

# Biblical Assurance (Part 1)

by Paul Washer

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*Paul Washer emphasizes the critical importance of self-examination and understanding the difference between security and assurance in one's faith.*

**Duration:** 52:31

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, 1 John 1:5-7

**Topics:** "Assurance"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of understanding the message that God is light. He explains that this message is not just one among many, but the crucial message that needs to be heard in the face of the problems in the church. The preacher emphasizes the need to explain the attributes of God when sharing the gospel, as simply mentioning the existence of God may not be enough. He also highlights the importance of teaching the Bible rather than manipulating emotions to bring people to the altar. The sermon concludes by introducing the first test mentioned in 1 John 1:6-7, which states that if we claim to have fellowship with God but continue to walk in darkness, we are lying and not practicing the truth. On the other hand, if we walk in the light as God is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and are cleansed from sin through the blood of Jesus.

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## Transcript

We will begin in Second Corinthians, chapter 13. Second Corinthians, chapter 13, let us pray. Father, I pray for wisdom.

I know that apart from him, I can do nothing. I am in such great need of wisdom, power, unction, clarity. I pray, O Lord, that every thought might be subject to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

That every word may be guided. I offer you, Lord, what I am, but apart from your grace, Lord, that's not much. So in this moment, dear God, I would ask that for the glory of your son and for the benefit of your people, that you would help me.

And I would also ask, Lord, that you would do a work among us in Jesus name. Amen. Before I begin my text, there's two things that I would just like to mention.

Number one, my name is Paul. For those of you who wonder who I am, my name is Paul. And for the next few months, I'll be helping the church a bit with the grace of God that has been given to me.

And the task of preaching and praying with the staff and counseling and other things and whatever, I can be a help. I take this responsibility as a work of God's providence, but I take it with much fear, with much trembling. And I want you to know that I believe I am here for this time by God's providence, but that will be validated not by a political authority, but by a spiritual authority, the ability to minister to God's people.

And if that does not come about, I want to know and I want to even cut this short stay necessary in half. Because it needs to be validated by the Lord that there is some blessing coming out of this pulpit and that there is some blessing coming out and working with the staff and working with the congregation in this time. Also, I want to tell you that I recognize something.

I knew the first man in this church, Pastor James Weaver, and I knew him to be a man of prayer. I think I've never met a man like him who prayed like he prayed. I have not known Pastor Bullock as much.

He came to Peru and visited me, talked to him a few times, but I understand from everyone that has spoken of him that he was very, very serious about the word of God and preaching exposition of not just coming up here and flinging out ideas and telling moral and quaint stories. To be honest with you, it would be a much easier task if he had been another sort of man. It would have been a much easier task if he would have just built this church on quaint stories and moral maxims.

But it seemed that he preached forth the word of God from this pulpit. So that is something I will probably not live up to, but will attempt at least in this time that I am here to at least fear God and not speaking nonsense to you. But in preaching forth the word of God.

Secondly, I would like to say that I have spent now a few days with the staff and I count it a great privilege to get to know them, their kindness towards me. We have spent two days praying together, spending most of our mornings in the word and in prayer. And I counted a tremendous privilege to be associated with the people that you have working in the office.

And I know that some of you are thinking we're in a transition period. That is very, very true. And and I want you to know that the elders and myself and the staff, we're not unaware that even during transition periods, needs in the congregation do not stop.

And the staff is made up maybe as far as the counseling, pastoring people on that staff, it's made up of, well, I'll be there. Ryan will be there and Matt will be there. The elders are open to meeting any need, the focus group leaders are there to help you.

But I want you to realize something in this short period that I am here, Philippians four, one will apply. You will be my crown and my joy. My vision at this moment is not about making this church big or changing the world.

The vision is the sheep. You it doesn't make me happy just to have Sunday mornings that look really good. That's not the litmus test of the church.

