



Spirit of Grace Herald

The Ministry of Dennis
& Benedicta Pollock

February, 2022

Spirit of Grace Ministries

P.O. Box 2068
McKinney, TX 75070
(530) 712-4253

Email: grace@spiritofgrace.org

Examine Yourself

In 2 Corinthians Paul writes: **Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? – unless indeed you are disqualified. (2 Corinthians 13:5).** Paul is suggesting that not all of these "believers" in the church may be genuine Christians. And just to be safe he suggests that they do an examination of themselves, "test themselves" to see if they pass the test and are in fact born-again children of God.

Today, there are numerous ministers who suggest that if you think you are a believer, then you surely are a believer. But these Corinthians to whom Paul wrote did believe, at least in their own minds. And had you questioned them, they would surely have told you that, yes, they believed that Jesus died on the cross for their sins, and yes, they believed that He rose from the dead the third day, and yes, they believed that Jesus was the Son of God. Therefore, they must be Christians. They surely would pass muster on any theological test. How do we examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith? The 1st epistle of John gives us several criteria. In the first chapter John declares: "If we say that we have fel-

lowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth." (1 John 1:6) In the second chapter he writes: "He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." (1 John 2:4)

Notice that both verses make a big deal about "saying." These people are "say-ers." They **say** they know God and Christ. They **say** they have fellowship with the Lord. They **say** they are children of God. But their saying and their experience contradict each other. If you did an interview with them and asked them if they believed in God, they would **say**, "Of course I do." If you asked them, "Do you believe that Jesus died for the sins of the world?" they would **say**, "I sure do!" They would **say** all the right things.

Here is what John says: When people say they know God but do not keep His commandments, they are liars – they do not know Him at all. They can say "Halleluia" and "God is good" and "I believe" all day long, but all their saying doesn't make their relationship real.



John is not finished with this issue. He writes: "**He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now.**" (1 John 2:9) Real Christians will love their brothers and sisters, not hate them. And if you do hate your brother or sister, if you despise them and delight in their misfortune, you are in darkness, no matter how many times

you repeat: "I'm in the light, I'm in the light, I'm in the light!"

But John is determined to push this theme still harder, and in the next chapter he writes: "**Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning... Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.**" (1 John 3:7-9)

Examine Yourself

Things are black and white with John. You live a righteous life – you are like your Master Jesus. You live a sinful life – you are like your master, the devil. In fact, John is so insistent on this that he declares if you have been born of God, if you have truly been born again, you *cannot* sin. God's righteous seed is in you. This is where most people, in fact most Christians would protest, "Wait a minute, John! Are you saying that it is not even possible for a Christian to sin? Because if that is true, there's not much hope for any of us."

One thing we need to understand is the difference between the ultimate and the general concepts of good and evil. For example, in the ultimate sense no one is good; we are all evil. "There is none good, no not one." And yet in a more general sense there *are* good men and women. The Bible says about Barnabas: "**For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.**" (Acts 11:24). God said to the devil about Job: "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, **a blameless and upright man**, one who fears God and shuns evil?" (Job 2:3). Were Barnabas and Job exceptions to the "there is none good" rule? Were they entirely sinless from birth to death? Of course not. But in a more general sense they were "good" people. They followed the Lord the best they could with the knowledge they had. And they received amazing compliments in the word of God. In a general sense they were good; in the ultimate sense they were sinners like all of humanity.

In the same way John tells us that, in this general sense, we cannot go on sinning the way unbelievers do. We have received a new nature; the Holy Spirit now lives in us, and we cannot continue to live like we once did. And if we do continue in the same sinful, selfish, lustful manner that we did before our profession of faith in Jesus, it must be that we are still in the darkness.

I believe all of this demonstrates what we should look for when we follow Paul's advice to "examine ourselves" to see whether we are in the faith. We will not find sinless perfection, but we should find a transformed life. Our lives, our behavior, our love for others, and our eagerness to be a blessing to people should demonstrate that we are true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Partner with Us!

Spirit of Grace Ministries need you! If you are being blessed by the pamphlets and articles we produce each month, and if you have a heart to see the gospel go forth to the nations, we would invite you to partner with us in our Friends of Grace Program. By committing to support SOGM with a monthly donation of \$25 or more you will enable us to continue the work of sharing the gospel and teaching God's people the word of God. Or you can give a \$300 (or more) one-time gift, and you will be added to our list of friends. And through your prayers you can insure that our labors are not in vain. We send out a special gift to our Friends of Grace each month, usually a teaching CD or a DVD report of a recent mission.

Please consider being a vital part of this ministry through your regular prayers and giving. Together we can make a difference! To get started, send us your contribution and let us know you want to become a Friend of Grace

