

# Marks of True Children of God - Part 1

by William MacDonald

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*The sermon explores the marks of true children of God, as described in 1 John, including sound doctrine, practice of righteousness, love, obedience to the Word of God, not loving the world, not forsaking the Christian fellowship, and not sinning.*

**Duration:** 42:16

**Scripture:** Hebrews 10:26

**Topics:** "Children Of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the difference between Peter and Judas in their response to sin. He mentions that Peter back-slid from the Lord but was restored, while Judas sold the Lord for thirty pieces of silver. The speaker then explores different interpretations of 1 John 3:9, which talks about sinning. One explanation is the concept of the old and new nature, where believers have a new nature that resists sin but also an old nature that still sins. However, the speaker personally disagrees with this interpretation, as he believes that individuals are held responsible for their own sins. The sermon concludes with the speaker sharing the story of a young man named Dale who is struggling with setting sin in his life, despite being a Christian. Dale expresses his frustration and the ongoing battle he faces with sin.

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## Transcript

It's really a joy to be back, to see what the Lord has been doing in the meantime, to meet friends old and new. Old not in years, of course, but old in acquaintance and affection. And it's really a joy to be here with Brother Dave Nicholson.

I think he's here. I've passed across before, and I'm looking forward to sitting under his ministry once again. And we have with us, too, Brother Don Robertson, who's the administrator of the Discipleship Intern Training Program.

And he might be talking with some of you about leadership training in the assembly. In fact, he'll be sharing Sunday night with that. Don, why don't you just stand up so the folks can know who you are? Don's from Vancouver, British Columbia, originally, but he's now with us down in San Leandro, California.

And he has some of these brochures, if anybody is interested. I'm sure he'll be glad to give you one. Would you turn in your Bibles, please, to 1 John, chapter 3? I'd like to take up some studies with you on John's first epistle.

And we'll read the first 12 verses of 1 John 3. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God. Therefore the world knoweth us not because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God.

And it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Whosoever commiteth sin transgresseth also the law, for sin is lawlessness properly.

Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not. Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

Little children, let no man deceive you. He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that commiteth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. And if the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil, whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother, and wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Well, rather a difficult portion of scripture, wouldn't you say? Especially if you read it in the King James Version of the Bible.

And so we hope to look into it, and perhaps clear up some of the difficulty with the help of God. The purpose of John's first letter is to describe the mark of true children of God. Some years ago there was a man named William Law, and he wrote a commentary on this book, and he called it The Test of Life.

And I think that was a most fortunate title for a commentary on 1 John, The Test of Life. Here, John is giving us the characteristics of those who are true children of God. And the key verse, of course, is 1 John 5, verse 13.

These things have I written unto you, that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. I think there's a little background that might help us in understanding the epistle. When John wrote, there were some false teachers who had wormed their way into the assemblies of the apostolic days.

These were known as Gnostics. G-N-O-S-T-I-C-S. Gnostics.

The word comes from a word meaning to know. These people professed to have superior knowledge. That's the bane of all cults.

They all professed to have knowledge in addition to what is found in the word of God. And that's what the Gnostics did. And their attitude was, yeah, what you have is good, but you'll never be really happy.

You'll never be really fulfilled until you are initiated into the deeper mysteries that we have. And really, that sounds very familiar, because that's what the cults say today. That's one of their come-on arguments today.

The Gnostics denied, some branches of Gnosticism denied the true deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. They denied Jesus Christ come in the flesh. Other branches of Gnosticism denied the true humanity of the Lord Jesus.

And, of course, because they were wrong on these essentials, they were wrong on a great many other things. Eventually, these Gnostics left the Christian fellowship. They abandoned the Christian fellowship, and John says of them, they went out from us because they were not of us.

If they had been of us, they would have continued with us. Which is another way of saying that true faith always has the quality of permanence. So that's a good thing to remember.

True faith always has the quality of permanence. The Gnostics made a distinction between Jesus and the Christ. They believed that any matter was evil, and therefore Jesus could not be God.

They believed that the Christ was a divine influence. You might call it a divine emanation that came out from God and came upon the man Jesus. Now this will sound a little complicated to you, but it wouldn't if you knew anything about some of the modern cults.

One in particular teaches exactly this. They taught that the Christ came upon Jesus at his baptism and left him in the Garden of Gethsemane. Think about that for a minute.

The Christ came upon the man Jesus at his baptism and left in the Garden of Gethsemane. So Christ didn't die, they would say. Jesus died.