The question is, are you doing well, are you growing in the Lord, your marriages, do they reflect the love and the truth of Jesus Christ, your children? Are they being raised in admonition, love and discipline of the Lord? Are you growing in holiness? Are you growing in love? Are you struggling through terrible problems? I want you to know that in this transitional period, we're we're open, we're open. You call the office. I would encourage you if you're in a focus group, first call your focus leader and we're going to work on equipping them so they can minister to people's needs.

But but call them and they'll be honest. If they can't deal with the problem you're going through, they'll call us. And I don't care what time of the night it is.

One of us will be there also when I give an invitation, you know, invitations are a good thing, kind of a modern thing, but they're a good thing. But I want you to see something it most of the time it doesn't end here. You come forward, you have a need, you have a problem.

If I have to stay here all day, we'll stay here all day. We have to go back to the office. That's all right.

We want this church. We want to honor the Lord Jesus Christ, we want to honor the men that have gone before. And we want this church to be without spot and without wrinkle before the Lord, we want your families to be strong.

You think he keeps mentioning families, the litmus test of your godliness is your family. There are needs out there. And we want to minister to them now, I have ministered and pastored and preached for 22 years now, I don't know everything, but there is something of the grace of God in me.

And if I can't find the answer, I'll find someone who can. I've spent a great deal of time with Brother Matt. And I find in him a man.

Who has wisdom to give and a passion to minister to God's people, call on him. And there is also Brother Ryan. Every time I think of him, I think of First Timothy, chapter four, verse 12.

Do not let anyone look down on you because of your youthfulness. He is young, but if I was in his. He's light years ahead of me when I was his age.

And with regard, especially to young families, he has a great deal of wisdom. Great deal of wisdom, youthfulness does not make a man incompetent, an old age does not necessarily make a man wise because it's all about whether or not we can communicate the word of God to you. We might not be the best pastoral team in the world, but we're the only one you got, but we are willing.

So you call. Now, we're in Second Corinthians, chapter 13, verse five, test yourselves to see if you are in the faith, examine yourselves, or do you not recognize this about yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you unless indeed you fail the test. Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, I come before you in the name of your son. And now, Lord, it is an unction that I need. Do you know? In Jesus name, amen.

You may be seated. There are so many people who go to church on Sunday, even in Bible teaching churches like this one has been and yet do not know the Lord. They do not know him.

They can even be involved in ministry. They can even be involved in religious activity, but they do not know him. And why is that? Because of the preaching that is so prevalent in this country today, I'm not going to spend time dealing on what is wrong.

I want to get to what is right, but we need to understand something. So much has been done in the evangelical community that is not biblical and it is not historical. We have taken the gospel of Jesus Christ and reduced it down to four or five little principles and a prayer that you repeat at the end.

That's not Christianity. We see people, a very, very handsome speaker on television a while back, he was speaking and he went through his entire sermon about about people's temporal needs and all such and sort of things. And then he gets to the very end and he looks right into the camera and he says, pray this prayer if you want Jesus to fix your life.

And after he led those people in a prayer, he said, we believe we know that if you repeated that prayer, God has given you eternal life. My friend, that's not true. That is not true.

Now, we come down to an issue. You know how so many people, it's very, very common in America today to hear someone say, I don't want none of that theology stuff, I don't want none of that doctrine. When you say you don't want theology, those are two words, theos and logos in the Greek language.

You're saying I don't want a word from God because that's what that means. Also, when you say you don't want doctrine, Hebrew word means teaching. I don't want teaching.

I want all the benefits of eternal life and salvation, but I don't want to hear a word from God. Everything that we do must be founded upon doctrine. Not just because I use the word doctrine does not mean it's something men teach.

Jesus taught doctrine, he taught truth, and that's where we need to stand upon the truth. Now, in theology, in doctrine, there are two doctrines that are very important. One of them is the security of the believer, and the other is the doctrine of assurance.

Today in America, we've combined both of those and lost both of them. We've combined them into one doctrine and lost both of them. Now, what is the doctrine of security? I really don't like that title, but we'll use it because it's common today.

It's better to say perseverance of the saints. But the doctrine of security is this. When God has truly saved an individual, the same power of God that saved that individual keeps that individual unto the end, keeps them from falling.

