

Tests of True Conversion

Text: 1 John 2:3-14

Topics: Salvation, Obedience, Works, Assurance

Series: Bold Assurance

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An unemployed man applied for work at every business he could think of. One day he went to the zoo to see about getting a job there. The manager sighed with relief. "You've come at exactly the right time. Can you start right away?"

"Yes, of course," the man replied. "What do I do?" "Our gorilla died this morning, and we need you to take his place. Wear this gorilla outfit, and behave like a gorilla." The manager gave him the big, hairy costume and took him to the service entrance at the back of the gorilla cage. "The gorilla is one of the most popular animals in our zoo. I'm counting on you to do a good job."

The man climbed into the suit, and then walked through the back door into the cage. Some people were already there, and shouted in excitement when the gorilla appeared. The gorilla grunted back at them, and began climbing trees and swinging on the ropes. The people loved it, and so did the man inside the gorilla suit. The more they 'oohed' and 'aahed' the higher he would climb and swing. In his excitement, the man swung so high he went up and over the wall of his cage and landed in the cage of the next animal, the lion! The lion, drawn by the commotion, started walking over to investigate. Seeing another animal in its cage,

it roared and bared its fangs. The man inside the gorilla suit panicked and started yelling, "Help, get me out of here!" The lion immediately leaped through the air, knocking the "gorilla" over. As the man lay on the ground with the lion's mouth on his neck, he heard a voice whisper in his ear, "Shut up, stupid, or you'll get us both fired!"

Now here's the point: what makes an animal a gorilla? Is it what's on the outside, or what's on the inside? The inside, of course. It's the same with being a Christian: it's not what's on the outside, but what's on the inside that counts.

If I have been genuinely converted, I will...

1. Obey the Word (1 John 2:3-6)

A. **The Obedience Test.** As a Christian, I should have a strong desire to obey Jesus as Lord. I should also have a strong feeling of regret whenever I am living in disobedience to Jesus. (John 14:15; 15:10; 1 John 5:3. Luke 6:46)

B. "Obedience to God does not bring about justification (which comes by faith alone), but obedience as a pattern of life does give evidence that one has been born again. To **know him** involves a personal relationship that transforms practical behavior." *The ESV Study Bible*

C. Is there any area of my life where I am comfortable living in disobedience to Jesus or to the Word of God?

In Harrodsburg, KY - everyone is saved. Everyone knows the Gospel message and believes in Jesus. But few people were seeking daily obedience.

I would witness to people and they would tell me - Im saved. I prayed a prayer at Vacation bible school when I was a kid. Jesus is my Lord and Savior.

I would always say - "Great! Now what has our Lord been telling you to do lately?"

What do you mean?...

You want to be sure you are obeying his command.

What about his command to be baptized?

I have been asked lately by many of you - where does the Bible command baptism before observing the Lord's Supper.

By the way - every church requires this. Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopalian, Lutheran, Assembly of God, and almost all Non-denominational churches require Baptism before you can observe the Lord's Supper.

“Remember our Lord” it is a LORD’s Supper. Is there any area in my life where I am not obeying Jesus?

BFM 2000 - Article 7 - Being a church ordinance, it is pre-requisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

Paul warns that if we take of the Lords Supper

1 Corinthians 11:27–31 (HCSB) *Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy way will be guilty of sin against the body and blood of the Lord. So a man should examine himself; in this way he should eat the bread and drink from the cup. For whoever eats and drinks without recognizing the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself. This is why many are sick and ill among you, and many have fallen asleep. If we were properly evaluating ourselves, we would not be judged,*

The command to be baptized. “I am afraid to get my hair wet in front of so many people” “I am afraid of water.”

- 1.If you are afraid of going back into the water - you can kneel into the water and lean forward. The Bible Requires Immersion.*
- 2.If you are afraid of so many people - we can baptize you in the early service - or we can schedule a special time with some of our staff present and family members present if we have to.*

If you need baptism - call our offices - come see me after the service. Let's get it done!

D. Is there any area of my life where I am comfortable living in disobedience to Jesus or to the Word of God?

2. Obliterate hatred (1 John 2:7-11)

A. The Love Test. As a Christian, I should have a strong love for other Christians and for all people. There should be a feeling of guilt over anyone in my life for whom I have an abiding hatred. (1 John 3:14-15, 4:20, Titus 3:3, John 13:35)

B. "Those who profess to be Christians, yet are characterized by hate, demonstrate by such action that they have never been born again." - John McArthur.