The Christ couldn't die. How wonderfully the Word of God refutes that. In 1 Corinthians chapter 15, Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

It's wonderful to me that God allowed all of the false teachings to arise in the early days of the Church, and they're all answered in the Word of God. We think, well, so many new cults today. Well, there really aren't that many new cults today.

They're just variations of the old false teachings. They're just variations of all the old heresies. And most of the cults that you have in Fargo and that we have out in California are just variations of Gnosticism, really.

And one of them that comes from my old hometown, I'm ashamed to say, Christian Science, teaches this very thing that I was just saying, the distinction between Jesus and the Christ, and how the Christ came upon Jesus and then left him. Now, the book of 1 John is a very difficult book to outline. It's been the despair of commentators trying to outline this book.

And I think the reason for it is it's woven something like a braid. John is giving the test of life in it, and here he'll begin with the test of sound doctrine, and that'll go along for a while, and then it'll move over. And then the second test, the test of love, will come in.

And then the test of obedience to the Word of God, and pretty soon they're all braided together. I don't know if you noticed when I was reading this morning, but the test of love was braided with the test of sin. That is, that the Christian does not sin.

The true child of God does not sin, according to 1 John 3. The subjects are braided together, and that makes it very, very difficult. Now, it's a weaving. And a subject will appear and then disappear and then

appear again quite unexpectedly, and oftentimes in union with some other.

Perhaps I would just mention some of the tests of life. I already mentioned some, but let me go over them again. First of all, the test of sound doctrine.

And the test of sound doctrine is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. And when we say the Son of the living God, we say absolute deity. No question about it.

And John brings the changes on this great test of life. And that's a wonderful thing, you know. We might be tempted to look throughout the world and see all the differences among evangelical Christians, and we might, in our minds, emphasize the differences.

But you know, it's a wonderful thing that wherever you go in the world, travel around the world, and you come across two believers, and they're all right on the beam, as far as this is concerned, the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's basic, absolutely basic. A second test of life is the practice of righteousness.

John insists that Jesus Christ makes a change in a man's life, in a woman's life. And that when a person is truly born of the Spirit of God, he henceforth practices righteousness. It becomes habitual in his life.

You can depend upon him to do the thing that is right in his dealings before God and in his dealings with his fellow man. The true child of God passes the test of love. Love for God and love for his fellow believers.

John says, we know we have passed from death to life because we love the Brethren. It's a marvelous thing. You really have to experience it to understand it.

But it really is quite thrilling. And we might be saying more about that later. Another test of life.

The child of God obeys the commandments of the Lord. A divine instinct is planted within him by which he wants to do the thing that pleases the heart of Christ. And he goes to the Word of God and he sees the commandments of the Lord and he says, that's what I want to do.

That's what his renewed nature loves to do. Because Christ's yoke is easy and his burden is light. The true child of God does not love the world or the things that are in the world.

He knows that the hands of the world are stained with the blood of Jesus. And to go on in fellowship with the world would be a traitor to his Redeemer. And the true child of God does not forsake the Christian fellowship.

I quoted that verse already to you. They went out from us because they were not of us. If they had been of us, they would have continued with us.

And then, of course, we have the test concerning sin that we read about in 1 John 3. And we'd like to think with you about that now. But first of all, I'd like to say, what does 1 John teach on the whole subject of sin? Let's take a review of the epistle and see what John teaches about the subject of sin. First of all, he teaches that the believer should not sin.

1 John 2, verse 1. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. That verse used to really bother me. Why is that verse in the Bible? Doesn't God know I'm just dust? Doesn't God know I sin every day in thought, word, and deed? And here is a verse in the Bible that says, My little children, these things

write I unto you, that ye sin not.

Well, this is God's ideal for His people. And God couldn't say anything different than that. God couldn't say, My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin just a little.

If I saw that in the Bible, I'd know it wasn't the Bible. And if it said that in the Bible, I'd say, Lord, what's a little? How much can I sin? You know, and I'd go right up to the limit. Isn't that right? So, I adore the Scriptures when I come to a verse like that and say, God's ideal for His people is perfection, as far as this is concerned.

But you don't go very far before you realize that God makes provision for failure. And if any man sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And that's speaking about believers.

If any man, how do you know? Because we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He's still our Father, even when we sin. Also, in chapter 1, you have verses that show that the Christian does sin.

Verse 8, if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. Verse 10, if we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. So, Christians do sin.

God's will is that we should not sin. In the event of failure, we have an advocate and a propitiation, and Christ is that propitiation. Christians do sin.

We say that we don't, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But there is an interesting thing about believers, and that is that Christians confess their sins. They confess their sins.

1 John 1, verse 9, if we confess our sins, He's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And the blood of Christ is the cleansing agent, the constant cleansing agent, for our sins when they are confessed. And when we do confess our sins, they're forgiven for His name's sake.