Now, that's the doctrine of security. But there's another doctrine. It's called the doctrine of assurance.

The doctrine of security is if you have truly believed in Jesus Christ, you are secure. The doctrine of assurance is how do you know you have believed? How can you be assured that you have truly believed unto salvation? Now, think about the importance of this question. When you look around, all we'd have to do is dismiss this church right now and go knock on doors throughout this entire county.

What would we find? We would find that everybody basically in this county has been saved. They all believe they believe. I believe.

We could go to trailer parks, we could go everywhere you would want to go, we could go to rodeos today, we could go anywhere you would want to go, and we would find people without number who believe and believe they are saved. And yet there is no evidence of a new life in them. There is no evidence of Christ.

There is no evidence of a supernatural work of God. So the question comes down to this. How can you and I be assured? How can we have confidence that we truly believe unto salvation? How do you know you believe? That's a fearful question when you think that you're surrounded by multitudes of people who claim to believe.

And it seems as though that claim is false. How do you know you are saved? Let me put it this way. I ask someone, do you have eternal life? Are you saved? Are you going to heaven? And they say, yes.

I ask them, why? Well, because I believe. My next question, how do you know you believe? How do you know that what you're calling belief is actually saving faith? Now, in many instances around this country, there will be people today who will walk up to pastors all over this country and say, Pastor, I'm not really sure if I'm a Christian or not. And you know what the primary question will be? That will be asked? Well, let me ask you a question.

Was there ever a point in time in your life when you prayed and asked Jesus Christ to come into your heart? And the person will say, yes. And then, were you sincere? I think so. Well, then, this is just the devil bothering you.

You need to believe God. You're saved. Some of you have heard that in different places.

Some of you have said that in different places. That's what we have done with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Now, we have the Apostle Paul here in this book.

And what's going on? He is addressing a church that is in disobedience. Not only are there true Christians there who are, in a sense, being disobedient, lifted up, proud, but he's also addressing a church that has within it people who profess faith in Jesus Christ who really aren't Christians. Now, how does the Apostle Paul deal with assurance? How does he talk to these people so that they might truly know that they are saved or truly know that they are not? Well, we get to verse 5. He says this, Test yourselves.

Look at that. Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith. And then he repeats himself, basically, Examine yourselves.

He doesn't necessarily ask them to go back to a point in time, even though in counseling that's important, to discuss someone's conversion experience, very important. But the issue isn't so much what did you do back then, but what are you doing now? Because what you are doing now will determine what really happened back then. Because if God begins a work in you, he continues it.

If he starts a work, the work will persevere. If you have repented, you'll continue to repent. If you have believed, you're believing now.

Because he who began a good work will finish that work. So now, he gives us two words here. And it's a word to you and to me.

Not just to this church in Corinth. But to you and to me, he gives a word. He says, test yourself.

Take a test. Well, what material do we use? Well, there's only one material. You've been taught that quite well.

It's the word of God. You test your life in light of what the word of God says about genuine faith and genuine Christianity. That's what you do.

And then he says, examine yourself. There are many times when I worked in the Andes Mountains running mule trains and everything else you can imagine, that when I was having to go across a footbridge, I tested it. Why? Because it's a long fall.

You test that footbridge. Why? Your life depends on it. Do you not see? I'm not preaching to hear myself preach.

I'm not talking just to say beautiful words. Listen to me. Whatever is spoken out of a pulpit when the word of God is truly preached, your life depends upon it.

And the life of your children depend upon it. Do you not see? This is not some flippant little thing. This is not something that you just add to your life as an accessory.

This is it. I think not only of you. I think about the children.

How many people go to hell because they believed that they were converted in a vacation Bible school where they were asked as little children, how many of you love Jesus? You've had a little child raise their hand and say, well, I hate him. Or how many of you little children want to go to heaven? Have you ever seen a little child raise their hand and say, no, I'd rather go to hell actually. And then when the question is asked, how many of you want to go to heaven? How many of you believe in Jesus? What happens? They all raise their hand.

