

## Abide in Him

Some believe they have passed from death to life (1 Jn 3:14) when, in fact, they have not. We know this because their lives do not show the fruit of the Spirit<sup>1</sup>; but rather, they show the fruit of the flesh<sup>2</sup>. Self-deception (Matt. 24:48–51) is dangerous.

If one's life is dominated by lies, deceit and sin, it is unlikely that he is saved (1 Jn 1:6). If one does not desire to be with other believers (e.g. going to church), it is unlikely that he is saved (1 Jn 4:20).

The apostle Paul was concerned for the Thessalonians with whom he'd shared the faith: I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain (1 Th 3:5).

Paul knew that hearts must be established in faith: For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord (1 Th 3:8).

Believers are those who have received Christ (Ac 5:14). They have eternal life (Ro 6:23) and are written in the Lamb's Book of Life (Re 21:27).

Some profess faith but they are not genuinely his (Tit 1:16, 1 Jn 2:4, 19, 2:11, 2 Ti 3:5). The Lord tests men (Ge 22:12, Dan. 6:1–28, 2 Co 2:4). Some are found to be true disciples and some are not (1 Co 14:25, Re 2:2).

A remnant in scripture is a people who have remained faithful to God during difficult circumstances (Hag 1:8–12). In every generation God has not left himself without a witness (Ac 14:17). He has always had a remnant of believers who have not turned their back on him (Ro 11:5).

The apostle John wrote: 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 they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us (1 Jn 2:19).

J. Vernon McGee explains Jesus' parable of the soils found in Luke 8:4-15:

The Sower is Jesus. The seed is His Word. The birds are a symbol of the Devil. The “rocky places” are those who receive the Word of God in the enthusiasm of the flesh. Trouble and persecution dampen the interest. For a time fleshly hearers of the Word manifest great interest and zeal, but a little trouble reveals their lack

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<sup>1</sup> The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. The New King James Version. Ga 5:22–23.

<sup>2</sup> The works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like. The New King James Version. Ga 5:19–21.

of true faith. Only some of the seeds falls on good ground and brings forth a full harvest. These are the hearers who are genuinely converted by the Word of God.<sup>3</sup>

If the seed (the word of God) does not penetrate the heart, individuals fall away. This is of course devastating:

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame. Heb 6:4–6

People are judged not by what they don't know but by what they know about the gospel of Jesus Christ (Ro 14:12). Men have an internal testimony (Ro 2:15), an external testimony (Ps 19:1 and the scriptures (Jas 1:18); therefore, they are without excuse (Ro 1:20). If one has ever seen a magnificent sunrise or starry night, he is without excuse before God.

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot. Heb 10:28-29

Men have a responsibility to respond to God's gracious offer of life. They must remain in the Christian race to win a crown of life. Paul said: I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified (1 Co 9:27).

The apostle encourages people to examine themselves: 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. But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified (2 Co 13:5–6).

No one would want to be rejected by God: People will call them rejected silver, because the Lord has rejected them.” Je 6:30.

Some hear the good news but return to a life of sin:

For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having

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<sup>3</sup> McGee, J. V. (1991). Thru the Bible commentary: The Gospels (Luke) (electronic ed., Vol. 37, pp. 108–109). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: “A dog returns to his own vomit,” and, “a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.” 2 Pe 2:20–22

The Christian must abide in him to escape hell and damnation: If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned (Jn 15:6).