



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

1 JOHN 3:18-24 – A TRUE BELIEVER...*HOLY AFFECTIONS!*

COLORADO JUNE 9, 2020

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If we are true believers, if we are “of the truth” as John says (1 John 3:19), then there will be a desire for holy affections. Our salvation will not be based on our feelings, or an experience. If you are truly saved, if your profession is real and genuine, it will show up in your life.

I. 1 JOHN 3:18-24 – A TRUE BELIEVER...*HOLY AFFECTIONS!*

(18) “Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. (19) We shall know by this that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him, (20) in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. (21) Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; (22) and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. (23) And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. (24) And the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And we know by this that He abides in us by the Spirit whom He has given us.” 1John 3:18-24

John writes later, “*These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.*” (1John 5:13) He wants us to know and be assured that you are a Christian. So how can we know we are saved? Here in 1 John 3:19 and 3:24, John says, “*we shall know by this*”. And he shows us reasons how we can know we are saved...*because it shows up in our life*. It’s not an emotion or an event. No it is a zeal for what Jonathan Edwards called “holy affections”.

A. A LOVE FOR OTHER CHRISTIANS- 1 JOHN 3:18-19

The gospel summons us to share our time, our friendship, our possessions and more with our needy brothers and sisters. Christ constantly gave of Himself to others in need. (Matthew 9:35-36) It is Christ’s selfless sacrifice for us that shapes and inspires us in the practice of love for others. And it is this practice of love that gives assurance of true Christian faith. Remember, likeness is the evidence of belonging. God wants us to know that we are really His because we love like Him.

John makes it clear that the practice of love in our lives is a sure indication of our salvation. (1 John 3:14-15) A person may claim to be filled with God’s love but it is mere words if we cannot meet tangible needs. In Matthew 22:35-40, Jesus calls us to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves. To say that we love God and yet refuse to give that love towards another unfortunate brother or sister discredits our claim and that’s hypocrisy.¹ The mark of a true believer is love for God

and love for the brethren. What demonstrates that we are of the truth? We have a real affection for the people of God. And this love is demonstrated not by what we say, but how we sacrifice. Is this holy affection a true work of God in your life?

B. THANKFUL FOR GOD’S GRACE- 1 JOHN 3:19-20

A genuine believer has a thankfulness for the unmerited favor given by God. Though we fail and fall short, and our heart may condemn us, God knows all things and our confidence before God is based solely on God’s gracious acceptance of us in Christ, not on anything we have done.² Yes we sin but God has given us His favor when we do not deserve it. And God has given us His mercy, thus not giving us what we deserve which is judgement. We have been justified, declared righteous by Christ’s death in our place on the cross. All this points to the actions of a true and living faith that has a real sense of fellowship with God. And with that comes a confidence and peace that results only because of God’s grace, even when we do sin. Do you have a true thankfulness for God’s grace where He has forgiven your sins and cleanses you from all unrighteousness even though you don’t deserve it? (1John 1:7)

C. A BOLDNESS IN PRAYER- 1 JOHN 3:21-22A

John says that if our heart does not condemn us, “*we have confidence before God.*” Let those words sink in for a moment. John isn’t referring to confidence in general but rather of one’s standing before God Almighty and access to Him! It is a confidence by which we can turn trustingly toward God.

“**confidence**” Greek “**parresia**” means boldness and freedom of speech. In ancient times it was a valued right of a citizen in a free state to speak his mind. Freedom of speech without fear or shame. It is the idea of coming before someone of importance, power and authority and feeling free to express whatever is on their mind. It was a most valued right of a citizen.

So for believers it is being able to come into the presence of our Father Who loves us, without fear.³ It is confidence to approach God freely. This speaks of the believer’s free and uninhibited communion with God in our daily life bringing us into intimate relationship with our Father...face to face!⁴ What an amazing blessing John points out for us! This is the freedom to run into the presence of God and spill out whatever is on our hearts. Not only can we have confidence at the end of our life that we will live eternally with God forever, but we can also have confidence before God now, today! And

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS, GOVERNOR & SPOUSES: TUESDAY AT 7:15AM, CAPITOL BASEMENT, ROOM 0109

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this is the distinct difference between a believer and an unbeliever. A genuine believer will have a desire to come to the Father and pour out their heart to the Lord in prayer.