But then you come to this difficult passage in chapter 3, where it says very specifically in the King James Version that if a man commits sin, he's really not born of God. That whoever is born of God does not commit sin. And when I read these verses, I think of the torture that I and many other Christians have gone through in seeking to understand it.

And I'm going to give you an illustration today before we go and look at the passage more in detail. I'm going to tell you about a young fellow named Dale. I hope there's no Dales here.

If there is, just call him Alphonse. Dale was in an agony of despair. It was about a besetting sin in his life.

He had this besetting sin before he was converted, and now three years later, it's just about driving him to distraction. And I'm going to let Dale tell the story to you. He says, I know I'm a Christian.

Three years ago, I repented of my sins, and I received the Lord Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. I've done everything the Bible says to be saved, and if I'm not saved, then I don't know what else to do. But the trouble is, I don't have victory in my life.

I'm fighting a ding-dong battle with sin. Sometimes I'm up, and sometimes I'm down. I have this giant Goliath in my life, and every once in a while, I think that Goliath has been conquered.

And then this besetting sin comes back again, and my first reaction is to resist. I clench my fist, and I grit my teeth, and I'm going to resist. And then my mind swims with pleasurable fantasies, and pretty soon, I'm weakening more and more.

And I yield to the temptation. I fall flat on my face, and the momentary pleasure is followed by shame and guilt and frustration and anger. Anger at myself.

After a while, I pick myself up from the mud hole, and I confess my sin to the Lord, and I determine by His grace that it's never going to happen again. Everything is great. I feel clean.

I've regained my song. I can lift up my head and face the world once again, and things go along so smoothly and so long that I think that I have found complete deliverance. And then Satan comes to me and delivers a double whammy.

The animal in me awakens and refuses to be silenced. The pressure builds up like the steam in the boiler, and it just seems to be irresistible. I know I shouldn't yield.

One part of me doesn't want to do it, and another part of me wants to. I find that I'm a moral schizophrenic, and all my best resolutions crumble and my strongest determinations dissolve, and history repeats itself. The scenario is sickeningly familiar.

There I am. I'm on the ropes again, and I'm a moral failure, and I hate myself, and I wish I were dead. Time passes, and the scalding shame decreases, and I go back to the foot of the cross to cry out my confession again and again.

I'm really ashamed to ask forgiveness after so many repetitions. How often will God forgive me anyway before He gets set up? But there's no other way for me, and so in spite of my depression and discouragement, I come to Him with 1 John 1, 9 again. If we confess our sins, He's faithful and just to forgive us our sins, to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

I have nothing else. If I ever had any self-confidence, it's gone now. I walk softly filled with horror that it might happen again, and eventually I feel free to engage in Christian service again.

In fact, I deliberately try to busy myself in activities so much that I won't have the temptation anymore, and it seems to work that way for a while. But oh no. The overpowering passion is back again, screaming for satisfaction.

I'm not ignorant of the facts. I know it's wrong. I'm not being deceived.

I go ahead and do it. You might say I sin willfully. You know, the very next day I come across that verse that says if we sin willfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversary.

So there it is. It seems to me I've committed the willful sin, and according to that verse, the outlook is pretty bleak. It plunges me into dark despondency, and I try to reconcile this with the truth of eternal security because I've always believed that what's saved always saves.

And I'm just confused. Life becomes a chamber of horrors. Finally, in desperation, I just cast myself on the Lord, and I cry out for mercy, and I go to the words of David in the Psalms, the penitential Psalms, and I

use them to express my repentance and confession.

I can't say there is instant renewal. Maybe God has forgiven me, but I have trouble forgiving myself. And maybe God has forgotten, but I'm still haunted by the memory.

I know that time doesn't heal all things, but it does seem that the passing of time helps me to get over my guilt and shame. And when I think of my besetting sin, I recoil with shame and horror. I praise the Lord for victory from day to day, and he says life is worth living again.

But then Dale takes a brief vacation in Hawaii, and he's not living the disciplined life, and he's not reading the word of God, and he's not spending time in prayer, and he's pampering his body, and the old temptation is back again, and the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak, and his resolve melts, and he takes the insane plunge and sins. And after the momentary high comes the spiritual low, and he's dazed and reeling and numb. And then he turns on the radio, and a man is reading these verses from 1 John 3. You're born of God, whosoever is born of God does not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God.

And then he reads Galatians 5, 19-21, to prove that those who practice the deeds of the flesh cannot inherit the kingdom of God. And God says, where does that leave me, I wonder, as I've fallen into this sin repeatedly. How often do I have to do it before it becomes a practice? And so the old windmill is at work in his mind again, and it really seems he has practiced this sin.