And then what happens? They're all pronounced saved. And then what happens? They're baptized. And then what happens? When they're about 15 or 16 and start feeling a little bit of strength, a little bit of independence, they show their true colors.

And then what do we call it? They just need to rededicate their life. No, they need to be saved. They need to be regenerated by the power of God.

Someone asked me one time, they said, can a five-year-old be saved? I said, a 65-year-old Harvard professor cannot be saved apart from the power of God. And a five-year-old can. That's not the issue.

Children can be saved. We have to be doctors of the soul in this church. We have to be people who love so much that we are going to not only test and examine our own lives, but it is the responsibility of any spiritual leadership in a church to also be very, very careful of how they deal with the souls of the people that God sends to them.

So he says, test yourselves to see if you are in the faith. Examine yourselves. Now, how are we to do that? Should we compare ourselves with others? Well, no.

Paul tells the church in Corinth, that's a very foolish thing to do. So how are we to test ourselves? How are we to examine ourselves in the light of God's word? Now, he goes on to say this. He says, do you not recognize this about yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you? Unless indeed you fail the test.

He's looking at these people who claim to be believers. He's saying, you live like a group of people that do not even realize that God has come to take up residence in your life. But then he goes on.

He doesn't stop there. Could it be that God has not come to take up residence in your life? You're living like someone in whom the spirit of Christ does not dwell. Now, why do I say this? Well, for the reason any preacher would say this.

Love, how many of you? I'm not condemning you. I'm not. How many of you, other than coming to church this Sunday? There is very little difference between you and those who profess no faith whatsoever in Christ.

It's not you I'm against. It's you I'm for. It's you we desire to reach.

How many of you, teenagers, young people? Your life is no different at school, except that you go to church on Sunday. Take this to heart. Take it seriously.

Think about what's being said to you. This is a test, not a minor thing. You think of so many tests you must take in order to get into a good university.

Once there, you think of the MBA program or law school or medical school and the tests you must take. I'm talking about an eternal thing, an eternal wager. Life and death, heaven and hell.

Two words that won't even be mentioned in some churches this Sunday. Is your faith real faith? Let's examine it. Let's turn to 1 John chapter 5. 1 John chapter 5, verse 13, 1 John 5, 13.

Now, when John writes his gospel in John 20, 31, he tells us why he has written the words he has written. So that people would believe that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, that they might have eternal life. That's the reason he wrote his gospel.

Now he's going to tell us the reason he wrote his epistle. He says, verse 13, These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. Why did John write this letter? He wrote it to a group of people who were professing faith in Christ, so that through reading the letter, they would know whether or not they were truly saved.

That's the purpose of this letter. And this was well known in the old days of old preaching. That if you want to know whether or not you're saved or not, you don't go to some little magical formula.

If you want to know whether you're saved, you go to 1 John. Because the whole thing is a series of tests that are given, so that the Spirit of God might reveal to your heart that you truly are saved, and give you a biblical assurance instead of an emotional one. But at the same time, maybe give you biblical assurance that you're lost, no matter what the profession that comes out of your mouth.

And that's what we're going to do. Let's take a brief look at verse 13, and then we're going to try to get into one or two of the tests this morning, and then this evening we will continue on. Now, there's two-fold purpose here.

Number one, this is for you to examine your own life. It does not matter, sir. It does not matter, sister, if you have supposedly or really been in the faith for 40 years.

The Word of God is never something we learn and then we don't have to listen to anymore. This is for you. Every one of us should examine our lives to see if we truly are in the faith.

But, also, listen to me. Those of you who are leaders, those of you who are parents, learn this. Why? First of all, for your children's sake.

That you might be able to help them discern whether or not they have truly come to the faith. Now, he says these things. What are these things? The entire book of 1 John.

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God. Now, when the scriptures, when the apostles and such, writing their epistles, talk about someone who believes. Some men really get kind of messed up here.

They say, well, he says they believe, they really do believe. He's talking to true believers. No, he's talking in the same way any pastor would.

Those of you who profess to believe. I can't look in your heart. I don't know if your profession is true, but I'm writing to those of you who say you believe.

