

# TRUE AND FALSE CONVERTS



Which are you?

by Jason Butte

# WHAT ARE THE IDENTIFYING MARKS OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN?

## THERE IS A DYNAMIC TRANSFORMATION IN THEIR LIVES.

<b>#1: The Holy Spirit Indwells</b>	When a person truly trusts in Christ, the God of all Creation comes to live within them (Romans 8:9). God the Holy Spirit effectively guides (John 16:13), teaches (John 14:26), convicts of sin (John 16:8), empowers ministry (1 Peter 1:12), provides giftings for ministry (1 Corinthians 12:8-11), and leads (Romans 8:14) every true believer.
<b>#2: New Creation</b>	When a person truly trusts in Christ, they are made a new creation - "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).
<b>#3: New Nature</b>	When a person truly trusts in Christ, they become partakers of the divine nature and receive everything needed to live a godly life (2 Peter 1:3-4).
<b>#4: New Desires &amp; Ability</b>	When a person truly trusts in Christ, God begins to work in them, giving them both the desire and the ability to do His will (Philippians 2:13).
<b>#5: Divine Correction If Stray</b>	When a person truly trusts in Christ, they have God's promise that He will effectively correct them when they stray from His path. He also assures that a person can know they are not His child if they do not receive this correction (Hebrews 12:5-11).

The above is true of every genuine believer. The idea that a person is "saved" but does not possess a vital and authentic walk with the Lord is completely contrary to the clear teaching of God's Word. If a person has been truly "saved", the transformation noted above will have taken place and God will guide them on the path of righteousness. They will heed the voice of Jesus and they will follow Him (John 10:27). The yearning passion of the genuine believer is to follow after God's righteousness (Matthew 5:6). The new desires of the believer will stand in complete opposition to the world, the flesh, and the devil. The result is a notable internal battle (Romans 7:15-25). The believer will experience the battle between their new nature and their sinful flesh as long as they are in their mortal body.

When the child of God yields to the flesh and they sin (and this will happen), God will convict and will correct them. But, the believer will not continue on a consistent path of spiritual apathy and unrighteousness because God is neither spiritually apathetic nor unrighteous - and the true believer has God's nature, God's desires, God's guidance, God's empowerment, God's correction, God's leading, and God's very life within them. These foundational and clear Biblical truths provide a stark contrast to the apathetic, social, and worldly "Christians" that are so common today. In fact, these are not "Christians" at all. There is nothing "Christ-like" about them. They are among the many who Jesus said would say unto Him "Lord, Lord..." but would be cast eternally from His presence of the Day of Judgment (Matthew 7:21-23). God desires to save them but they must be willing to humble themselves and admit their need. Where do you stand?

## FURTHER BIBLICAL EVIDENCE OF SALVATION

According to the Scriptures, when saving faith is present, the following characteristics will also be present. This list is not all-inclusive; however, these Biblical evidences can not be easily confused with counterfeit characteristics that are present in the life of a false convert.

<b>#1: Present Faith in Jesus</b>	We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8) on the basis of His atoning death on the cross. This is an on-going faith in the life of one who has been justified (Romans 1:17). This is not an idle and apathetic faith - it is a living faith that acts upon what it professes to believe (James 2:17-18).
<b>#2: Love for Jesus</b>	A Christian will love Jesus (1 Corinthians 16:22). This love will result in submissive obedience to Him (John 14:15, 21, 23-24). It is not a burdensome thing for a Christian to obey Jesus' commands - they do so out of love for Him (1 John 5:1-3).
<b>#3: Love for Fellow-Believers</b>	Those who love God will love God's children (1 John 4:20-21). This love is self-sacrificing (1 Jn 3:14-18). This love yearns to be with others who have a living faith in the Lord Jesus, and this love demonstrates that they belong to Him (John 13:35).
<b>#4: Spiritual Growth and Continuance in the Faith</b>	A Christian will continue in the faith (John 8:31). When they stumble they will be corrected (Hebrews 12:5-11). They will follow Jesus (John 10:27). Failure to continue steadfast in the faith manifests that they were not true believers (1 John 2:19).
<b>#5: Holy Affections</b>	A Christian does not love the things of the world (1 John 2:15). Instead, they hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matthew 5:6). Like Paul, though they don't always do right, they yearn for holiness and despise the presence of sin (Romans 7:15-25).

