

# 1 John 5:12 Commentary

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FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS CHILDREN  
Click chart to enlarge  
Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission  
Another Overview Chart - [1 John](#) - Charles Swindoll!

BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP		BEHAVIOR OF FELLOWSHIP	
Conditions of Fellowship	Cautions of Fellowship	Fellowship Characteristics	Fellowship Consequences
Meaning of Fellowship 1 Jn 1:1-2:27		Manifestations of Fellowship 1 Jn 2:28-5:21	
Abiding in God's Light		Abiding in God's Love	
Written in Ephesus			
circa 90 AD			
From Talk Thru the Bible			

**1 John 5:12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life:**

**Greek** - o echon (PAP) ton huion echei (3SPA) ten zoen o me echon (PAP) ton huion tou theou ten zoen ouk echei (3SPA):

**Amplified** - He who possesses the Son has that life; he who does not possess the Son of God does not have that life.

**Wuest** - he one who has the Son, has the life. The one who does not have the Son of God, the life he does not have.

- **that has the:** 1Jn 2:23,24 Joh 1:12 3:36 5:24 1Co 1:30 Ga 2:20 Heb 3:14 2Jn 1:9
- **and he:** Mk 16:16 John 3:36)
- [1 John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## HAVE SON, HAVE LIFE

John goes on to explain that if eternal **life is in His Son** (1Jn 5:11) the one who has the Son has the life present in the Son.

**David Smith** - The argument is that God would not have granted us this priceless gift if he were not in intimate relation with us and had not a steadfast purpose of grace toward us. (Expositor's Greek)

**He who has the Son** - That is the one who possesses (so to speak) the Son, i.e., who has Him present in his life (cp Col 1:27b). Who is the one who possesses the Son? It is "he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God." (1Jn 5:5) Having the Son is the result or effect (or gift) resulting from accepting, receiving or believing the testimony of God concerning His Son.

**Akin** - This verse consists of a further explication of the last phrase of the previous verse. In parallel clauses John states the relation between having the Son and having life. To possess the Son is to possess life in all its fullness. Holding to the biblical faith means possessing Christ himself, as well as the life the Father grants to those who trust his Son as Lord and Savior. Ultimately, what matters is our relationship to the Son. This life is not something only to be received in the future but is a present possession ("has," echei = present tense). It should be noted that eternal life is not earned or merited, but rather it is a gift that is given by God to those who have the Son. (NAC)

**MacArthur** - Here again the exclusivity of the gospel is evident. Only those who believe the Father's witness to the Son and acknowledge Jesus as Lord and Savior have eternal life... the sobering warning to those who reject it is, "How will [you] escape if [you] neglect so great a salvation?" (Heb. 2:3-note). ([1-3 John- MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon on has the Son** - we understand possessing the Lord Jesus Christ. There is the finished work of Jesus, and faith appropriates it. We trust in Christ, and Christ becomes ours. As the result of grace in our souls, we chose the Lord Jesus as the ground of our dependence, and then we accept him as the Lord of our hearts, the guide of our actions, and supreme delight of our souls. He that hath the Son, then, is a man who is trusting alone in Jesus, in whom Jesus Christ rules and reigns; and such a man is most surely the possessor of spiritual and eternal life at the present moment. It is not said "he shall have life"—he has it, he enjoys it now, he is at this hour quickened spirit; God has breathed into him a new life, by which he is made a partaker of the divine nature, and is one of the seed according to promise, and this life he has by virtue of his having received the Son of God to be his all. ([Alive or Dead](#))

Other refuge have I none,  
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee.

**Steven Cole** - Jesus Christ is everything. If you have Him, you have eternal life. If you don't have Him, you do not have the life. As someone has said, "*Christianity is Christ!*" All of God's promises are yes in Him (2Cor. 1:20). All that God offers us, He offers in Jesus Christ. He is the only sure, solid foundation for your faith. The most important question in the world is the one Jesus asked His disciples, "*Who do you say that I am?*" (Mt. 16:15). Peter's answer, inspired by God, is the only correct one (Mt. 16:16), "*You are the Christ (Messiah), the Son of the living God.*" Do you believe this testimony that God has given about His Son? If so, you have eternal life. If not, you do not have the life and you will perish if you do not repent and believe! ([1 John 5:5-13 Is Christianity Merely Psychological?](#))