And that's what he's doing here. Now, he says, so that you may know. Now, look at that.

That one word destroys some denominations, some teaching. Those who would say you cannot know that you are saved. Contradict everything in 1 John 5, verse 13.

He says, so that you may know that you have eternal life. Let me just put a passing word here about something very, very important. Eternal life is not a ticket to heaven and an escape from hell.

Eternal life is this. That they may know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. Let me just give you something that's really good.

This isn't one of the tests of faith, but this will help you kind of square off to see where you're at. You know, so many people want to go to heaven only because they want to go to heaven. They have nothing to do with God on earth, yet they want to go to heaven.

Why? Well, it's a nice place. And the alternative is terrible. So they want to go to heaven.

If that is your view of eternal life, right there a red flag should jump up that possibly you do not know Him. My friend, heaven is heaven because God is there. Those who really go to heaven, go to heaven not so they can swing on gates of pearl or walk down streets of gold.

They go to heaven because they want to see the face of the Savior. They want to worship Christ. They love Him.

Eternal life is not just longevity. It's not just a perfect body in a perfect place. It is a love for God that will finally and eternally be able to manifest itself.

A love that some of you so desire. You so desire to love Him as He ought to be loved. You so desire to serve Him as He ought to be served.

And heaven is heaven to you because there it's going to happen. You will see Him, no more veils, no more looking through a cloudy glass. But you'll see Him.

But if you're sitting here today and heaven is just a way to get out of the alternative or a fine place to be. You sound more like someone who wants to rent a condo on Lake Travis but not someone who wants to go to heaven. Because heaven is all about God.

All about God. Now, let's look at the tests that are in Scripture. And we'll start in chapter 1. Now, some of the things I'm going to say here at the very beginning are absolutely crucial.

Absolutely crucial to your understanding of this book and this passage. Crucial. So, put your thinking caps on.

In chapter 1, verse 5. He says, This is the message we have heard from Him and announced to you that God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all. Now, this is not a test. It's an introduction.

And you must understand this passage to get to the rest. Okay, now, first of all. What is the message? That God is light.

Now, what does that mean? He's saying this is the message that we have heard from Him. Well, let's just break it all down. This is the message.

First of all, He doesn't say this is a message. Or this is a really good message among a whole bunch of other messages. No, He's saying this is the message you need to hear at this time with the problems that are going on in this church.

That's what He's saying. And what were the problems going on? They had a group of false teachers that had moved in that were the roots of a heresy that still exists today that we call Gnosticism. And what these false teachers taught was that they alone possessed this esoteric, and the word means hidden, they alone possessed this hidden knowledge that the common believer, like all of us, would never really understand.

But they possessed this knowledge which gave them such a high ranking. It also enabled them to, well, to live freely. That was their term for it, but God's term for it would be in bondage to sin.

They were very immoral. Very immoral. Some of them would say, well, you know, the body is going to be destroyed anyway, so if you live in sin constantly, that's no big deal for a Christian.

It was antinomianism, a word that means lawlessness. They lived as though God had never given a law. Because the body is evil, it will be destroyed, we'll go to heaven one day and our soul and spirit, we can do whatever we want with our body because it won't affect our inward man.

They had many such heresies like that. They denied many things about the doctrine of the person of Christ. They were a very wicked lot.

Now, he says, this is the message you need to hear in the context of all the wickedness and immorality that is around you. And what is that message? God is light. My dear friend, if there was a message the church of Jesus Christ needs to hear in America today, it is this.

God is light. You are surrounded by a sea of wickedness. You live in a culture that is all but pagan.

And it has affected you much more than what you could imagine. Don't think that you swim through this sea without being tainted by its stain. There is so much in all of us that is so secular and unbiblical that if it were to be pulled back all at once, it would terrify us.

So again, this is not just people 2,000 years ago, this is today. God is light. Now, what does that mean? Well, John, if you study his gospel and study his epistles, all of them, you come to understand something about him.

Very unusual in his writing. He uses a lot of terms that kind of leave you open to two or three possibilities. It's almost as though he's done it on purpose.

