

# 1<sup>st</sup> JOHN BIBLE STUDY

1 John 3:11-24

Lesson #14

## Introduction

This is lesson 14 of our 1<sup>st</sup> John Bible study, covering chapter 3, verses 11 through 24. So let's go directly to those verses: I'm going to read verses 11-18 now, and we'll read 19-24 when we get further along in the study.

### Actions Speak Louder than Words

*11 For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; 12 not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.*

*13 Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. 15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. 16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.*

1 John 3:11-18 (NASB)

### Verses 11-12:

*For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; 12 not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.*

Right from the outset let's make certain that we rightly understand what this sentence means, and what it doesn't mean. It's more often than not, used out of context as a means to tolerate sins of disobedience by church goers who wish to ignore various commandments of scriptures and call it loving. But that's not what this verse means at all. This sentence (this verse) is using resultant actions as the means by which we might rightly understand what Godly love actually is. Godly love is love that has a result that both honors God and benefits mankind. John uses the example of Cain and his brother Able. Cain killed his brother Able because of his hatred of his righteousness and his jealousy of his acceptance by God. Cain didn't seek, nor practice righteousness, therefore God didn't accept a sacrifice from him, but did accept one from his brother Able, and for this he was angry enough to murder his own brother, who had done him no harm at all.

And this is the point of the example. That love is demonstrated by the actions that it produces. One doesn't murder those whom they truly love out of jealousy of their status, or success, or anything else, rather they rejoice with them in those things. Remember that both Cain and Able were in the process of offering God a sacrifice at the beginning of this event, and both apparently sought to honor God by their presentation, but the results revealed the true nature of their hearts, and who it was that loved God and sought to offer acceptable worship.

We see that Cain was there with Able at the offering ceremony, and went through the motions of offering a sacrifice to God. His intentions seemed honorable on the outside, and there's no evidence presented that says Able suspected his brother of fraudulent motives, but by the providence of God, the results showed what was invisibly hidden beneath the visible facade of words and rituals, and demonstrated what was truly in the hearts of each one. Unless the resultant actions had taken place, no one would have known the difference, and it would have appeared that both brothers were equally seekers of righteousness and lovers of God, but the resultant actions spoke louder than words and rituals, and the truth was clearly revealed. The authentic love that Able had for God was acknowledged, and the true love that Cain had was revealed to be for sin and not for God, or for his brother.

And why did this happen the verse asks? Because Cain's deeds were evil and his brothers were righteous.

*14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? 16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols?*

2 Cor 6:14-16 (NASB)

The scriptures warn us that we will have nothing of common interest with those who love unrighteousness, and this verse (verse 12 that we're studying) also makes it clear how they will feel about us, if we do seek it and strive to honor God by obeying His commandments. And this is the point of the next verse:

**Verse 13:**

*13 Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.*

It's sometimes downright amazing how professing Christians are so shocked at the animosity that the world has toward us believers. Why do they dislike, or even hate us so intensely, when all we're saying is those same things that God has said from the beginning, and Jesus repeated during His earthly ministry? Well, why did Cain kill his brother Able when all he did was those things that honored God?

In a television program that I just watched, there was a line where the lead character commented on the teachings of a local town preacher, and he said he was "spreading self-righteous poison." You see, this is exactly what the scriptures are to those who don't know God. The scriptures are indeed poison to their whole style of live and everything they hold dear. They love their sins, and they hate to hear that they're sinners who will answer to a righteous God. Why do we ever think they'll like us when we tell them this? They won't. They didn't like it when Jesus said it, and they won't like it when you or I say it. To the unbelievers, Christians are in fact perceived as hypocritical, self-righteous spreaders of poisonous ideas and philosophies, that seriously threaten their lifestyles and affections. For them, Godliness and obedience to the scriptures, are perceived as an all out assault on their very core priorities, and represent a serious threat to their whole purpose of life. In this assessment they are absolutely right, God's commandments are all about those things that most affect our behaviors, and capture our deepest affections. In this they correctly understand what is at stake.