**NET Note on He who has the Son** - From the parallel statement in 1Jn 5:10a it is clear that believing in the Son and thus having God's testimony in one's self is the same as "having" the Son here in 1Jn 5:12a. This is essentially identical to John 3:16: "that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." In contrast, the negative statement in 1Jn 5:12b reflects the author's evaluation of the opponents: "the one who does not have the Son does not have (eternal) life." The opponents, in spite of their claims to know God, do not possess (nor have they at any time possessed, cf. 1Jn 2:19) eternal life. ([NET Note](#))

For ever here my rest shall be,  
Close to thy wounded side;  
This all my trust and all my plea,  
For me the Saviour died.

**Has the life** - That is **has the life** that is in the Son. There is no true life outside of the Son. All humanity is either living now in the

condition of spiritual life (in Christ) or spiritual death (in Adam). There is no middle ground and no plan B.

**Kistemaker** - The word **has** stands for fellowship with Christ. It means that in faith the believer has accepted Jesus Christ as the Son of God, who said, "**I am ... the life**" (John 14:6). Therefore, because of faith, God's Son and the believer are inseparable. (Baker NT Commentary)

**Osborne** - Those who have the Son of God living in them have eternal life now—not life someday, not life later on, not conditional life, but life, eternal life, now. (Cornerstone Commentary)

**Has** (2192)(echo) basically means to have but has a wide range of meanings determined by the context. In the present context the sense is **possess** (as in Amplified translation above) Earlier John used **echo** with this same sense writing "Whoever denies the Son does not **have** (**possess**) the Father; the one who confesses the Son **has** (**possesses**) the Father also.

**Echo** in 1John - 1John 1:3, 6-8; 1Jn 2:1, 7, 20, 23, 27-28; 1Jn 3:3, 15, 17, 21; 1Jn 4:16-18, 21; 1Jn 5:10, 12-14

**Wuest on the life** - The definite article (Gk = *ten*; Eng = *the*) appears before the word "**life**," pointing out a particular life, that life which God is and which He gives sinners who place their faith in the Son. (Word Studies from the Greek New Testament)

**Life** (2222)(zoe) in the present context describes the absolute fullness of life, both essential and ethical, which alone belongs to God the Giver of life. Truly meaningful life, life on the "highest plane", life that really is worthwhile is found only in "the promise of life in Christ Jesus". (2Ti 1:1-note) Who came so that we might have life and might have it abundantly (Jn 10:10). It is a life that is capable of enjoying the things of God down here, but especially the only life that will be suitable to enter and enjoy the grace of God in heaven.

**Spurgeon on life** - Of course, by "**life**" here is meant not mere existence, or natural life; for we all have that whether we have the Son of God or no—in the image of the first Adam we are all created living souls, and continue in life until the Lord recalls the breath from our nostrils—but the life here intended is spiritual life, the life received at the new birth, by which we perceive and enter into the heavenly kingdom, come under new and spiritual laws, are moved by new motives, and exist in a new world. The life here meant is the life of God in the soul, which is given us when we are new created in the image of the second Adam, who was made a quickening spirit; a celestial form of life inwardly perceptible to the person who possesses it, and outwardly discernible to spiritual observers by its holy effects and heavenly fruits. This spiritual life is the sure mark of deliverance from the penal death which the sentence of the law pronounced. Man under the law is condemned, sentence of death is recorded against him; but man under grace is free from the law, and is not adjudged to death, but lives by virtue of a legal justification, which absolves him from guilt, and consequently liberates him from death. These two kinds of life, the life which is given by the judge to the offender when he is pardoned, and the life which is imparted from the divine Father, the heir of heaven is begotten again unto a lively hope—these two lives blend together and ensure for us the life eternal, such as they possess who stand upon the "sea of glass," and tune their tongues to the music of celestial hosts. Eternal life is spiritual life made perfect. If we live by virtue of our pardon and justification, and if, moreover, we live because we are quickened by the Holy Spirit, we shall also live in the glory of the eternal Father, being made in the likeness of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the true God and eternal life. This is the life here intended—life spiritual, life eternal. ([Alive or Dead](#))

**William MacDonald** - The teaching is unmistakable. Eternal life is not found in education or philosophy or science or good works or religion or the church. To have life, one must have the Son of God. On the other hand, he who does not have the Son of God does not have life, that is, true life. Eternal life is inseparable from Jesus Christ.

