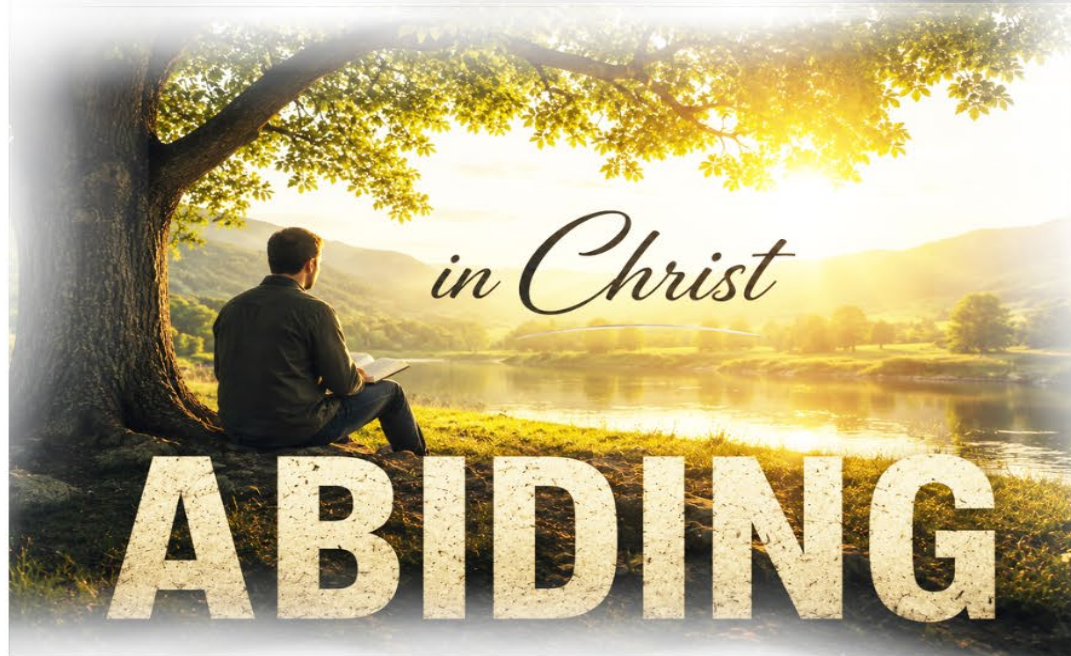


**SALVATION NOT IN ANY RELIGION
ONLY IN JESUS CHRIST**



JESUS OR RELIGION ONLY ONE WILL WORK

From The LOVE Test Book

John 14:6 “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

Before reading the next two chapters, it may be helpful to understand why they appear together.

Medicine often looks for evidence that life is present. A heartbeat, breathing, circulation, and response reveal that life exists within the body. In much the same way, the Apostle John directs our attention to evidences of spiritual life.

Chapters 14 and 15 from The LOVE Test Book

Chapter 14 asks a very personal question: Is Christ truly at home within the heart? Christianity is not merely learning about Jesus, attending church, or practicing religion. The Christian life begins when Christ Himself dwells within the believer.

Chapter 15 then asks: If Christ lives within us, what evidence should appear? John points to one of the clearest signs of spiritual life: love for God’s people. Love does not create life; it reveals life.

These two chapters belong together because one deals with the presence of Christ, while the other deals with the evidence of His presence. The first asks, “Does Christ dwell within?” The second asks,

“What does His life produce?”

As you read, perhaps the most important question is not, “What do I know about Christ?” but rather, “What evidence does Christ’s presence produce within my own heart?”

Chapter 14

Christ At Home Within

“And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us.” (1 John 3:24)

One of the greatest questions a person can ask is this:

Does Christ truly dwell within me?

Many people know about Jesus. They can quote verses, attend church, and discuss spiritual matters. Yet the question is not whether Christ is known by us. The question is whether Christ lives within us.

John returns to this truth repeatedly throughout his writings. He understood that Christianity is not merely accepting facts about Christ. It is receiving Christ Himself. Salvation is not simply believing certain truths. It is entering into a living relationship with the Son of God.

That truth changed my life.

When I was first saved, I knew very little about theology. I could not explain many doctrines. Yet something had happened within me. The Bible became alive. Prayer became real. The Lord Jesus was no longer merely a name found in Scripture. He became a living presence within my heart.

Years later, I discovered that Jesus had described this very thing.

"If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him."
(John 14:23)

That word abode captured my heart.

The Christian life is not merely following rules or adopting a religious lifestyle. It is fellowship. The Father and the Son take up residence within the willing heart. The believer becomes the dwelling place of God.

This is why the love test is so important.

A person may imitate many aspects of Christianity. He may imitate morality, kindness, religious activity, and Bible knowledge. But he cannot manufacture the life of Christ. The love that forgives enemies, seeks reconciliation, and delights in God flows from a source deeper than human effort.

It flows from Christ within.

