John 3:9 [NIV] *“No-one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.”*

The “seed” of the Holy Spirit” in us empowers us to resist a life of sin.

1 John 4:7-8 [NIV] *“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.”*

“Born again” children of God will love God and love other “born again” children of God.

1 John 4:9-11 [NIV] *“This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”*

It is our accepting the love of God expressed in sacrifice of Jesus Christ that prompts us to love other human beings, even if they are not yet “born again” children of God.

1 John 5:4 [NIV] *“for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.”*

“Born again” children of God will resist the influence of this ungodly society.

Our faith in Jesus Christ and His victory over sin and death will give us the confidence to **not** be part of this Satan influenced society.

In spite of us having to remain in it as a witness to God’s righteousness by being “light and salt”.

Matthew 5:13-16 [NIV] *“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”*

We are to be a light to this blind and darkened world and salt to savour the unpleasant taste of evil in society.

This is how we overcome this world's influence.

Romans 12:21 [NIV] *“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”*

Not overcome by this world but overcome it with the goodness of God expressed in and through our lives.

Revelation 12:11 [NIV] *“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”*

The three tools we use to overcome the world's evil influence that is generated by Satan the “*him*” in this verse and the “*they*” are the “*born again*” Christians.

The three tools we use as Christians are:-

1 The “*Blood of the Lamb*”

John 1:29, 36 [NIV] *“The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” ... “When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!””*

Accepting the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Only Son of God, as a substitute for our own deserved death opens up access to God the Father, and our request for the active indwelling of the Holy Spirit, makes us immune to Satan's influence. Luke 11:13 [NIV]

1 John 4:4 [NIV] *“You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.”*

The Holy Spirit in us is greater than all evil spirits in this world.

2 The “*Word of our testimony*”

Acts 20:22-24 [NIV] *“And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me, the task of **testifying to the gospel of God's grace.**”*

We are to give evidence of God's Grace [mercy, love, patience and faithfulness] **towards us personally.**

Matthew 10:32-33 [NIV] *“Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.”*

Acknowledged to all people that we are Christians and worship our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Matthew 10:27 [NIV] *“What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs.”*

All we are taught by God in secret we are to proclaim to all who will listen.

Matthew 10:28-31 [NIV] *“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even*

the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."

Such a testimony could bring us persecution but we are **not** to fear what many may do to our physical life, for our spiritual life is beyond their reach.

3 Willing to face even physical death.

Matthew 16:24-25 [NIV] *"Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it."*

We have been willing to give up our life; this could mean physical death, but also means giving up our will to fulfil God's Will.

Luke 14:26-27 [NIV] *"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."*

The Greek word translated "hate" is "misfo" meaning to disregard for one thing over another.

Where anyone may hinder the work we know God wants us to do as a testimony to His Love for humanity, we must disregard their demands on us.

Matthew 10:34-39 [NIV] *"Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn "a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.'" "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and **whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.**"*

God and His Work must take first place in our lives.

Matthew 6:31-33 [NIV] *"So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But **seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.**"*

God will provide all we need to fulfil His Work through us.

Romans 12:1 [NIV] *"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship."*

In most cases God desires us to be a "living" sacrifice so that we can continue to be a witness to others of His Love for all humanity.

Remember however that the word translated "bodies" is the Greek word "soma", meaning the total life-force of body, mind and spirit.

God is seeking our total commitment to being a witness for Him in the world that is blinded to why they have been given human existence.

Matthew 5:13-16 [NIV] *"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the*

same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

Salt has to be pure if it is to be effective, also it is for others to experience the pleasure it adds to their diet [spiritual food].

A light has to continue to give out its light wherever there is darkness of ignorance of the true Creator God to be effective.

A Christian constantly exposes themselves to the people who are in this darkness of not knowing God.

All of the above characteristics are the result of one thing in our lives.

Galatians 5:16-25 [NIV] *“So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”*

Keeping in step with the Holy Spirit as we are led through life by Him.

Romans 8:9-11 [NIV] *“You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.”*

This is how a Christian is identified.