**John Stott** - In this paragraph (1Jn 5:6–12) John has been elaborating that he has stated briefly in one verse of the Gospel: 'But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name' (John 20:31). The Gospel, recording the words and works of Jesus, was John's testimony to him as 'the Christ, the Son of God'. The purpose of this testimony was 'that you may believe', and the result of faith is 'that by believing you may have life in his name'. The way to life is faith, and the way to faith is testimony. The sequence of thought is the same here. God has borne witness to his Son, in order that we may believe in him and so 'have' him, and having him may have life.

**He... has the life** - To "have" the Son means to "possess" him in the sense that he is present in the individual's life. And note that the verb **has** is in the **present tense** which signifies this is not a transient, on and off possession but a continual possession of **life**. John is referring to **life** he described in 1Jn 5:11 "God has given us eternal **life** and this **life** is in His Son."

**Vincent** has an interesting thought on "**has the life**" in his comments on "**have grief**" in John 16:22 - This form of expression (**Ed**: "**to have** something") occurs frequently in the NT, to denote the possession or experience of virtues, sensations, desires, emotions, intellectual or spiritual faculties, faults, or defects. It is stronger than the verb which expresses any one of these. For instance, to *have faith* is stronger than to *believe*: to *have life*, than the *act of living*. It expresses a distinct, personal realization of the virtue or fault or sentiment in question. Hence, to *have grief* (Jn 16:22) is more than to *be sorrowful*. In Mt. 17:20, Christ does not say if you

believe, but if you *have faith*; if *faith*, in ever so small a degree, is *possessed* by you as a conscious, living principle and motive. Compare *have love* (Jn 13:35; 1John 4:16); *have peace* (Jn 16:33); *have trust* (2Cor. 3:4); *have boldness* (Heb. 10:19; 1Jn 2:28).

**Adam Clarke** - It is vain to expect eternal glory, if we have not Christ in our heart. The indwelling Christ gives both a title to it, and a meetness for it. This is God's record. Let no man deceive himself here. An indwelling Christ and GLORY; no indwelling Christ, NO glory. God's record must stand.

**Harris** - The opponents, in spite of their claims to know God, do not possess (nor have they at any time possessed, cf. 2:19) eternal life.

**Hiebert** - The full title "**the Son of God**" now spells out the true identity of the one whom the unbeliever is spurning. He is the very embodiment of "the life" that the unbeliever needs. In the preceding statement John places the articular designation "the life" after the verb; now "the life" is placed emphatically before the verb, making prominent the life which is beyond the grasp of the one who does not have the Son. Without Him he is spiritually dead. It is a sober message to realize that this sad assertion brings us to the close of the main body of the epistle. But, as Smalley notes, "a practical call to decision is also implicit. Life-giving faith is possible, and therefore it should be exercised and maintained!"

### **NO SON, NO LIFE! KNOW SON, KNOW LIFE!**

**He who does not have the Son of God** - To reject God's testimony about His Son is to reject the eternal life offered only through the Son and rejecting the Son brings God's wrath (John 3:36) and eternal death.

**Spurgeon** says **does not have life** refers to absence of "spiritual life, sentence of death is recorded against him in the book of God. His natural life is spared him in this 'world, but he is condemned already, and is in the eye of the law dead while he lives. Think of that, some of you, for these words refer to you. The unbeliever has no spiritual life; he neither laments his soul's need, nor rejoices that it may be supplied; he lives without prayer, and he knows nothing of secret fellowship with God, because he has no inward life to produce these priceless things, consequently, he will have no eternal life; he will exist for ever, but his existence will be a protracted death—of life he would not taste; he will have none of the joys of paradise, no sight of God's face; he will not swell the song of eternal happiness, nor drink of the river of ever-flowing bliss. He is a walking corpse, a moving carcass, a body in which death holds the place of life. He hath not the Son of God—that is, he has never trusted in Jesus to save him, and never submitted himself to the guidance and governing of the King in Zion." ([Alive or Dead](#))

**Does not have the life** - John could not have been more clear regarding the only way to obtain spiritual life.

John 5:24+ "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has **present tense** = continually) **eternal life**, and does not (absolute negation) come into judgment, but has passed (**perfect tense** = speaks of the permanence of this "passage") out of death into **life**.