Therefore, we are told "*Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.*" Of course they do, how do we expect them to feel when we tell them that everything they love is of the devil, and they will answer to God for it, and suffer His righteous judgement, lest they repent of their sins, and accept His loving forgiveness? Why did that crowd of people, who had seen Jesus' miracles of healing, and heard His preaching, shout out to the top of their lungs "crucify Him, crucify Him" when Pilate offered to let Him go free? Why, Because their deeds were evil, and they understood that His message was to repent of their sins, and believe in Him as their Lord and their Savior. And just as Cain killed his brother Able, that crowd killed Jesus, because their deeds were evil and His were righteous. Their loves, and desires, and affections were for the things of this world, and they were willing to kill anybody who threatened to put an end to them, or even speak out publically against them.

They are fighting for their lives and the things they love, and even though those things are sinful and evil in the sight of God, they are precious and valuable in the hearts of godless sinners. If we don't understand this then we're intentionally naive and deserving of what ever the consequences. Unless we understand that there must be a supernatural act of God upon the heart and mind of a sinner, for them to do a complete 180 degree flip of desires and affections and priorities, then our evangelizing will be powerless.

But, with this act of God present, with His gracious gift of saving faith, every predestined and elect sinner will experience this complete change of heart and mind, upon hearing the gospel rightly presented, and the results will be a Holy Spirit empowered regeneration of life and nature, and an active and demonstrated love of God, and of all those who belong to Him. This isn't just some arbitrary decision that a believer makes or declines, this is the results of regeneration. This is the result of God's love for us, our reciprocal love for Him and His own, and it isn't an act of man but an act of God, through His Holy Spirit. For this reason we have the absolute declaration of John's next verse:

**Verse 14:**

*We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.*

John just said that we shouldn't be surprised when the world hates us, and now he contrasts that with the statement that we can know that we've passed out of death and into eternal life by the fact that we now love those people that we used to hate, and considered a threat to our former way of life. We couldn't help but hate them when we were of the world, but now we know that we actually love them, and feel the same as they do about God and about righteousness. Those who

we formerly hated, we now love like our own family, and by this we can know that we've truly passed out of death, under the judgement of God, and into eternal life with God in His eternal kingdom. Our change of heart attitude and affections is the assurance of regeneration by the Holy Spirit. If we know in our hearts that we love God, and that we love all those who are His, then this is the source of our assurance of His salvation. This is that tangible, and experiential down payment of the Holy Spirit made by God that assures us of the final completion at His Son's glorious return. We can be a Cain or we can be an Able, and we might all meet at the same assembly place, and all seem to be honoring God, but the condition of our hearts will be made evident, both to us and to others, by the resultant demonstrations of our love.

Then John does precisely what he's done throughout this epistle, he states the same thing in the negative aspect for absolute clarity. He says *He who does not love abides in death*. In other words, an absence of love toward our brethren is clear evidence that no regeneration of spirit has occurred, like Cain, and despite any ritualistic and symbolic offerings, the heart condition of that person is still unsaved and abiding in the death of God's eventual judgement. Christian churches are filled with such as these and John has already warned us of this. It's easy to talk about love, and it's common to call many things acts of love, but authentic Godly love is that which promotes obedience, both in ourselves and in our brethren.

Encouraging our brethren to practice sin, and calling it loving, is a lie that John has already addressed in previous verses, and demonstrates a lack of genuine Godly love and an abiding in death. No one who loves his brother will ever encourage him to continue to live in sin, in knowing disobedience to God. Only Satan and his followers demonstrate love like that. And by this we can accurately assess both ourselves and others in our midst. Anyone in our churches, or outside for that matter, who claim they are demonstrating their love for someone by encouraging them to sin, is doing the same as Cain did when he murdered his brother, they are encouraging them to a life that will result in judgement and eternal damnation, and that's Satanic love, not Godly love. No one who loves another will ever encourage them to pursue something that will do them horrific harm. This is exactly what Satan did in the garden of Eden. Love is proven by its deeds, as were those of Cain and Able, as John goes on to point out.

