

Now in the Scripture, true love for God and Christ is seen and made evident by how we behave. In other words, the Bible points out the kind of behavior that shows itself as loving God, and in contrast points out a false kind of love which is not really true love for God, because it lacks obedience. It is clear from scripture that love for God produces obedience to His commandments. This obedience is the result of regeneration in the life of the believer. This obedience is produced by a willing submission to the Lordship of Christ.

1 John 5:3 - 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. NASB

John 14:15,21 - 15 "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. 21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him." NASB

1 John 4:20-21 - 20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for **the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.** 21 And this commandment we have from Him, that **the one who loves God should love his brother also.** NASB

True Conversion or Mere Professors?

In the New Testament, the writers are continually laboring to show the nature of true faith and also the nature of false faith. The believer is called to self examination again and again to test the reality of their faith. This was a theme in the teaching of Jesus when He would present His parables to teach about the nature of the Kingdom and of saving faith.

Luke 8:14-15 - 14 "And the seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, **and bring no fruit to maturity.** 15 "And the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and **hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.** NASB

Luke 18:22-26 - 22 And when Jesus heard this, He said to him, **"One thing you still lack; sell all that you possess, and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."** 23 But when he had heard these things, he became very sad; for he was extremely rich. 24 And Jesus looked at him and said, **"How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!** 25 "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." NASB

Luke 12:16-21 - 16 And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a certain rich man was very productive. 17 "And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' 18 "And he said, **"This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.** 19 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.'" 20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' 21 **"So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."** NASB

Matthew 13:47-50 - 47 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind; 48 and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down, and **gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away.** 49 "So it will be at the end of the age; the angels shall come forth, and take out the wicked from among the righteous, 50 and will cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. NASB

This theme in the teaching of Jesus, shows that true faith produces good works consistent with that faith. In fact, those who do not submit to Christ as Lord, or reject Him by disobedience, are condemned as not possessing salvation. A man's good deeds are proof of his true repentance and a man's evil deeds prove him to be a child of the devil.

Matthew 7:21 - 21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. NASB

Luke 13:24-27 - 24 "Strive to enter by the narrow door; for **many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.** 25 "Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Lord, open up to us!' then He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know where you are from.' 26 "Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets'; 27 and **He will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from; depart from Me, all you evildoers.'** NASB

This was also carried on by the Apostles as they explained the Gospel and the kingdom of God.

Titus 1:16 - 6 They profess to know God, **but by their deeds they deny Him**, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed. NASB

2 Timothy 3:1-5 - 3 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 **For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money**, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; 5 **holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these.** NASB

James 1:22 - 22 But **prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers** who delude themselves. NASB

2 Corinthians 13:5 - 5 **Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith**; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you — **unless indeed you fail the test?** NASB

We are commanded again and again to repent and stop sinning. This is a fundamental part of Christian life, that is, that we submit to the Lordship of Christ and obey His commandments. It is clear from Scripture that those who go on in unrepentant sin will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Romans 6:12-13 - 12 Therefore **do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts**, 13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; **but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.** NASB

Romans 8:12-14 - 12 So then, brethren, **we are under obligation**, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh — 13 **for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.** 14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. NASB

Ephesians 5:3-5 - 3 But **do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you**, as is proper among saints; 4 and **there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting**, but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. NASB

A proper understanding of salvation issues from the book of first John alone, and shines light as clear as a sunbeam on these issues. A true Christian has been *“born of God”*, because God has decided to give Him life, and that life is eternal by nature. When we have been *“born again”*, we have become new creations with an eternal destiny. You cannot turn from genuine faith, because you are kept by Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Bible never teaches that someone who is genuinely saved, can reject or disengage themselves from Christ. Someone who apostatizes must have had at one time an orthodox and essential *profession*, but not a genuine new birth. But as John explains of the apostates or antichrists;

1 John 2:18-19 - 18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour. 19 **They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us.** NASB

If one were *“born of God”* he could not continue to sin. The idea here is that true converts do not live in continual patterns of sin (the word for *“sins”* here means “ongoing continual practice of sin”), and that further if one is living in an ongoing continual pattern of sin he/she is only a **mere professor** and not a **true believer**.

1 John 3:6-10 - 6 **No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.** 7 Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; 8 **the one who practices sin is of the devil**; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil. 9 **No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.** NASB

These contrasts are meant to speak to the true believer of how to discern false teaching from true teaching about the faith. When an apostate continues in his sin, he shows the reality of his eternal state and divine calling. When one continues in righteousness and truth, their works are the proof positive of saving faith.

1 John 2:29 - 29 If you know that He is righteous, you know **that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.** NASB

When an apostate breaks fellowship with Christians, and begins to live in continual patterns of sin, they show themselves to be children of the devil.

1 John 3:9-10 - 9 **No one who is born of God practices sin,** because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 10 **By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God,** nor the one who does not love his brother. NASB

John makes it crystal clear that the distinguishing mark of true faith is the fruit or product that comes from it. When the product of one's life is a continual pattern of sin, they manifest that the true nature of their faith is only **mere profession** and not the fruit of being **"born of God."**

1 John 4:7-9 - 7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and **everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.** 8 **The one who does not love does not know God,** for God is love. NASB

Those who have been born of the divine will, (John 1:13), persevere. Not because they persist in their own spiritual fervor, but because Christ the good Shepherd knows His sheep, and He will lose none that the Father has given Him, but will raise them up at the last day (John 6:39).

1 John 5:18-19 - 18 We know that no one who is born of God sins; **but He who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him.** NASB

It is obvious then that there is a so called faith, a **mere profession**, which is really no faith at all. If someone claims to have faith, but does not live a life consistent with the teaching of Christ, his/her faith is useless. True saving faith is that which produces the fruit of God's Spirit in the life of a Christian. ***Faith in Christ is not just mental agreement with the gospel message, but it is a life response to the gospel, which produces actions consistent with the children of God.*** The demons believe the Gospel message and know that it is true, but they have not conformed their lives to it. Many people are just like them, they have believed that the message is true, but that have not submitted their life to Christ to obey Him.

James 2:14-19 - 14 What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? **Can such faith save him?** 15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? 17 **In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.** 18 But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. 19 **You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that-and shudder.**

Faith is the reality and proof that our hearts have been cleansed and we have been reconciled to God. Faith has substance, and that substance is a transformed life. Remember how Jesus defined of faith.

Luke 9:23 - 23 And He was saying to them all, **"If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.** NASB

You see He is calling for the transformation of one's life. It is a willingness to deny oneself and go where He goes and do what He does. It is not our good behavior that earns favor with God, but our good behavior is the **product** of the kind of faith that saves. If we realize that Christ had to die for our sins, how can we walk in them any longer! Eternal life is the free gift of God given to those who repent and have faith in Christ. It is by grace through faith in Christ alone that we are saved, not by our works. But **this faith produces a life surrendered to the Lordship of Christ** and is a testimony of Christ's power over sin. This is why we are exhorted toward good works.

Ephesians 2:8-10 - 8 For **by grace you have been saved through faith;** and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast. 10 **For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works,** which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. NASB

Therefore **true saving faith is seen in contrast to mere profession** by a submission to the Lordship of Christ which produces a life of good works and obedience to God's commandments.