## ARE YOU TRULY SAVED? DO YOU WANT TO KNOW? READ ON.....

The Scriptures say to "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Corinthians 13:5) The instruction in this passage is for us to examine our lives to determine whether "Jesus Christ is in [us]". The life of Jesus will be manifest in those who truly know God. This mandate does not direct us to look to a past experience, but rather, to a present reality.

We must remember that before anyone can be saved they must be willing to humble themselves, consider their true condition, and acknowledge their need to God. The Bible reminds us that "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." (James 4:6) If the worst case is true and you have not truly trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ, don't you want to know so that you can turn to Him while there is still time? Would you really want to continue on a blind and deceived path and then spend an eternity in the Lake of Fire?

**Consider this question honestly: "What evidence is there in your life that you have truly trusted in Jesus?"**

### NON-CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE OF SALVATION

These are things that neither prove nor disprove the presence of saving faith. Each of these characteristics could, and in most cases should, be present in the life of every genuine believer; however, just because they are present does not necessarily prove that saving faith is present. The Scriptures indicate that these characteristics can be found in the lives of the unsaved as well. Therefore, the following characteristics, though good, are not sufficient evidence in a person's life to warrant assurance of salvation. Does your complete basis of assurance rest in the following?

<b>#1: Belief in God</b>	Even the devils believe in God, and they are not saved (James 2:19)
<b>#2: In-depth Biblical knowledge</b>	The "scribes" mentioned in the NT were considered to have expert knowledge of God's Word. Yet, Jesus made it clear that these did not possess salvation. (Matthew 5:20, Matthew 23:13-14)
<b>#3: Zeal and Passion for God</b>	The Apostle Paul made it clear that Israel had zeal for God (Romans 10:2). He also made it clear that despite this, they were not saved (Romans 10:1). Paul even spoke of his own pre-conversion zeal for God (Acts 22:3).
<b>#4: Water Baptism</b>	When the Apostle Paul went to Ephesus, he found some "disciples" who had been baptized but had not truly believed on the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 19:1-5). So, they had been baptized but were not saved.
<b>#5: Religious Devotion</b>	The "Pharisees" were the most religiously devout Jews in their society. They were evangelistic (Matthew 23:15), they tithed in great detail (Matthew 23:23), they prayed (Luke 18:10), and they fasted (Matthew 9:14), etc. Yet, Jesus made it clear that these did not possess salvation. (Matthew 5:20, Matthew 23:13-14)
<b>#6: Active Ministry</b>	Jesus said that on the Day of Judgment there will be "many" who have been very active in ministry who will be cast from His presence – they are not saved (Matthew 7:22-23).
<b>#7: Visible Morality</b>	The Pharisees, again, are an obvious example of individuals who live a very outwardly moral life – yet have no relationship with God (Matthew 23:27-28). Also consider James 2:10; Isaiah 64:6; etc.
<b>#8: Conviction of Sin</b>	Individuals who opposed Jesus during His earthly ministry were at times convicted (John 8:9). These were not saved individuals. The Holy Spirit convicts the entire world of sin (John 16:8), yet, relatively few will actually be saved (Matthew 7:13-14). People can feel guilt, admit sin, pray, and desire to change - all without trusting in Jesus.
<b>#9: Time of Decision</b>	Judas Iscariot, experienced and responded to the call of God; he even received power from Jesus to heal sickness and cast out devils (Mark 3:13-19). Yet, he was not saved (John 6:70). The Bible never points us back to a past event or experience to evaluate the reality of our faith. Instead, God directs us to look for present Biblical evidence of salvation. Paul said to examine whether Christ is in us - present tense (2 Corinthians 13:5).
<b>#10: Feeling of Assurance</b>	Many during Jesus' earthly ministry thought they had eternal life, but were wrong (John 5:39-40). The Bible says that "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?" (Jeremiah 7:9)

## WHERE DO YOU STAND? CONSIDER.....

### **Present Faith in Jesus:**

Can you genuinely say that Jesus is the primary focus of your life? Does your faith in Jesus guide your day-to-day actions?

### **Love for Jesus:**

Do you love Jesus? Does your love relationship with Jesus create a desire for you to know His will and then gratefully obey it?

### **Love for Fellow-Believers:**

Do you love to have Christ-centered fellowship with other believers? Are you willing to sacrifice yourself for them?

### **Spiritual Growth / Continuance:**

Since the time of your conversion, has there been a steady pattern of growth and continuance in the faith?