D. A HOLY AFFECTION TOWARDS OBEDIENCE- 1 JOHN 3:22

John says that “*we keep*” and “*we do*”. Both are in present tense and refer to the ongoing conduct of true believers. The Christian keeps and does what is pleasing in God’s sight. It is our obedience that gives evidence of our greater desire to do what is pleasing to God. Our obedience to God’s Word, His commandments, (Psalm 19, Psalm 119) reveal that our will and God’s will are in harmony.⁵ And nothing honors God more than keeping His commandments and pleasing Him.

Think of it like a child doing things for his father just in thoughtful ways that pleases him. And this child also does specifically what his father has asked him to do and spelled out. It is a desire for holy obedience to the commands of God and to do what is pleasing in His sight. A true believer will have a holy affection for obeying and pleasing God. And as John states in 1 John 5:3 that His commandments are not burdensome, but instead our joy because it pleases our Father.

E. FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST - 1 JOHN 3:23

John gives us “*His commandment*” to obey. This word is singular so in 1 John 3:23, this is all one command to obey which essentially has two facets: “*believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ*” and second, “*love one another*”. To “*believe*” means that we trust in God’s Son as our only hope for salvation. It means we rest on His perfect, sufficient and atoning sacrifice on the cross for our sins. Only by His perfect righteousness of His obedient life we can be saved.

All people everywhere are sinners. That is why God tells everyone, He commands all people everywhere to repent and believe in His Son Jesus Christ. (Acts 17:10, John 3:16) We are all sinners and sin is a serious problem. Through our attitudes and actions we have rebelled against our Maker. And this great God is perfectly holy. And He must respond with fierce opposition to sin. He must punish it. Only when we understand God’s wrath toward sin can we realize that we need to be saved from it. Only when we hear the very bad news that we are deserving of judgement can we appreciate the very good news that God has provided salvation through His Son Jesus Christ. This is the hope of our life; that Jesus, God’s

perfect and righteous Son, died in my place for my sins. Jesus took all the punishment. Jesus received all the wrath as He hung on the cross, so I could be completely forgiven.⁶

To “*believe*” is in the aorist tense in the Greek and refers to a completed action at one point in time and produces continuing results into the future. In other words, at the point when I trusted in Christ’s saving work on the cross, this one action produces continuing results by God for the remainder of my life. When I “*believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ*”, from that time forward, it produces ongoing results into the future. When John tells us we need to abide in Christ, remain in Christ over the long haul. We are given that faith in Christ by God and it is eternal. A true believer never ceases to believe in Christ...never. Do you have a holy affection for Jesus Christ? The crucial question that only you can answer is this, do you “*believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ*.”? If not, repent of your sins and “*believe*”, trust in Him alone for salvation.

F. A TRUE BELIEVER HAS THE HOLY SPIRIT - 1 JOHN 3:24

The power of the good news of the gospel isn’t just that we are declared righteous before God and justified on the basis of Christ’s sinless and perfect sacrifice for us on the cross. No it’s not just that my position before God the Father has changed, but also the power of sin in my life has changed. Not only is my position before Christ righteous based on Him, but He is in me through the Holy Spirit to make me righteous! Through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and the power of God’s Word, God begins to peel away at our desires for sin and renews our mind and changes our lives. And so this ongoing work of the Spirit in our lives is called “*sanctification*.”

And the presence of the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity, in a believers life cannot be hidden. He is the “*Holy Spirit*” and His great mission is to glorify Christ (John 16:14) and to conform us to His likeness. (Galatians 5:22-23) So every Christian is indwelt by the Holy Spirit as John affirms. (Romans 8:9-10) It is His ministry in us to conform us to the image of Christ, God’s Son. (Romans 8:28) We know Christ abides in us through the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in us. And it is by each of these areas we can know we are of the faith...a true believer in Jesus Christ.

Are these affections and passions true of your life?

¹ Hamilton, Ian, *Let’s Study the Letters of John*. The Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, UK, 2008. Pg. 45.

² Hamilton, Ian, *Let’s Study the Letters of John*. The Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, UK, 2008. Pg. 50.

³ MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary Series on 1-3 John*. Moody Press: Chicago, IL, 2007. Pg. 145.

⁴ Hiebert, D. Edmond, *The Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary*. Bob Jones University Press: Greenville, SC, 1991. Pg. 169.

⁵ Hamilton, Ian, *Let’s Study the Letters of John*. The Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, UK, 2008. Pg. 51.

⁶ Mahoney, C.J., *The Cross Centered Life*. Multnomah: Penguin Random House LLC: NY, 2002. Pg. 14-15.