So the poor guy is really on the ropes, isn't he? He doesn't know which way to turn. He's a bundle of tangled emotions, and he needs help. And what would you tell him? Well, first of all, let's look back in this passage, and let me just say, first of all, that there are several different explanations for these verses.

I'm looking right now at verse 9 of 1 John 3. And some people say that this is speaking about the old nature and the new nature, and that when you're born again, you have a new nature that casts sin, and you have an old nature that does sin. And this is an accepted explanation of this passage, and maybe some folks here believe that, and maybe when we get to heaven we'll find out that's the right explanation. I personally don't accept it because God holds the individual responsible for sin, not the nature.

For instance, I can't say, well, it wasn't me, it was my old nature. That doesn't get me off the hook, does it? God holds the individual responsible. Here's a man, and he goes speeding through Fargo at 80 miles an hour, and he's dragged into court.

And he says to the judge, the judge, it was my old nature that was speeding. The judge says, well, I fine your old nature \$50 for speeding, and I fine your new nature \$50 for being an accomplice to the fact. You see, it's the person who is responsible, not the nature.

So don't use that as a cop-out. God doesn't allow that as a cop-out, that it wasn't I, it was my nature. But what I do believe that this passage teaches is that whosoever is born of God does not practice sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot go on sinning because he is born of God.

I believe that the verb here is the present continuous tense. Verse 6, whosoever abided him does not go on sinning, does not sin habitually, whosoever sinneth, that is, whoever goes on characteristically sinning, has not seen him, neither known him. And I believe that the test of life that you have in 1 John 3 and elsewhere is that the Christian does not practice sin.

Now you say, well, how do you square that with Dale? Dale felt he was practicing sin. And how do you square that with the willful sin, because Dale felt that he had sinned willfully? Well, first of all, let me take up the willful sin, which is found in Hebrews 10, 26 and 27. Would you like to turn to that? Hebrews 10, 26 and 27 says there, For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for a judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversary.

He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses. Of how much sore a punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done death's fight unto the Spirit of grace. Now notice that carefully.

This passage is not describing a Dale who is fighting this ding-dong battle of sins, who falls on his face in confession before the Lord when he sins. The willful sin here is the sin of apostasy. It's a very serious sin.

It's a sin that cannot be committed by a true believer. It's a sin of a man who once professed to be a believer. Perhaps he was baptized and took his place in the Christian fellowship, but he was never really born again.

He was an imposter like Judas, and he subsequently turned his back on the Lord Jesus and maliciously renounced him. It says he trodden underfoot the Son of God. Dale hadn't trodden underfoot the Son of God.

Hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing. Dale never did that. And hath done death's fight unto the Spirit of grace.

Dale never did that. So Dale need not worry that he had committed the willful sin. And if he had, he wouldn't worry about it.

If he had committed it, an apostate never worries about it. He's quite callous about the whole thing. Some years ago I read in a book, I cannot document this, but I read in a book that when Jews had professed faith in Christ and then under pressure were tempted to go back into Judaism, the rabbis had a little ritual that they put them through.

The rabbis would take some blood of an animal and put it on the floor and say, look my friend, that represents the blood of Christ. If you want to come back to Judaism, walk over it. And when a man walked over that blood, he committed the willful sin.

Trodden underfoot the Son of God. Counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing. Dale didn't do that.

So Dale need not worry that he had committed the willful sin that we read about in Hebrews 10. But you say, what about this business of practicing sin? Hasn't Dale been practicing the sin? And isn't this a problem that I have in my life too? Well, let me just say, there's a difference between a Christian who fails repeatedly and an unbeliever who practices sin. And I believe that's the distinction that John makes here.

Let me say that again. There's a distinction, there's a difference between a Christian who fails repeatedly and an unbeliever who practices sin. And let me tell you what some of those differences are.

First of all, remember that the Christian is not sinless, but he does sin less. And I contend for that. A Christian isn't sinless.

And anybody who contends for the eradication of the sinful nature in the believer is either completely deceived or he has very low thoughts of sin. He doesn't know sin the way God knows it. The Christian is not sinless, but he does sin less.

Secondly, sin is not the dominating power in a Christian's life. I think that's what John is insisting on here. Sin is not the habitual practice of the believer's life.

He does sin, and that keeps him prostrate before the Lord, crying out to the Lord for mercy and forgiveness. Three, when a Christian sins, and this is different from an unbeliever. You go back to your unbelieving days.