John 3:36+ He who believes in the Son has **eternal life**; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see **life**, but the wrath of God abides (**present tense** = continually) on him."

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**Robert Morgan** - from [100 Bible Verses Everyone Should Know by Heart](#) - recommended

The one who has the Son has life. The one who doesn't have the Son of God does not have life. —1 John 5:12

Writing in a Gideon publication, Garry O. Parker recalled an exciting day when he was in the sixth grade. Several visitors were passing out a special gift. As each class was called to the assembly room, these Gideons gave a New Testament to every child who promised to read it. Garry raised his hand and received his copy.

A few months later his mother passed away after a long illness, and the following years were unsettled and difficult. One February night in 1957, Garry was sitting in his room reading his New Testament. He came to 1 John 5:12: The one who has the Son has life. The one who doesn't have the Son of God does not have life.

He saw clearly that our eternal future depends on whether we have Jesus as our Savior and Lord, and that message pricked his heart like a needle. "In that moment," Garry recalled, "God awakened my understanding, and I quietly put my trust in Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and Lord. It was not an overly emotional moment but one of quiet certainty. It was the beginning of an adventure in faith with Jesus Christ, which has continued to be exciting every day."

Garry became an effective pastor and now, retired, continues serving the Lord with this message: This is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. The One who has the Son has life. The one who doesn't have the Son of God does

not have life.

## Great Assurance-of-Salvation Verses in the Bible

I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will have the power to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord! (Rom. 8:38-39<sup>+</sup>)

I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to guard what has been entrusted to Him until that day. (2 Ti 1:12<sup>+</sup>)

I give them eternal life, and they will never perish—ever! No one will snatch them out of My hand.... No one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. (John 10:28-29)

## Memory Tip

[The full 100 verses in this book include:](#)

(1) 1 John 5:11-12 about assurance of salvation; (See [Morgan's note](#) on 1 John 5:11)

(2) and 1 John 5:14-15 about assurance of answered prayer. (See [Morgan's note](#) on 1 John 5:14)

Why not memorize verse 13, too, and you'll have an entire paragraph of assurance packed away forever in your mind.

The assurance of salvation is plainly written over the pages of the New Testament. Christ and His apostles lived in the air of certainty.... The epistles glow with the truth that we may know we possess salvation. — Herbert Lockyer

## How can I have assurance of my salvation?

### Question: "How can I have assurance of my salvation?"

**Answer:** Many followers of Jesus Christ look for the assurance of salvation in the wrong places. We tend to seek assurance of salvation in the things God is doing in our lives, in our spiritual growth, in the good works and obedience to God's Word that is evident in our Christian walk. While these things can be [evidence of salvation](#), they are not what we should base the assurance of our salvation on. Rather, we should find the assurance of our salvation in the objective truth of God's Word. We should have confident trust that we are saved based on the promises God has declared, not because of our subjective experiences.

How can you have assurance of salvation? Consider 1 John 5:11–13: "And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life." Who is it that has the Son? It is those who have believed in Him (John 1:12). If you have Jesus, you have life. Not temporary life, but eternal.

God wants us to have assurance of our salvation. We should not live our Christian lives wondering and worrying each day whether or not we are truly saved. That is why the Bible makes the plan of salvation so clear. Believe in Jesus Christ (John 3:16; Acts 16:31). "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9). Have you [repented](#)? Do you believe that Jesus died to pay the penalty for your sins and rose again from the dead (Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21)? Do you trust Him alone for salvation? If your answer to these questions is "yes," you are saved! Assurance means freedom from doubt. By taking God's Word to heart, you can have no doubt about the reality of your eternal salvation.

Jesus Himself assures those who believe in Him: "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:28–29). Eternal life is just that—eternal. There is no one, not even yourself, who can take Christ's God-given gift of salvation away from you.

Take joy in what God's Word is saying to you: instead of doubting, we can live with confidence! We can have the assurance from Christ's own Word that our salvation will never be in question. Our assurance of salvation is based on the perfect and complete salvation God has provided for us through Jesus Christ. (from recommended resource gotquestions - [How can I have assurance of my salvation?](#))

### Related Resources:

- [What are some of the signs of genuine saving faith?](#)
  - [If you doubt your salvation, does that mean you are not truly saved?](#)
  - [What if I don't feel saved?](#)
  - [Can a person believe in some sense but not be saved?](#)
  - [How can I avoid being a doubting Thomas?](#)
- 

## How Can I Know for Sure? - Robert Morgan

Not long ago as I drove to a speaking engagement, I began to wonder if I was on the right road. I clutched the directions in one hand, but for some reason the route didn't feel right. I didn't have a lot of spare time, and my stomach started knotting as I told myself, "There's a seventy percent chance I'm on the right track, but a thirty percent chance I'm lost."

