

The Voice in the Wilderness

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Examine Yourself

Bible Text

2 Corinthians 13:5 (NKJV) **“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? —unless indeed you are disqualified?”**

1. What “the faith” means in Christianity

The faith refers to the true Christian faith, that is a genuine belief in and commitment to Jesus Christ. It is the wholehearted trust in God and in the saving work of Jesus Christ. This includes believing the gospel, relying on Christ alone for salvation, and continuing in obedient loyalty to Him. It's not merely intellectual agreement, but a living, saving relationship with Christ that shows evidence in one's life.

Ephesians 2:8-10 ***“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.***

The person who is in the faith will continuously trust in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31); believe in the apostolic gospel (1 Corinthians 15:3–4) and persevere in obedience that flows from genuine belief (James 2:26). He therefore possesses the faith that produces obedience, repentance, and spiritual fruit.

2. Signs someone is not in the faith

The Bible warns that not everyone who claims Christ truly belongs to Him (Matthew 7:21). Below are recurring biblical indicators:

a) Denial of Jesus Christ's identity and work

- ***"Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?"*** (1 John 2:22).
- ***"And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world."*** (1 John 4:3).

A persistent rejection of Jesus as the Christ (Messiah), Son of God, crucified and risen, contradicts the faith.

b) Mere verbal profession without obedience

- ***"Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter... but he that doeth the will of my Father"*** (Matthew 7:21).
- ***"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him"*** (Titus 1:16).

An unchanged, disobedient life that contradicts Christ's commands suggests a hollow profession and faithlessness.

c) Ongoing, unrepentant practice of sin

- ***"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin"*** (1 John 3:9) - *this means not a settled, habitual pattern without repentance.*

A true believer can never make a persistent sinful lifestyle the prevailing norm in his life.

- ***"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God."*** (1 Corinthians 6:9–10).

A lifestyle marked by unrepentant sin, with no conviction or turning, signals spiritual danger.

d) Lack of love for fellow believers

- ***“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren”*** (1 John 3:14).

Consistent hatred, bitterness, envy or indifference toward Christ’s people contradicts saving faith.

e) Abandoning the apostolic teaching

- ***“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not”*** (2 John 1:10).
- ***“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith”*** (1 Timothy 4:1).

Turning away from the gospel once delivered is described as departing from the faith. So also, is the rejection and hatred of any of the Biblical teachings.

f) No evidence of spiritual fruit

- ***“By their fruits ye shall know them”*** (Matthew 7:16).
- ***“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ²³ Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law”*** (Galatians 5:22–23).

While believers can still struggle, however, a total absence of Christlike fruit over time calls one’s profession and confession of Christ into question.

g) Hatred for calls to a holy living

¹⁵ But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; ¹⁶ Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy (1 Peter 1:15-16).

Believers who show utter disgust and disregard to calls to live a holy and blameless lifestyle cannot be regarded as believers. They are definite ***“wolves in sheep’s clothing”*** (Matthew 7:15).

An important balance

The Scripture also calls believers to self-examination with humility and hope:

- ***“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith”*** (2 Corinthians 13:5).
- ***“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us”*** (1 John 1:9).

Struggles, doubts, or seasons of weakness do not automatically mean someone is not in the faith. The decisive issue is whether a person truly trusts in Christ and shows ongoing repentance, growth and desire to forsake the evil way at all times.

I pray that the grace of God will be available for every believer to walk in the narrow path at all times in Jesus' name, Amen.

God bless you.