That is why John continually points us back to abiding.

The branch does not produce fruit by striving. It bears fruit because life is flowing through it. In the same way, believers do not produce spiritual life through determination. Spiritual life is the evidence that

Christ Himself is present.

The Spirit bears witness.

Christ abides within.

Love becomes visible.

And the believer discovers that the Christian life was never intended to be lived alone. It is Christ living His life through us.

Let Love Settle In

The greatest evidence of spiritual life is not what we accomplish for Christ.

It is Christ living within us.

Before there can be fruit, there must be life.

Before there can be love, there must be Christ.

The love test ultimately points us back to one question:

Is Christ truly at home within my heart?

Christ within is the hope of glory.

CHAPTER 15

WE KNOW THAT WE HAVE PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE

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

The words "we know" appear repeatedly throughout First John. God does not want His children living in constant uncertainty concerning their relationship with Him. He desires that they understand the evidences of spiritual life. Throughout this remarkable letter, John presents one test after another, helping readers distinguish between profession and possession. He is not trying to create doubt. He is revealing reality.

One of the clearest evidences He gives is love.

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

Notice carefully what John does not say. He does not say that we pass from death unto life because we love the brethren. Love is not the cause of salvation. Salvation is found only through faith in Jesus Christ.

Rather, John teaches that love is evidence that something has already happened within the heart. Love reveals life.

The illustration is simple.

A living tree produces fruit because life is present within it. The fruit does not create the life. The life produces the fruit. In the same way, genuine love for God and for fellow believers is evidence that God's life is present within the heart. The love did not save us. The love reveals that we have been saved.

John immediately provides an example.

Cain and Abel stand as one of the earliest contrasts found in Scripture. Both men knew about God. Both brought offerings. Both approached the same altar. Yet their hearts were very different. Abel came God's way. Cain insisted upon his own way. When God rejected Cain's offering, the LORD graciously spoke to him and gave him an opportunity to respond correctly.

Cain refused.

God even warned him that sin was lying at the door. The LORD gave him an opportunity to turn from the path he was choosing. Yet Cain hardened his heart. Instead of repenting, he murdered his brother. His hatred revealed something that had been present within him all along.

John wants us to see that contrast.

"Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother."

Why did Cain hate Abel?

Because Abel's life exposed Cain's heart.

The same thing still happens today. Genuine believers often make unbelievers uncomfortable simply by living for God. Light exposes darkness. Truth exposes error. A heart that loves God naturally reveals the condition of hearts that do not.

That is why the love test is so important.

Many people think Christianity consists primarily of external activities. Attend church. Read the Bible. Give money. Volunteer. Serve. While all of those things may be good, none of them automatically prove the presence of spiritual life. A person may participate in religious activities for many reasons. The question remains: What is taking place within the heart?

John's answer is clear.

Spiritual life produces spiritual evidence.

One of those evidences is love.

Not perfect love.

Not sinless love.

But genuine love.

The natural heart tends toward self. It protects itself, promotes itself, and places its own interests first. The Holy Spirit begins changing those desires. He teaches believers to love God, love truth, love fellow believers, and eventually even love their enemies. Such love is not natural. It is supernatural.

That is why loving others can become such a revealing test.

When bitterness enters the heart of a true believer, something feels wrong. Fellowship is disturbed. Conviction comes. The Spirit begins

working. The believer may struggle for a season, but he cannot remain comfortable there forever. God's life within him keeps drawing him back toward forgiveness, reconciliation, and fellowship.

That was certainly true in my own life.

There were people who hurt me deeply. For years, I carried wounds that never seemed completely healed. I would say they were forgiven, and in many ways they were. Yet traces of pain remained. Over time, however, the Holy Spirit kept working. The more I understood God's love for me, the more my own heart began to change. The struggle itself became evidence that God was still working.

Lost people often view such matters differently.

Many are comfortable with bitterness. Comfortable with hatred. Comfortable with resentment. They may justify it, excuse it, or defend it. Yet the child of God experiences something entirely different. The Spirit continues drawing him toward God's heart.

That brings us back to David.

David failed many times, but his heart kept returning to God. Saul's heart moved in a different direction. Cain's heart moved in a different direction. Again and again throughout Scripture, we see the same contrast. One heart moves toward God. Another moves away.

The love test helps reveal that difference.

Not because love saves.
But because love reveals life.

John's purpose is not to make believers fearful. His purpose is to help them understand the evidences of God's work within. A changed heart.

A growing love for God. A growing love for fellow believers. A desire for fellowship. A hunger for truth. These things do not produce salvation. They reveal the presence of the Savior.

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

Those are not merely words to memorize.

They are words that invite every reader to examine the condition of their heart.

And they point us back to the One who first loved us, Jesus Christ.

Thoughts To Ponder

Salvation is not in any religion.

Salvation is in Christ alone.

The evidence of life in Christ is abiding.

With love and prayers for you,

Dave Weeks

