

A REMINDER OF THE THREE “TESTS” OF SALVATION THROUGHOUT 1 JOHN

1. The THEOLOGICAL test — Do you BELIEVE that Jesus is the Son of God (18x) and therefore, the LIGHT of the world?

1John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

2. The MORAL Test — Is it your desire to be holy? Are you making every EFFORT to live above sin?

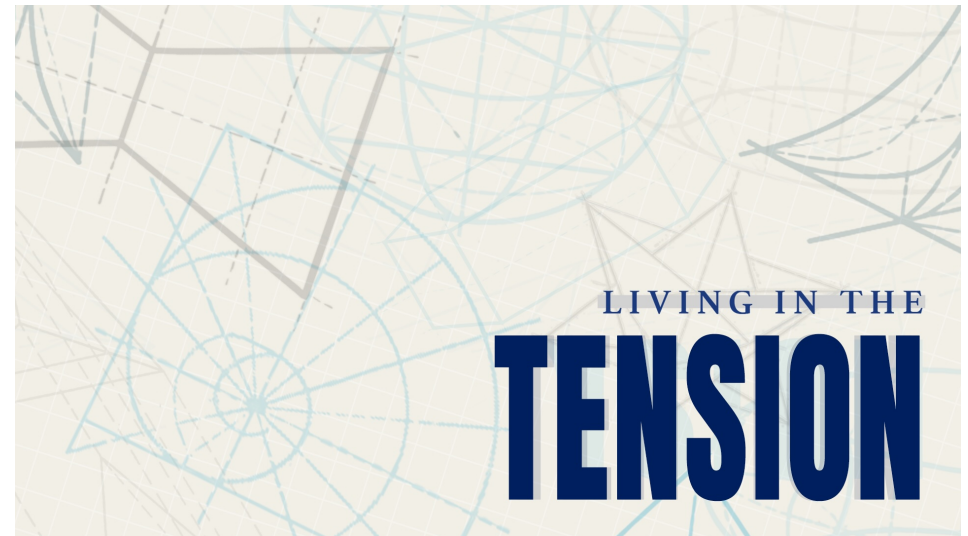
1John 3:6 No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; . . .

3. SOCIAL Test — Do you truly LOVE others?

1John 4:21 And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

1 John 3:18 τεκνία μου, μὴ ἀγαπῶμεν λόγῳ μηδὲ γλῶσση, ἀλλ' ἔργῳ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ. 19 καὶ ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐσμέν. καὶ ἐμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πείσομεν τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν, 20 ὅτι ἐὰν καταγινώσκη ἡμῶν ἡ καρδία, ὅτι μείζων ἐστὶν ὁ Θεὸς τῆς καρδίας ἡμῶν, καὶ γινώσκει πάντα. 21 ἀγαπητοί, ἐὰν ἡ καρδία ἡμῶν μὴ καταγινώσκη ἡμῶν, παρρησίαν ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, 22 καὶ ὁ ἐὰν αἰτῶμεν, λαμβάνομεν παρ' αὐτοῦ, ὅτι τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηροῦμεν, καὶ τὰ ἀρεστὰ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ ποιοῦμεν. 23 καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐντολὴ αὐτοῦ, ἵνα πιστεύσωμεν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, καθὼς ἔδωκεν ἐντολὴν ἡμῖν. 24 καὶ ὁ τηρῶν τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν αὐτῷ. καὶ ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι μένει ἐν ἡμῖν, ἐκ τοῦ Πνεύματος οὗ ἡμῖν ἔδωκεν.

Scripture quotations are from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Any use of bold, underline, ... or [] is ECC emphasis added.



July 11 & 12, 2026 | Living in the Tension- 4 | 1 John 3:18-24 | Dennis Miller

TODAY'S SCRIPTURES —

1John 3:18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

*19 **By this we shall know** that we are of the truth and **reassure** our heart before him; 20 for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. 21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have **confidence** before God; 22 and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. 23 And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. 24 Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And **by this we know** that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.*

WHAT IS THE TENSION?

Sometimes our heart CONDEMNNS us and we doubt our STANDING with the Lord. We NEVER need to doubt.

THE KEY THOUGHT OF THIS PASSAGE

ASSURANCE (*reassure, by this we shall know, by this we know, confidence*)

A REMINDER OF THE SOCIAL TEST

*1John 3:18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. 19 **By this we shall know** that we are of the truth and **reassure** our heart before him; 20 for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.*

1. This is the seventh time in this letter that John has called his readers his CHILDREN. It is a reminder of his CLOSE relationship with them, but also indicates a new SECTION.

2. He says that if our love is ACTION instead of ONLY WORDS, it is a reminder to us (*By this we shall know*) that we are truly followers of Christ. This gives us CONFIDENCE.

3. However, John adds a NEW thought here to remind us of the times that our heart (or conscience) might CONDEMN us. In these moments, our confidence can DISAPPEAR.

So what should we do?

a. CONSIDER what your conscience is saying. If you ignore it too often, you could SEAR it and make it ineffective.

1 Tim. 4:2 through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared,

b. Evaluate the REASON your conscience is calling to you. If it is invalid, IGNORE it.

c. Remember that even though your conscience may be SPEAKING to you, *God is greater than our heart* (or conscience) and does not CONDEMN you.

ONE MORE THOUGHT ON THE CONSCIENCE

1 John 3:21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; 22 and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.

1. John adds an interesting ADDITION to this topic that is unique to this letter. It can be troublesome for the reader.

2. Two things happen if your heart does NOT condemn you:

a. You will have great CONFIDENCE before God.

b. You can ask and receive from Him because you are OBEDIENT. This means that if you are seeking what is in HIS WILL, you will receive because you are asking unselfishly.

John 15:7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

A REMINDER OF THE THEOLOGICAL TEST

1 John 3:23 And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

1. Now John reminds us of the GREATEST commandment which is to *believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ*. This should again sound a bit FAMILIAR to us.

Mark 12:29 Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

2. Then John adds the SECOND commandment that Jesus had defined.

Mark 12:31 The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

A REMINDER OF THE MORAL TEST

1 John 3:24 Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

1. John concludes this section with the reminder of KEEPING the commandments. The one who does so ABIDES in God and God in him.

2. John CONCLUDES with the same phrase that basically began this passage — *by this we know* — but also introduces a new topic, The HOLY SPIRIT, who is proof of God's PRESENCE in your life.

1 John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, . . .

THE BOTTOM LINE

In the first half of John's letter we have seen three messages repeated as of greatest importance: BELIEVE in the Name of Jesus; Live in OBEDIENCE; and love others in word and in ACTION.

And you will have CONFIDENCE!