

Message #15**I John 3:21-24**

God does not want His people filled with anxiety or doubt about whether or not they are God's people. He wants them knowing with absolute certainty that they not only know Him, but that they are in close fellowship with Him.

GOD DESIRES THAT HIS PEOPLE KNOW THEY ARE IN CLOSE FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM AND HE HAS DEvised SPECIFIC THINGS THAT DO LET HIS PEOPLE KNOW THAT THEY ARE IN CLOSE FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM.

TEST #1 – The test of our heart. **3:21**

One may tell where one is at in one's relationship with God by the continual status of the heart. If our heart does not continually (present tense) condemn us, then we can have confidence that we are in a right relationship with God. Now of course what is really needed for this assessment is real personal honesty and integrity before God.

Being right with God is a matter of the heart. If you are continually involved in something that you know is not of God and your heart or conscience does not condemn you, then there are three serious options you need to think about:

- 1) Your heart is being deceived either by Satan or by yourself in a self-convincing way that you are right with God, when you really are not.
- 2) Your heart is so hardened and calloused to sin that it no longer even hears the Spirit of God.
- 3) Your heart has never really ever been right with God.

TEST #2 – The test of our prayers. **3:22**

Now the verb tenses “ask” and “receive” are both present tense and this is important. The continual and habitual pattern of one's life who is in fellowship with God is that they will continually ask for things and continually receive answers. This does not mean that every request will be answered.

The “if” clause is third class conditional, not first class conditional. There are religious frauds who will tell you that if you do this, it is a fact (first class) your prayer will be answered. This condition is not the condition of fact. What this means is “if” the conditions are met, it is probable (third class) that God will answer the prayer. In other words, there is a good probability that God will answer the prayer “if”: 1) We keep His commandments; 2) We do things pleasing to Him. Keeping His commandments are tangible principles we obey in conformity with the written Word of God. Pleasing Him are applications we make, when we may or may not have specific verses.

As near as I can determine, there are nine Biblical prerequisites that, if we meet them, guarantee that we will have many prayers answered in our life:

- 1) Obey the written and known Word of God in any given situation. **3:22**
- 2) Do specific things that you know please God. **3:22**
- 3) Pray in Jesus' name. John 16:23-24
- 4) Examine our motives to make certain our prayer request is not for our own lusts. James 4:3
- 5) Examine our motives to make certain we have been forgiven and are forgiving. Matt. 6:14-15
- 6) Examine our lives and make certain we are not covering some secret life of sin. Ps. 66:18; Is. 59:1-2; Jer. 11:10-12
- 7) Examine our prayer to make certain it is not a pharisaical show. Matt. 6:5-8
- 8) Examine our relationship with our spouse. I Pet. 3:1-7
- 9) Make certain when we pray that we have faith that God can answer that prayer. James 1:5-7

TEST #3 – The test of our faith. **3:23a**

I am going to say this point blank—if you do not personally believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior, His name and His alone to save you, you do not have a relationship with God and you do not have fellowship with God.

TEST #4 – The test of our love. **3:23b**

John comes back to a point we have seen several times in this epistle—love one another. The pronoun “another” is another of the same kind.

I find something grammatically intriguing about this verse. The commandment is singular, but the application is plural. In other words, this is viewed as one commandment with a plural application.

Let me say this in a very down to earth way—if you continually care more about unsaved people than you do your own church family, something in your spiritual life is drastically wrong and you do not have fellowship with God.

TEST #5 – The test of our obedience. **3:24**

The Spirit of God has been given to us. The verb tense “given” is aorist, which means He was given to us at one point or moment in time, the moment we believed. Now the Holy Spirit is prompting us to obey the Word of God. As we do this, the Spirit gives us assurance that we are walking close with the Lord.

God wants us to know we are right with Him and know we are in fellowship with Him. Do you have this knowledge today? Is your trust totally and only in Jesus Christ to save you from your sins? Are you purposing to meet the tests and prerequisites?