#### **Verses 15-16:**

*15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. 16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*

Drawing on his example of Cain and Able, John says that everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, just as Cain hated his brother and murdered him, and this kind of heart attitude cannot be representative of a regenerated spirit with the indwelling life of God in residence. In fact, just the opposite says John, and points to Jesus who laid down His own life for us whom He loves. Now, because I can anticipate someone's questions, let's clarify that this reference to being a murderer is not concerning a single act, like Moses, or David, but rather a persistent and defining heart attitude. Christ did not lay down His life so that we could continue to practice sin with impunity. (Repeat that) In verses 7 & 8 of this same chapter John said that *The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil*. He came both to atone for our sins **and** to destroy the works of the devil. And what are the works of the devil? Those same verses tell us this also:

*Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; 8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning.*

The works of the devil is sin. The works of the devil is disobedience to God, and he has practiced that from the beginning, but Jesus Christ came to **destroy** those works of disobedience in His redeemed and regenerated followers. To produce in them, not in the world, a new practicing lifestyle of obedience to God as an authentication of their new righteous status. And Christ's willingness to lay down His own life on their behalf sets the standard of practice for all those who follow Him.

Do you see what John's saying? Authentic Godly love is demonstrated not by murdering our brothers, or encouraging them to self destruction, but by our willingness to lay down our own lives in their place if the need arises. This is how the love of God is rightly demonstrated, and is so clearly recognizable from the worldly love of self that characterizes the multitudes of godless humanity, including all those false proclaimers of faith in Jesus who fill our churches while at the very same time continue to fearlessly practice rampant lawlessness, and encourage others to do the same. In further explanation John adds:

### **Verses 17-18:**

*17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.*

Now I'd like to spend some time on these two verses. One reason is that this issue of actions, or deeds, or works, is sometimes very seriously confused. For example, when I was first saved I was introduced into a church group that was led by a Chinese preacher who had been a follower of Watchman Nee. They call themselves The Local Church, and among their teachings is that any actual tangible actions of help and assistance those in need are simply "acts of the flesh" and have no value for the church or the believers. I was told that we should simply pray for those in need and let God take care of their physical requirements.

This was very hard for me to accept, and when I referred to verses from James chapter two, I was told that the book of James shouldn't be in the Bible, and they don't accept it. I was very young and didn't want to be confrontational, but I knew this wasn't right. There's something fundamentally wrong with a heart that can look on physical needs and walk away without taking actions to help. And time proved this to be true when I and some others were viciously and heartlessly ostracized and forced to leave that church for refusing to support a lawsuit against another Christian brother, and citing 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians chapter 6 as our scriptural responsibility. The point I'm making is that the true condition of the hearts of many, though not all, of those professing brothers was made manifest by time.

To take the position that a compassionate response to the needs of our brothers isn't our responsibility is to strip the gospel of it's regenerative power, to relegate love to a detached abstract principle, and Gnostically divide our being into separate components. When our body hurts, we hurt. When our body is hungry or thirsty, we're hungry and thirsty, and God didn't treat us as components. He sent his beloved Son to physically and tangibly die on our behalf, He didn't just tell us to feel better and be encouraged. This church group that I was in, and many others also, perceived this as "works salvation." And even considered it an assault on the merits of Grace. The inability to perceive the cause of something, from the resultant effects of it, was a stumbling block to them, and still is to many churches. But there's no reason to make this mistake. Our car drives because we put gas in it, it doesn't have gas in it because we drive it. There is a cause, and there is an effect, but some just refuse to acknowledge the relevancy of this distinction.