Just then I recognized a landmark, and all my fretting subsided. I was on the right road, and I knew it.

It's one thing to be traveling the road of life, but another thing to know it for sure. How terrible to journey toward heaven with anxious insecurity about our eventual destination, hoping we're on the right road but wondering if we may be lost after all.

John ended his gospel by telling us he had written it for one reason—that we might have eternal life. Now we find Him ending his little letter of 1 John by telling us he had written it for another reason—that we might know we have eternal life. This five-chapter epistle tells us how we can be certain and convinced we're on the right road, that we really do have everlasting life through our Lord Jesus Christ.

"These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God," he said, "that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God" (1 John 5:13, emphasis mine).

As I mentioned earlier, one of the things that bothers some Christians is being unable to recall the exact moment when they invited Christ into their lives. But when Jesus said, "You must be born again," He was drawing a comparison between being saved and being born. We're born a second time, this time into God's family.

So do you recall a specific incident that occurred at the time of your physical birth? Do you recall the traumatic moment when you first saw the light of day? Do you recall the face of the doctor who delivered you or the nurse who handed you to your mother? None of us remember those things, yet none of us languish in despair crying, "I'm not sure I've really been born—I can't recall a thing about it!"

We do not doubt our birth because we have three pieces of powerful evidence. First, we're breathing right now—we have air in our lungs. Second, we possess a birth certificate. Third, we bear a family likeness.

The same three indications are true for our spiritual birth. How do we know we've been born again? How can we be certain we're in God's family, heirs of His kingdom, possessors of His life? First John stresses three tests on which we can base our assurance of salvation.

## The Oxygen of the Holy Spirit

First, as Christians we have the oxygen of the Holy Spirit within us.

The final sentence of 1 John 3:24<sup>+</sup> says: "And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us."

In the next chapter, 1 John 4:13<sup>+</sup> adds: "By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit."

And in the next chapter, 1 John 5:6b<sup>+</sup>, "And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth."

This agrees with what we read elsewhere in Scripture. Romans 8:16<sup>+</sup>, for example, says: "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God."

Galatians 4:6<sup>+</sup> puts it like this: "And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!'"

In the New Testament, the apostle Paul won many people to Christ in the town of Thessalonica. Writing to them later, he said: "When we brought you the Good News, it was not just meaningless chatter to you; no, you

listened with great interest. What we told you produced a powerful effect upon you, for the Holy Spirit gave you great and full assurance that what we said was true" (1 Thessalonians 1:5+, TLB).

Of course, that brings up a practical question. How do you know you have the Holy Spirit living within you? Well, do you have an interest in spiritual things? Are you learning to pray? Are you getting involved in church? Do you long to please God? Is there a song in your soul? Do you feel a growing love for Jesus Christ and for others? Do you have a deepening peace? Is the Word of God meaningful to you?

All of these are the result of the inward ministry of the Holy Spirit, and these are powerful indicators that the Spirit lives within you. If none of these things are true, it's a caution flag for the soul, warning you to investigate your heart as to whether you've actually been born again.

## Our Birth Certificate

Second, we know we've been saved because we have a birth certificate. When we are born literally, our names are recorded in the country of our birth and we're issued a birth certificate. Likewise, when we are born spiritually, our names are recorded in the heavenly records ("the Lamb's Book of Life," see Revelation 21:27+), and the Word of God becomes our personal birth certificate.

Notice how clearly this is stated in 1 John 5:11, 12—"And this is the testimony [the facts, the record, the reality, the way it is]: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."

There's an old song that says: "[Jesus loves me, this I know; / for the Bible tells me so.](#)" Our assurance of salvation is based on the unchanging Word of God.

In his book, [How to Begin the Christian Life](#), George Sweeting suggests that doubting our salvation is like a prisoner who has been pardoned by the governor.

A guard brings him the document, and there it is, signed and sealed. Suppose you ask the man, "Have you been pardoned?" He will say, "Yes."