So when you say, God is light, you must look at the context around this to discover, what does he mean when he says God is light? Because it does no good to say God is light if you don't know what that means. For example, we were in a seminary class one day and I was a young seminary student and the professor told us all, he says, I just want each of you just to mention an attribute of God. So we all went through the class and after then we had a whole board written of the attributes of God.

And all of a sudden it just dawned on me, I raised my hand, I said, sir, that means absolutely nothing, what we have written. He said, you're absolutely right. Why does it mean nothing? It means nothing to say God is holy unless you go into the Bible and find out what holy means.

Because the world will give you a definition of holy. The world will give you a definition of love. The world will give you a definition and they'll all be wrong.

If you say God is light, you then must go into the Scripture and say, okay, what does that mean? Now, throughout Scripture, we talk about light, especially in John, in his gospel and his epistles. He does this thing between light and darkness. Holiness, moral purity, sinlessness, perfection, and sin, unrighteousness, wickedness.

So when John says that God is light, he's saying God is holy. Remember this, the Bible never says God is love, love, love. And it never says God is merciful, merciful, merciful.

But it does say God is holy, holy, holy. And the repetition is important, very important. You want to know what God is? Who God is? God's holy.

And if there was ever a message we needed to hear in America today, it's that. God is holy. I have a dear friend that is so, so very, very wise.

He's one of my favorite preachers in the world. When he witnesses to somebody, this is how he'll start off. He'll tell them how holy and how righteous God is.

And then when they ask him, well, then how am I to be saved? He'll look at them and say, oh, that's easy. Be perfectly righteous and perfectly holy like God. And then he'll turn away.

Because the person's sitting there and going, you just left me. I mean, you've left me. You tell me God is this way.

I'm nothing like that. And now you're telling me in order to go to heaven, I've got to be just like God? Yes. Well, that's impossible.

Yes. What do I do? Jesus. You see, in our witnessing, if we do not deal with the attributes of God, when we tell people, you know, you need to be saved or that, you know, there's a God, they could be thinking about a tree or something.

You have to be able to explain what does this mean? Now, you may be noticing something about my preaching right now. And it might be to the dislike of some of you and to the like of others of you. And it is this.

I am not working this sermon down to some fine point where I can manipulate you to this altar. I'm not trying to, you know, how do I bring this to a crescendo and how do I get... No, I'm going to teach you the Bible. And I believe that teaching you the Bible is going to change your life.

Okay? So when we run out of time, we'll stop. We'll give an invitation, but we will stop. And we'll pick this right back up again tonight.

Now, just so we all understand where we're at. Now, when he says that God is light, it not only means that he's holy. But in this context, it means something tremendous.

And if you don't catch it, you won't understand what he's saying. These teachers said that God was dark. He was esoteric.

He was hidden. You couldn't really know him. And you couldn't really know his will.

Sounds like the media today, doesn't it? Everybody, all the politicians talk about God, but you can't know who he is. And you can't know what he's required of the old man. That's the exact same thing.

And why did they teach that way? Because everyone wants a God. Okay? But when you start defining who he is and what his law is, it brings responsibility. So everyone wants a God, but a God that's really far away, that you really can't know.

And you don't know what he wants. Because then you have the liberty to live just like your carnal heart desires. I was debating with a man from Spain one time.

And he had the advantage. He was a very, very gifted man. And the language, he just had such a control of the language.

And we were discussing a philosopher from Spain, Unamuno, who's one of the most famous philosophers in Spain. He's influenced much of Europe. He wrote a book, *La Vida es un Sueño*, Life is a Dream.

And what this is about is this. That the greatest thing to be is a seeker of the truth. But the most arrogant thing you could ever do is say you found it.

It's like if I go to a university to debate or something. If I stand up in front of the entire group and I say, I am a seeker of the truth, they'll all applaud me. I mean, they'll applaud.

And then when I go, and I found it, they'll boo me off the platform. Because, and I told this man from Spain, I said, I just discovered why you don't want to acknowledge that there really is a truth out there. Because the moment you acknowledge it, you're going to have to submit to it.

