



The Test of Discipleship

As a kid I used to love static electricity. I remember turning off the lights in the church's hallway and scuffling down the hall to the darkest corner then touching a light switch screw. The goal was to see how far the spark would jump. Although you cannot see electricity it is evident when it is present because of the results.

John 3:8—You can't see the Spirit of God in a person but you can see the results.

“Like the wind, which is invisible, yet the effects of which are plainly seen and felt, is the Spirit of God in its work upon the human heart. That regenerating power, which no human eye can see, begets a new life in the soul; it creates a new being in the image of God. While the work of the Spirit is silent and imperceptible, its effects are manifest. If the heart has been renewed by the Spirit of God, the life will bear witness to the fact.”—*Steps to Christ* p.38

This is the 7th in our series, “Steps to Christ: How to be ready for Jesus to come”. Today we want to look at The Test of Discipleship. “While we cannot do anything to change our hearts or to bring ourselves into harmony with God... our lives will reveal whether the grace of God is dwelling within us. A change will be seen in the character, the habits, the pursuits. The contrast will be clear and decided between what they have been and what they are. The character is revealed, not by occasional good deeds and occasional misdeeds, but by the tendency of the habitual words and acts.”—*ibid* p.38

Galatians 5:22, 23—When the Holy Spirit moves in He starts to set up house. He cleans out the old bad character traits and adds his own pure ones. How do you know if you have the Holy Spirit? Check the fruit; are you more loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, etc. than last year? Those fruits will grow if God is in your life.

The Spirit of God colors our lives with His fruit. It may seem as though the color is ours because we're the ones who are colored, but it's not our color; it's God's. We become God's color and are then able to color our world.

1 John 4:19—When we are colored with God's love, “The loveliness of the character of Christ will be seen in [us] His followers. It was His delight to do the will of God. Love to God, zeal for His glory, was the controlling power in our Saviour's life. Love beautified and ennobled all His actions. Love is of God. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it. It is found only in the heart where Jesus reigns.”—*ibid* p.40

Two Errors to Guard Against

1. Looking for righteousness in our own behavior. Trying to become holy by your own works in keeping the law. We have already talked about this. “It is the grace of Christ alone, through faith, that can make us holy.”—*ibid* p.40

2. “The opposite and no less dangerous error is that belief in Christ releases men from keeping the law of God; that since by faith alone we become partakers of the grace of Christ, our works have nothing to do with our redemption.

“But notice here that obedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love. The law of God is an expression of His very nature; it is an embodiment of the great principle of love, and hence is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth. If our hearts are renewed in the likeness of God, if the divine love is implanted in the soul, will not the law of God be carried out in the life? When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new-covenant promise is fulfilled,”—*ibid* pp.40, 41

Hebrews 10:16—“If the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life? Obedience--the service and allegiance of love--is the true sign of discipleship. Thus the scripture says, “This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.” “He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” 1 John 5:3; 2:4. Instead of releasing man from obedience, it is faith, and faith only, that makes us partakers of the grace of Christ, which enables us to render obedience.”—*ibid* p. 41

Although obedience is the test of discipleship, we should not spend our time examining our works, but Jesus'.

Ephesians 2:8 & James 2:17—We are saved by grace through faith alone but James tells us that faith is a living thing. You can tell if it's alive by it's actions. In CPR I was taught the “Look, Listen and Feel” method of evaluating if a person's heart and lungs have stopped and needs CPR. If you couldn't see the chest moving, hear the breath blowing, or feel the pulse or the breath coming out of the mouth and nose then you don't need to rip the chest open to see if everything's working right; you know it isn't because there are no works.

The test of discipleship is like the “Look, Listen and Feel” method. If things are working on the inside then good works will also be evident on the outside. Although the Holy Spirit is invisible to us the colors he puts in us *are* visible. He asks us to color our world.



The seventh step in order to have a relationship with God and be ready to meet Him is to let the Holy Spirit come in and color your life with His character and good works.