"Do you feel pardoned?" we ask.

"No, I don't. It's all so sudden."

"But if you don't feel pardoned how do you know you are pardoned?"

"Oh," the man replies, "it tells me so right here."

The Bible does not use vague or nonspecific language regarding our salvation. It doesn't use terms like maybe or might or hope-to-be. It says will and shall and is. If you have given your life to Jesus Christ yet still struggle with doubts about your salvation, memorize 1 John 5:11, 12—"And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."

## Our Family Likeness

The third clear indication we've been truly born is our family likeness. Yesterday I saw a newborn baby, and when I looked from the baby to the mother I saw exactly the same face, just separated by age.

Likewise, when we are born again we begin to take on the characteristics and the image of Jesus Christ. We begin to grow in our resemblance and likeness to Him. This is one of the great themes of this little book of 1 John:

- 1 John 1:6+ puts this in negative terms—"If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth." In other words, if we claim to be Christians, but there is no change in our attitudes or behavior, we're mistaken.
- 1 John 2:3+—"Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments." If our lives begin to reflect the holiness and righteousness of Jesus Christ, if there are changes in our attitudes and behavior, if there is spiritual growth taking place—then we know that we know Him.
- 1 John 2:5+—"Whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him."
- 1 John 2:29+—"If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him."
- 1 John 3:14+—"We know that we have passed from death to life [that is, we know that we are really children of God, that we have really been saved], because we love the brethren."

The Bible teaches that God is love, that His love is infinite and unending, and that He loved the world so much

He gave His only Son. As we grow in our Christian life, we begin to reflect God's love, learning to love even the unlovely and unlovable. That growing love is proof we've really been saved.

How, then, can we know we've really been saved? If we have the Holy Spirit within our spirits like oxygen, if we have the birth certificate of the Word of God, and if we're growing in our family likeness, then we can know we are saved.

If those things are not present and if there has been no change in our behavior as a result of giving our lives to Christ, then, frankly, we may not have assurance of salvation; in fact, we may not be genuinely saved.

The apostle Paul wrote these somber words in 2 Corinthians 13:5—

**"Examine** yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. **Test** yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?"

There was a time in my life many years ago when I struggled with this very thing. I was raised in a Christian home and in a godly church, and while that did not make me a Christian, I can say I never knew a time when I wasn't trusting Christ. But one night—I was perhaps ten or eleven years old—we had a revival meeting at our church and the evangelist preached so hard that I questioned whether or not I had ever really been saved. After all, I could not remember a time or place when I had clearly and definitely made that decision.

That evening at bedtime, I slipped quietly into the bathroom, locked the door, and knelt down by the bathtub. I prayed something like this: "Dear Lord, I think that I have received Jesus Christ into my life by faith. If I have really done that, I thank You, Lord, for saving me. But if I have not really done that, then tonight, right here by this bathtub, I receive Him into my life as Lord and Savior."

I told no one what I had done, but I can tell you now that from that moment, I've never doubted my salvation. Perhaps you need to make a similar decision. (from [Simple - Robert Morgan](#) - recommended book)

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## The Oldest Living Things

He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. —1 John 5:12

Hikers in California's Sierra Mountains are surprised to encounter 10-foot-high fences with barbed wire stretched around the top. What do they see inside the fence-surrounded enclosures? Some vital communication equipment like a radio tower? No, they see only a few gnarled trees, maybe just a twisted stump with a few needles.

A sign reads: DO NOT ENTER. BRISTLECONE PINE PROTECTION ZONE. PLEASE PROTECT THESE TREES. They are the oldest living things on earth.

Pamphlets explain that these bristlecone pines were flourishing when Jesus walked on earth, and that the oldest were seedlings at the time of the Exodus from Egypt.

Eventually, though, regardless of how carefully they are protected, those trees will die. They are not destined to live forever. But Christians have the certainty of everlasting life. To be sure, our bodies will die. Yet by God's grace and power, our souls will never perish. Our bodies will be raised up and, as Paul said, be changed from mortal to immortal (1 Cor. 15:53).

We are awed by the longevity of the bristlecone pines. How much more awesome is eternal life through Christ. We who believe in Him will live forever! ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

We cry, "O God, how can it be?  
How long is vast eternity?"  
The answer rings from shore to shore,  
"No end, eternal, evermore."  
—Anon.