C. The Old commandment is that we love God and love others

D. What makes the command new is that we have to love one another the way Christ has loved us (John 13:34) (HCSB) "I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another."

Illustration - Going to the house of a man who had left our church - he was upset with another man in our church. I remember sitting in his house and hearing him say - As long as I live, I will never forgive that man for what he did.

In contrast to that attitude - one day a tornado ripped through our county. This man who would never forgive was out of town - more than a 20 hour drive away. There were trees and debris all over his yard.

The man whom he would not forgive recruited a whole group of men, and they went to his house and spent hours cleaning up his yard.

Jesus said to love your enemies.

In Christ - we are not to hate.

Jesus gave up his life for us - while we were still enemies. In the cross - God has displayed his love for the unlovable - and he calls us to the same level of sacrificial and radical love!!!

We have all had people in our lives that have scarred us hard. I have found myself praying for their welfare and for God's blessing on them. It is hard to maintain a hatred for someone whom you pray for.

This is hard to do -

We need to be careful as believers. I have heard some people say - in church - I hate Palestinians. I have heard people say - I hate homosexuals.

3. Overcome the evil one (1 John 2:12-14)

- A. **The Holiness Test.** As a Christian, I should desire to walk in holiness and to battle sin. There should be a strong feeling of guilt if I am dwelling in sinful behavior. (Psalm 32:1-5, 1 John 1:6-7)
- B. "The author understands believers' victory over the evil one to be achieved because God himself abides in them (he is greater than the evil one) and his Son, Jesus Christ, protects them, and as a result they are able to overcome the evil one through their faith in God.)" Colin G. Kruse, Pillar NT Commentary.
- C. *Am I battling against sin or am I comfortable in sin?*

I had a supervisor at Winn Dixie who was telling all of the other stock guys what the best pornography websites were.

Here was a married man, father of two kids, churchgoing man - who would talk to me about the Lord and then talk to my coworkers about his love of pornography.

He should be feeling some guilt about the matter. He has embraced this sin and is celebrating this sin with his coworkers.

Can I share something with you - I struggle with sin every single day - and I feel miserable about my sins. I am not comfortable sinning.

conclusion -

Many people who have visited my home have marveled at a picture that we have on a little table by the door. There is

a frame with two slots for pictures. On the right side of the frame is a picture of me when I was eighteen years old. On the left side of the frame is a picture of Tony Jr. when he was eighteen years old. What is amazing about this picture is that we look like twins. Even though I am many years older and even though we are father and son, in these pictures we look just alike. Why? Because of a DNA connection. My essence was transferred to him and in the process of his development, he wound up looking like me.

We should look like Christ. A connection has been made because of His sacrifice on Calvary, and His essence has been transferred to us. People should marvel at the resemblance.¹⁴⁴

Tony Evans, *Tony Evans' Book of Illustrations: Stories, Quotes, and Anecdotes from More than 30 Years of Preaching and Public Speaking* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009), 58.

Application Questions

- 1. What test did John describe for knowing whether or not a person truly knows God? (2:3-6)**
- 2. Practically speaking, what does it mean to "walk as Jesus did" (1 John 2:6)?**
- 3. What did John say he was giving to his readers? (2:7-8)**
- 4. In 1 John 2:7-11, John focuses on one of the commands. How can this command be both old and new (1 John 2:7-8)?**

- 5. How are claiming to be a Christian and loving one's fellow Christians related? (2:9-11)**
- 6. In view of the overall context of this passage, what does it mean to live in the light (1 John 2:10)?**
- 7. Compare John's statements about love and hate (1 John 2:9-11) with similar ones made later in the epistle (1 John 3:10, 14-15). How do these verses clarify the two types of people John is contrasting?**
- 8. Why did John write to "the dear children"? (2:12-13)**
- 9. Why did John write to "the fathers"? (2:13-14)**
- 10. Why did John write to "the young men"? (2:13-14)**
- 11. What does the way in which we treat other believers reveal about us?**
- 12. What confidence does Jesus' atoning death give to us?**
- 13. What confidence should our relationship with the Father give us?**
- 14. How does this passage encourage you to obey Christ and love other members of his Body?**