

Putting Things In Perspective

Effective and Fruitful

*2 Peter 1:1 Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: 2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. 3 His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and Godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, 4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. 5 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with Godliness, 7 and Godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent **to confirm your calling and election**, for if you practice these qualities **you will never fall**. 11 For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

How to _____ Your Call and Election

by John Piper

Last Sunday I presented a _____ six-question test. It was a test for your life. A test to discover whether God abides in you, whether you are born again. A test to confirm your calling and election.

I based it on the twofold test that John gives in his first letter--the test of love (1 John 2:10; 3:14; 4:7-13) and the test of belief (1 John 2:23-25; 4:6; 4:15; 5:13).

The two tests are summed up in 1 John 3:23f: "And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

All who _____ his commandments abide in him, and he in them."

If we _____ and love then we can have assurance that God abides in us. Here are the questions I would use to test the genuineness of my belief and love.

1. The Test of _____

1.1 Does your heart incline you to the testimony of the apostles and prophets? That is, do you have a persevering longing to read the Bible?

The question is not: Do you never have dry times of indifference? The question is: Is the ongoing, customary desire of your heart to join Mary at the feet of Jesus and do the one thing needful, namely listen (Luke 10:42)? "My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them and they follow me." (John 10:27; cf. 10:16; 18:37). "Whoever knows God listens to us [the apostles]" (1 John 4:6).

1.2 When your heart grows cool and you begin to drift away from the word of God, do you feel a godly guilt that humbles you and brings you broken to the cross for forgiveness and renewal?

1.3 When you hear the testimony of Scripture that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of the World, does your heart confess this truth? That is, do you gladly affirm the divine greatness of Christ and how worthy he is of trust and admiration and loyalty and obedience? Does your heart exalt Christ as the greatest thing of all?

2. The Test of _____

2.1 When you hear a description of love like 1 Corinthians 13 or contemplate the example of Christ's life of love, does your heart fill with longing to be like that, and do you make firm resolves to conquer unloving attitudes and behaviors?

2.2 When you fail in a resolve of love does it grieve you and bring you broken to the cross pleading for forgiveness and seeking new strength to love again?

2.3 Is the current pattern of your life to live for the eternal good of other people, or are your thoughts and dreams and daily choices generally aimed at merely making yourself comfortable and your name esteemed?

If you come up short on these six questions then the most urgent agenda in your life is to do serious business with God in prayer. Seek the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near.

He will help you turn from the _____ desires.

Be zealous to _____ your call and election! (2 Peter 1:10)

For the sake of your true assurance,

Pastor John

Can we actually _____ for sure that we will spend eternity with God?

1 John 5: 11 *And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

12 *Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

13 *I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, **that you may know that you have eternal life.*** 14 *And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.*

God is well able to _____ us and keep us in Him!

John 10:27 *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 **I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.*** 29 *My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, **and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.*** 30 *I and the Father are one."*

Hebrews 7: 23 *The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, 24 but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. 25 Consequently, **he is able to save to the uttermost** those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.*

He will not _____ us, He has promised this.

Hebrews 13: 5 *Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, **for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*** 6 *So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"*

And as far as He is concerned there is _____ that can be used to separate us from Him.

Romans 8: 31 *What then shall we say to these things? **If God is for us, who can be against us?*** 32 *He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?* 33 *Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35 **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 *As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."* 37 *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, **nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.****

Then there is the _____ - _____!

It is _____ for us to “fall away”.

Hebrews 6:1 Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do if God permits. 4 For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.

It is not a sudden thing or a “_____”, it is a conscious decision to “depart from the faith”.

1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, 2 through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, ...

Paul said that even “he” had to _____ himself so that he would not be _____.

He _____ self-control.

1 Corinthians 9: 24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. 25 Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. 27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

Salvation is not a _____ existence.

It is purposeful and _____ focus.

Philippians 2: 12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. 14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing, 15 that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, 16 holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

If we are “_____” and purposeful to confirm our calling, “we will _____ fall”!

2 Peter 1:10 Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. 11 For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.