And that's what you don't want to do. And that's the way these doctors were. That's the way these false prophets were.

Here in this book. God is this esoteric God that you really can't know. And His will, well, who knows what He wants? And John counters this by saying what? God is light.

What does he mean? He has shown you who He is and He has told you His will. And you can't escape it. He's not a hidden God.

He's not a God that you have to go look for with a flashlight or a lantern like the philosopher went through the city looking for a righteous man. He's not that kind of God. He has made Himself known to you.

You know who He is and you also know what He desires of thee. That's what John's saying. And that's very, very important.

Very important. Very, very, very important. Now, we're going to finish by going to test number one.

And don't worry, there's ten of these. The wonderful thing about preaching outside of this country is you can preach this whole book on one Sunday morning. But in America, they just can't endure it.

Now, let's look at the first test. What is the first test? Verse six. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. Now, let's take this apart. If we say we have fellowship with Him, what does it mean to have fellowship with Him? My dear friend, in modern times, this book has been treated much differently than it was in ancient times.

Many people will look at this and say to have fellowship with Him, what He's talking about is the difference between two types of Christians. A Christian who walks in fellowship with God and a Christian who does not walk in fellowship with God. No, that's not what He's talking about.

And a boatload of ancient theologians will back me up on that as well as many of the greatest Bible teachers alive today. When He says, when He talks about fellowship, koinonia, a fellowship, a unity, an intimate relationship, He is not talking about two different types of Christians, one that has fellowship and one that doesn't. He's talking about a lost man and a saved man.

When He goes on and says, we know that we've come to know Him, He's talking about a saved man. A saved man has fellowship with Him. A saved man knows Him.

A person who abides in Him is a person who knows Him. A person who does not abide is a person who's lost. These are tests to determine, not whether or not you're a good Christian or a bad one.

These are tests to determine whether you are a Christian. So He says, verse 6, if we say that we have fellowship with Him, if we say that we are Christians, that we're born again, that we're going to heaven, that we've been regenerated, if we say that and yet walk in darkness. What does it mean to walk in darkness? Well, first look at the word walk.

It comes from a Greek word peripateo, which literally, the peri part on that, literally means, gives it the idea of walking around or wandering or going places. It's not just walking in a straight line, but just walking all over the place. So what He's saying is this, if we say we have fellowship, that we are Christians, and yet we walk around in the darkness.

Now, this is a present tense verb that means a continuous action. If we say we're Christians, and yet our lifestyle, our habit of living, is one of walking around in darkness, then we're a liar when we say we're a Christian. Now, what is darkness? We have to define that.

It's the opposite of light. You say, oh, walking in unholiness. Yes, but I want you to get this a little bit deeper.

What is light? God has told us who He is. God has told us what He desires. To walk in the light is to walk according to what God has told us about Himself, and to walk according to what God has told us about His will.

To walk in the darkness is to walk in a way that contradicts what the Bible teaches about the Person of God and contradicts what the Bible teaches about the will of God. Do you understand? To walk in the darkness is to live a life, to have characteristics in your life and works in your life that totally contradict everything we know about the Person of God. And it's to live a style of life that contradicts everything God has ever said about what He desires of you.

That's the difference between walking in the light and walking in the darkness. And what we're talking about here is lifestyle. A word that is very, very important that Dr. MacArthur uses quite a bit is habitual.

Habitual practices. The practice of your life. The style of your life.

Now let me show you the difference really quick so that we don't get confused. If you were to follow me around, especially when I'm on our farm, if you were to follow me around with a snapshot camera, a camera that just takes snapshots, you know, the old timey ones. If you were to follow me around, say I'm fixing a barn.

And I don't know if any of you have worked on barns, but that old, old tin that they used to put on barns. Not that new flimsy stuff, but the real old stuff. And you're up there nailing.

And I'm nailing, and you hear me, bam, bam, bam, bam, bam, bam, bam, bam. And all of a sudden I go, bam, bam, bam! And you hear a scream like nothing you've ever heard before on this earth. I throw the hammer.