Want to live forever? Let Jesus live in you now.

**JOHN PIPER SUMMARIZES JOHN'S  
EVIDENCES OF THE NEW BIRTH**



I think God wants the totality of this book to have its impact on us. It is dominated by the concern to give **tests of life** or effects and evidences of the new birth. He gives at least eleven evidences that we are born again. We could probably boil them all down to **faith** and **love**. But for now let's let them stand the way he says them. Here they are:

**1. Those who are born of God keep his commandments.**

1 John 2:3-4-note: "By this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says 'I know him' but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

1 John 3:24-note: "Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him."

**2. Those who are born of God walk as Christ walked.**

1 John 2:5-6-note: "By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked."

**3. Those who are born of God don't hate others but love them.**

1 John 2:9-note: "Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness."

1 John 3:14-note: "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death."

1 John 4:7-8-note: "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love."

1 John 4:20-note: "If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar."

**4. Those who are born of God don't love the world.**

1 John 2:15-note: "If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

**5. Those who are born of God confess the Son and receive (have) him.**

1 John 2:23-note: "No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also."

1 John 4:15-note: "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God."

1 John 5:12-note: "Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life."

**6. Those who are born of God practice righteousness.**

1 John 2:29-note: "If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him."

**7. Those who are born of God don't make a practice of sinning.**

1 John 3:6-note: "No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him."

1 John 3:9-10-note: "No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother."

1 John 5:18-note: "We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him."

**8. Those who are born of God possess the Spirit of God.**

1 John 3:24-note: "By this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us."

1 John 4:13-note: "By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit."

**9. Those who are born of God listen submissively to the apostolic Word.**

1 John 4:6-note: "We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error."

## 10. Those who are born of God believe that Jesus is the Christ.

1 John 5:1-**note**: "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God."

## 11. Those who are born of God overcome the world.

1 John 5:4-**note**: "Everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith."

**Two Wrong Conclusions** - One of the effects of all those "tests of life" is to overwhelm us with the sense that John may be saying: "If you're born again, you're perfect. If you're born again you don't sin at all. There is no defeat in the Christian life. There is only victory."

Another effect that these tests might have in our minds is to make us think we can lose our salvation. That is, we can be born again for a while and then begin to fail in these tests and die and lose the spiritual life that we were given in the new birth.

**Two Key Clarifications** - John is very aware that his words could be taken in these two wrong ways. So he is explicit as any writer in the New Testament that this is not the case: Christians are not sinless, and born-again people cannot lose their spiritual life and be lost.

He says in 1 John 1:8-10-**note**, "If we say we have no sin [present tense], we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins [present tense], he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." So John is at pains to say that "walking in the light" (1Jn 1:7-**note**) does not mean walking flawlessly. It means that, when you stumble, the light of Christ causes you to see it and hate it and confess it and move forward with Christ.

And John is just as jealous to make sure we don't infer from these "tests of life" that we can be born again and then later lose our life and be lost. 1John 2:19-**note** is one of the clearest statements in the Bible that there is another way to understand what happens when a person abandons the church. It says, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us."

Notice three things John says to protect us from misunderstanding. 1) Those who seemed to be born again and forsook the faith never were born again—they never were of us. "They went out from us, but they were not of us." In other words, the explanation is not that they lost their new birth. They never had it. 2) Those who are truly born again ("of us") will persevere to the end in faith. 1Jn 5:19b-**note**: "For if they had been of us, they would have continued with us." Endurance is not the cause of the new birth. The new birth is the cause of endurance, and endurance is the evidence of new birth. 3) God often makes plain who the false Christians are in the church by their eventual rejection of the truth and the people of God. Verse 19c: "But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us." It became plain. And it often becomes plain today. (Read full message = [Everyone Who Has Been Born of God Overcomes the World](#))

## We Know by Our Having the Son Robert Morgan

"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12).

The Scripture is plain — "He that hath the Son, hath life" (1 John 5:12). This is the positive statement.

"He that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12). This is the negative statement.

The same thing, differently stated, is: "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (vs. 11).

### 1. Eternal life is in the Son. "In Him was life" (John 1:4).

(1) THIS LIFE IS DEPENDENT UPON THE DEITY OF CHRIST. It is Christ, the Son of God, and not Jesus, the son of Joseph, Who is life.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God" (John 1:1, 2) — this is the Christ Who gives us life.