When a Christian sins, he's filled with guilt, sorrow, shame, and discouragement. Now, I knew that after I got saved. I had different sensations with regard to sin after I was saved than I ever had before.

I had a different sensitivity to sin after I was saved than I ever had before. When a Christian sins, he's filled with guilt, sorrow, shame, and discouragement. The unbeliever can sin, and it doesn't hurt.

Four, when a Christian sins, he wants to go to the Lord in repentance and confession. This is just one of the inborn instincts of the child of God that when sin comes into his life and comes as a cloud between his faith and God, he wants to go to the Lord. He wants to cry out his confession against, He wants to confess his sin and know that the sin has been put away.

Five, he does not want to practice sin as a way of life. Now, Dale was a failure, just as I am a failure. But I can say for Dale, the very fact that he's going through this terrible struggle shows he doesn't want to practice sin as a way of life.

And finally, he doesn't sin with the same freedom he did before he was saved. There are breaks there. There are inhibitions there.

There are voices calling to him there. There's a conscious spirit up there. And it's really quite different.

Dale would be the first to confess to you that it's quite different, this business of sinning now as compared with sinning afterwards. And once again, the question would come up in a young believer's life, how many times do I have to sin before it becomes a practice? Well, if God said 50, we'd sin 49 times, wouldn't we? And God's too wise to say something like that. God couldn't say something like that.

I would say this, it's not just a question of how many times you commit a sin, but it's also a question of what your attitude is at the time and afterwards as well. This doesn't excuse sin. All sin is serious.

But it's a question of not just of how many times you commit a sin, but of your attitude at the time and afterwards. Okay, with that in mind, let's go back to 1 John 3 and read some of these verses. And some of you who have a modern translation of the Bible might find something like this.

Verse 4. Whoever practices sin transgresses the law, for sin is lawlessness. Do you know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin? Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not. Whosoever sinneth has not.

Whosoever abideth in him does not practice sin. Whoever goes on sinning carelessly, indifferently, has not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you.

He that practices righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that practices sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested.

That's a good expression, isn't it? For the devil sinneth from the beginning. It's been his habitual behavior. It's been that which characterizes him.

He sinneth from the beginning. I think that's the key to the understanding of the passage. John is talking about habitual behavior as a test of reality.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God does not go on sinning habitually, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot go on sinning because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifested, and the children of the devil.

Whosoever doeth not righteousness, does not practice righteousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. Now there are just one or two other verses in 1 John about the subject of sin that I'd like to point you to before we close. One is in chapter 5, verse 16.

1 John 5, verse 16 says, If any man see his brother sin of sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death. I do not say that he shall pray for it.

All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not unto death. Now John here tells us about two different sins. There's a sin not unto death, and there's a sin unto death.

It says that a brother can sin the sin not unto death. It does not use the word brother when it speaks about the sin unto death. What it's saying to me is that you can see a brother sin of sin, a brother in Christ, a true believer, sin of sin which is not unto death, and you can pray and that brother can be restored.

Peter would be an illustration, wouldn't he? A backslidden believer. There is sin not unto death. But John says there's sin unto death.

Now in the context, I believe the sin unto death was the sin that the Gnostics committed, the sin of apostasy. Having professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, they turned their backs on him like Judas did. They apostatized from the Christian faith.

And John says I don't say that you should pray for people like that. Well the fact of the matter is it would be a waste of time to pray for them because there is no hope for an apostate. When a man once crosses that line, there is no turning back.

I'm sorry to say that in my lifetime I've known several apostates. People who once seemed to be bright and shining lights for Jesus but eventually became enemies of the Lord Jesus and enemies of the cross of Christ. I've never known one of them ever to come back.

I've known several of them to die violent deaths. It's a difference in my mind between Peter who backslid from the Lord and was restored a sin not unto death and the sin of Judas who sold the Lord for 30 pieces of silk. Now in the will of God we'll go on and look at some of the other tests of life in 1 John and apply them to our own hearts and see where we stand before him.

Shall we look to the Lord in prayer? Father we just thank you this morning for your precious holy words. What a mine of wealth it is to us, a light upon our path. We live in a day of unreality Lord.

We live in a day when a great wave of profession is sweeping over the world. And we pray Lord for reality. We pray that in our Christian service that you'll give us heavenly Isaacs not Ishmaels.

We pray that we might have those who are children of supernatural birth not those who are children of the flesh. We do ask it. We pray that as we go to the word of God and find it to be indeed a sharp two-edged sword that we might apply it to our own hearts as well and test ourselves and rejoice in the great salvation that you have provided for us.

We ask it in the Savior's name. Amen.

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