I jump down off the roof. I kick the dog. And immediately, you come up to me at that point and you go CLICK! And then you put it on the big screen next Sunday and you say, I told you that guy was a false prophet and he wasn't safe.

Look at that face. Or you follow me around with a snapshot camera, even in my own home, and you see me give my wife a quick word. Chato, can't you see I'm late? I don't have time to do this.

CLICK! You know what? If you follow me around with a snapshot camera, you are going to be able to find times when I am acting in a way that contradicts what we know about God and contradicts what we know about God's will. Is that not true? And if you just take that snapshot camera, you can condemn my soul to hell. But, if you follow me around 24 hours a day, 24-7, with a video camera, and take the full course of my life, are you going to see perfection? No.

Are you going to see someone that imitates Christ in absolutely every aspect of his being and his daily life? No. But what are you going to see? You're not going to see a habitual practicing of darkness. You are going to see someone to whom light has come and who the darkness is passing away.

You're going to see a style of life that although it is intermittent with sin, it is not habitual sin. There is a sense that light has come. There is a sense of, as a style of life, although not perfect, as a style of life, this man is walking in a way that conforms to what God has told us about His person.

And this man is walking in a way that conforms to what God has revealed about His will. Style of life. Now, He says, if we say... Do you know what your profession of faith in Jesus Christ is worth? Absolutely zero.

Because all the time here, He's going to contradict if we say. He says, if we say, and yet... If we say we know God, that we have fellowship with God, that we abide in Christ, that we're Christians, we're born again, if we use all this terminology, and yet, we live a style of life that does not conform to the person and will of God, we lie. Look at that.

Now, this is the apostle of love. That's what he was called. But look at the hard terminology he's using.

I mean, he doesn't debate. He just looks at you and says, no, you lie. He doesn't try to look inside your heart.

He doesn't count your hallelujahs. He doesn't care about the tears streaming down your face in worship. What he says is, no, you lie when you say that.

What will I say to you? What else can I say? I'm a man under compulsion. If you say that you know Him, but your style of life contradicts His attributes, primarily His holiness, and contradicts what He has revealed about His will for your life, all our lives, you lie. If you're sitting here today and you say, boy, I profess to know Him, but my style of life is just a flagrant violation of everything the Bible teaches about God and His will.

What would I tell you? At least, at the minimum, dear friend, a red flag ought to pop up. And you ought to say, wait a minute here. I need to get some godly counsel.

I need someone to take me through the Word. I need some help. Well, that's what we're here for.

Help. Help. Now, I'm going to give an invitation to Brother Robert to come up.

Listen to me. Again, this is not about getting an altar filled. This is about you.

This is about you being saved. This is about you being healed. This is about you being warned.

Hopefully, in a couple weeks when I can arrange it somehow, I'm going to have it where if you want to go off somewhere to a room, you can go. And as soon as I get done here, I will be there and I'll stay with you. We'll talk.

Whatever we have to do. Because I don't want just one minute here of a prayer and then see you go back to the same old thing. We need to deal with some things.

We need to deal with some things. You need to get things right for the sake of you and for the sake of your children, and most of all, for the sake of God. There are some of you in here today, and I am not a prophet or the son of a prophet, but there are some of you, you know unless your ears have become so hardened that you go to church, but when you walk out these doors, you're going to live a life that contradicts everything God has told us about Himself and contradicts everything God has ever said about His will.

Oh, my dear friend, don't run from that. Don't say the preacher is being mean. Come! Let's talk.

Let's reason together. Let's work this thing out. Let's wrestle this thing to the ground.

Let's get victory. Some of you might say, well, I just go up there and pray. I've gone up there and prayed a thousand times and it's never done anything.

Okay, let's take this thing a little bit further then. Let's meet and talk. Let's work this out.

It can be done. Some of you ought to be very, very happy because everything I've described up there indicates that you're a believer. And some of you ought to be absolutely terrified that everything I said up there indicates some red flags ought to be jumping up in your life.

Now, I'm going to be down here. Whatever elder, teacher, whatever wants to come down here can. Let's stand and let's sing.

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