### **Holy Affections:**

Is the yearning desire of your heart to live righteously and honor God? Do you hate the presence of sin in your life?

**That is how God, in His Word, describes those who are His children. Where do you stand? You know if you have been truly changed by God. You know if you are just playing games. You know if you truly yearn to follow after Jesus more than anything else in the world. You know whether you truly despise the presence of sin in your life or whether you love the ways and things of this world. Do you want to know if you have savingly trusted in Jesus? Examine yourself.....(2 Corinthians 13:5)**

**If the Biblical evidence we have looked at describes what God has done in you, praise God! If it does not, I must tell you honestly, that according to God's Word - you are not saved. You should be greatly alarmed, because according to the Bible you are on the road to an eternity in the Lake of Fire. You do not bear the fruits of one who has come to Jesus because you have never truly come to Jesus. Whatever type of faith you may have exercised, it was not a saving faith. It was a superficial faith lacking repentance, surrender, and submission to the Lord Jesus Christ.**

### **LET'S REFLECT ON WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR US**

God created Adam without sin. Adam; however, voluntarily rebelled against God. This rebellion is called sin. As a sinner, all of Adam's offspring are born with a sin nature. We are also sinners by our practice. We sin against God in many ways: in thoughts, in words, and in actions. Sin is vile and wicked in the sight of a Holy God. God is so perfectly Righteous that He will not have fellowship with unrighteousness. God is so Just that He must punish sin. We have made ourselves the enemies of God. Our sin has separated us from Him. There is nothing we can do to reconcile ourselves to God. God alone can reconcile us to Himself. Because of His Love and His Goodness, God has done the only thing that could be done to reconcile us to Him. God, the Eternal Son, became flesh in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He lived a perfect life and then offered Himself up as a sacrifice to receive the punishment we deserve for our sin. Jesus, who was sinless, took the full penalty for our sin through His suffering and death on the cross. God's justice was satisfied and the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead. The Lord Jesus Christ has purchased and provided our reconciliation to God. God has declared that all who will abandon their way and trust solely in the Lord Jesus Christ will be forgiven of every sin, will be credited with Christ's righteousness, and will thus be reconciled to God.

**THIS IS YOUR PERSONAL INVITATION TO FOLLOW JESUS. READ ON.....**

## HOW ARE WE TO RESPOND TO GOD'S OFFER OF SALVATION?

**Matthew 16:24-26** - "[24] Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after Me, *let him deny himself*, and *take up his cross*, and *follow Me*. [25] For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it. [26] For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

### THE MESSAGE IS CLEAR (VERSE 24)

The clear topic of this passage is the salvation of the soul. **Jesus says, "If any man will come after Me...."** He provides you with a decision to be made. **He says you must 'deny yourself'**. You must see the utter hopelessness of continuing life your way and your total inability to change it. **He says you must 'take up your cross'**. You must be willing to follow Jesus regardless of the cost. You must esteem Jesus more precious than anything or anyone else. He has purchased your forgiveness with His blood on the cross. He desires to be your Savior; you desire to be saved, therefore, you will choose Jesus over all else. **He says you must 'follow Him'**. You must submit and surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ. You must 'follow' and 'come after Him'.

### THE CHOICE IS FINAL (VERSE 25)

**Jesus says, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it"**. If you continue in your self-absorbed and self-willed way, the end result will be that you will lose your life eternally. **But, Jesus says, "whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it"**. If you are willing to lay down your life and follow Jesus, you will find eternal life.

### THE PLEA IS PASSIONATE (VERSE 26)

**Jesus pleads and reasons with you: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"** Even if you could gain all that this world has to offer (and you can't), it wouldn't mean much because this life is very short. What good would it do to gain all that is temporary and then forfeit your eternal soul? **Jesus says, "or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"** There is nothing you can do to purchase eternal life. If you are going to receive eternal life you must see your desperate situation. You must see that eternal life is found only in Jesus Christ. And you must submit and surrender to Him in faith. There is no merit on your part, you are merely bowing gratefully in submission to the Sovereign Lord, Jesus Christ, who purchased your salvation.

**Will you have Jesus? Will you have Him alone? Or, will you hold onto *your way*? In *your strength*? You can not have both *your way and Jesus' way*. If your soul is to be saved, you must deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow *Him*. Jesus alone. That is the only way you can come to Jesus. And it is only through Jesus that your soul can be saved.**