

THREE TESTS OF TRUE CHRISTIANITY **(1 John 5:1-5)**

I. The test of belief.

- A. The particular belief that is needed for this test is belief in Jesus.
 - 1. We must believe He is the Christ (5:1).
 - 2. We must believe He is the Son of God (5:5).
 - 3. We must believe He has come in the flesh.
- B. These were especially important in John's day because of the Gnostics.
 - 1. There were some that denied Jesus was deity.
 - 2. There were some that denied His humanity.
 - 3. There were some that denied His reality
- C. Sadly, these concepts of Jesus have not vanished in our day.
 - 1. How many times have we seen some show advertised that is going to teach some false idea about Jesus?
 - 2. Christian Science, Jehovah's Witness, the Mormons, Muslims and others all hold false ideas about Jesus.
- D. When we deny the deity, humanity or reality of Jesus there are consequences:
 - 1. It makes us a liar and antichrist (2:22).
 - 2. There can be no fellowship with the Father or the Son (2:22-23).
- E. On the other hand, there are consequences for believing in the deity, humanity and reality of Jesus.
 - 1. It allows us to be "begotten of God." (5:1).
 - a. John 8:24.
 - b. Without belief in Christ, belief that moves one to be obedient to Jesus, we can't be a child of God.
 - 2. It allows us to overcome the world (5:4-5).
 - a. The world is that body of evil that appeals to us through the lust of the flesh, eyes and pride of life.
 - b. With an active, obedient belief in Jesus, we can overcome that and be victorious.
 - c. The word "overcometh" carries the idea of a continuous struggle.
 - d. We continue to be victorious over sin because we continue to battle it.
- F. Without faith in Christ we cannot be begotten by God or overcome the world.

II. The test of love.

- A. The night before Jesus was crucified, He had two things to say about brotherly love.
 - 1. He made it a mark of discipleship (John 13:34-35).
 - 2. He made it a command to prove we are His friends (John 15:12-14, 17).
- B. As we know, John stressed brotherly love in this epistle.
 - 1. It is proof that we are abiding the light of Jesus (2:10).

- 2. It is proof of being a child of God (3:10).
 - 3. It is proof of having passed from death unto life (3:14).
 - 4. It is proof of knowing God and being begotten by God (4:7-8).
 - C. Now John tells us that it is a result of loving God (5:1).
 - 1. If you love God who begets these children, then you must love the children He has begotten.
 - 2. The second necessarily flows from the first.
 - D. John also shows us how we can be sure that we love God's children: by loving God and keeping His commandments (5:2).
 - 1. We can make the claim all day long and twice on Sunday's that we love the brethren.
 - 2. But if we don't love God and keep His commandments, those claims are hollow and hypocritical.
 - E. Without love, we cannot be true children of God.
- III. The test of obedience.**
- A. John has also talked much about being obedient.
 - 1. He has shown it is essential to having fellowship with the Father (1:6-7).
 - 2. It is essential to knowing Jesus (2:3-4).
 - 3. It is essential to loving God (2:5).
 - 4. It is essential to abiding in Christ (2:6).
 - 5. It is essential to being a child of God (3:10).
 - 6. It is essential to having our prayers answered (3:22).
 - B. John now shows us it is essential to two other things.
 - 1. It is essential to loving the children of God (5:2).
 - 2. It is essential to loving God Himself (5:3).
 - C. These tests, and specifically obedience, are not grievous to John.
 - 1. These commandments are not a burden, or heavy or distressing as the word means.
 - 2. If you think about, John had served the Lord for 50 years or more and never found His commands to be a burden.
 - 3. When done out of a heart of love, based on belief in God and Christ, man will be obedient and it will not be difficult.

From a sermon by Mark Copeland