"We know that the Son of God is come, \* \* even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the True God, and eternal life" (1 John 5:20) — this is the Christ Who gives us life.

"Whom say ye that I am? \* \* Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Matt. 16:15, 16) — this is the

Christ Who gives us life.

(2) THIS LIFE IS DEPENDENT UPON THE DEATH OF CHRIST. "Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree" (I Peter 2:24, 1911 Bible) — we are saved by His death.

He became "sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (II Cor. 5:21), — we are saved by His death.

He died, "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (I Peter 3:18) — we are saved by His death.

(3) THIS LIFE IS DEPENDENT UPON HIS RESURRECTION. "I am the Resurrection, and the Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26).

His resurrection assures our resurrection.

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (I Cor. 15:20) — the first fruits assure the harvest.

"Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19) — His life assures our life.

## 2. Eternal life is in. the Son for those:

(1) WHO BELIEVE THE SON. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36). Faith in Jesus Christ, in His Deity, His death, and His resurrection is the hand-touch of the soul, which brings eternal life.

(2) WHO KNOW THE SON. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only True God, and Jesus Christ, Whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). Eternal life is knowing the Son, and the Father.

Job said: "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee" (Job 42:5). It is not knowing about the Son — it is knowing the Son. "I know Whom I have believed" (II Tim. 1:12).

(3) WHO HAVE THE SON. "He that hath the Son hath life" (I John 5:12). It is Christ, crucified, risen, and coming, possessed by the believing heart, which gives eternal life.

(4) WHO ARE IN THE SON. "And we are in Him that is True, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the True God, and eternal life" (I John 5:20). These words are climactic — we not only believe the Son, know the Son, and have the Son; but the Son has us. We are safe because we are hid in Him.

What blissful security! What Heavenly sense of safety!

## The Life Which Is in Christ Jesus

Robert Neighbour

• **The Life Defined** (I John 5:11, 12). And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. (5:12) He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

• **The Life and Its Manifestations** (Ro 6:4<sup>±</sup>). = Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

• **The Life and Its Security** (Col. 3:3<sup>±</sup>). = For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

• **The Life and Its Precedence** (Gal. 2:20<sup>+</sup>). = "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

• **The Life and the Life More Abundant** (John 10:10). = "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

• **The Life and Its Tabernacle** (2 Cor. 4:7<sup>±</sup>). = But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;

• **The Life and How It Is Obtained** (1 Peter 1:23<sup>±</sup>). = for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.

Unless we have the Life which is in Christ Jesus, we have nothing worth the while; we have nothing upon which to build; we have no basis of development and of growth.

A mere churchianity is not sufficient. A mere formal profession of Christ is not enough. To know all about Christ Jesus will not meet the depths of our need. We must have the Life which is in Christ Jesus.

Our theme is not one of profession but of possession. We are not to discuss imitating Christ, but possessing Christ. It is not a matter of Christ without, our example; but of Christ within, our life.

A song is often sung: (by D. W. Whittle)

[As lives the flow'r within the seed.](#)

As in the cone the tree,  
So, praise the God of truth and grace,  
His Spirit dwelleth in me.

Refrain:

Christ liveth in me,  
Christ liveth in me,  
O what a salvation this,  
That Christ liveth in me!

2 Once far from God and dead in sin,  
No light my heart could see;  
But in God's Word the light I found,  
Now Christ liveth in me. [Refrain]

3 As rays of light from yonder sun,  
The flow'rs of earth set free,  
So life and light and love came forth  
From Christ living in me. [Refrain]

4 With longing all my heart is filled,  
That like Him I may be,  
As on the wond'rous tho't I dwell  
That Christ liveth in me. [Refrain]

**The song contains a truth, but the truth is very poorly expressed. The Spirit of Christ does live in believers; but He does not live there by any natural manifestation or development.**

“Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.

John 3:7+

There is no greater fallacy than that which supposes that the life of Christ is resident in embryo, in every life, and only needs to be fanned, in order to produce the matured life which is in Christ Jesus.

Christ does not live in us, as the cone lives in the tree at all. Christ lives in us by a new, a supernatural birth. It is our purpose to go into this all-important theme, and to consider what the Word of God says about this Life which is in Christ Jesus - Robert Neighbour

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**1 John 5:11 Commentary <> 1 John 5:13 Commentary**