Since this issue almost always reverts into a controversy of faith versus works, lets include those verses from James chapter two that say the same thing as John says in his verses, but goes a little farther:

*14 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? 17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.*

*18 But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." 19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. 20 But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? 22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," and he was called the friend of God. 24 You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. 25 In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? 26 For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.*

James 2:14-26 (NASB)

The love of God toward His elect motivated Him to take very serious steps to save us from our own flagrant sins of disobedience. His love was the cause, and His Son's brutal crucifixion was the results of that love. To God, love isn't just an abstract principle, it's an overwhelming personal motivator to actions of self-sacrifice for the good of those whom He loves. This is intentionally done as an open example from Him to us. This is a demonstration of Godly love played out on earth before all mankind and angelic creatures. This is God's declaration of what love is, and how it's intended to work.

If we are indwelt with the Spirit of God, then this is how love will work in us as well. Of course we should pray for the needs of others, and we don't have sufficient resources to meet every need on earth, but this verse is dealing with our own brethren, who come to us in a time of need, and ask us for that which we do have the capacity and resources to provide. How do we respond to them in that situation? John asks the question, rhetorically I perceive, how can the love of God abide in someone who has the means, but yet refuses to meet the pressing needs of his own brethren?

It is, and has been, John's overriding theme in this epistle, that our true beliefs and our persistent practices are inextricably linked together, and one does not, and indeed cannot, believe one thing, and consistently and persistently act and behave in a manner that is contrary to those beliefs. If one is righteous minded, he will practice righteousness in his routine behaviors, if he is not, his routine practices will reveal that. Again, this boils down to the title of this study that "Actions Speak Louder than Words." Or we could say that actions speak truer than words, which is the actual meaning.

But not just actions, a lack of actions is also included. A failure to do that which we know we ought to do is the same as doing something that we know we ought not to do. There are sins of commission and there are sins of omission, and even though we occasionally fail on both counts, a persistent habit of either is very revealing. Talk is cheap, as the saying goes, and everybody does that in abundance, but the scriptures never base their evaluations on talk, but on actions, on deeds, on works, because these are the results that authenticate the causes that produced them.

Both of these sets of verses, those from 1<sup>st</sup> John, and those from James 2, use behaviors as the means to establish the authenticity of faith. John asks rhetorically, how can genuine Godly love reside in someone who refuses to meet the needs of his own brothers? The obvious answer is that it can't. James asks rhetorically, the same question in verses 15-17 with the same implication. In fact, James says outright that a claim of faith that has no corroborating works is dead. The idea that Christian faith is an abstract principle of believing something, apart from subsequent behaviors that are in conformity with that belief, is totally refuted everywhere in scripture. (Repeat)

Those who hold this antinomian view are very much mistaken, and are missing the whole point of saving faith, which is to sanctify and transform the recipients into Christlikeness in their routine daily behaviors. (Rom 8:29; Eph 4:13; 1Pet 1:2) If the response is absent, then the cause isn't authentic. (Repeat) James says, even the demons believe that there's one God, and that Jesus is His Son, but that doesn't save them from their rebellion against Him, and disobedience to His commandments. What those demons are missing isn't information, or belief, it's sanctifying response. And the same applies to every human who professes the name of Jesus Christ. That which authenticates their faith is the sanctifying response of loving submission to His authority, and a genuine affection for Him and all His own, that demonstrates itself but appropriate behaviors. This is anything but an assault on Grace, it's rather the establishment of it, and the very purpose of its having been granted. Now we could continue to multiply words on this subject, but we've stated our case and proven our position quite thoroughly, so let's move on to the next verses.

### **Verses 19-22:**

*19 We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him 20 in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things. 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 the things that are pleasing in His sight.*

It's difficult to extract the exact meaning of these verses because of the construction of the sentences. Perhaps it was clearer in the original language. But I did some research to see how it was treated by some of or the scholars of the past and present, and there is a reasonable consensus of interpretation. Verse 19 says we will know by "this" that we are of the truth. The "this" to which he is most likely referring is our love of the brethren that he's just described. If we have a self-sacrificing love for our brethren, it is a very good sign that the love of God is operational in our hearts. An absence of such love should be a reason for concern to any who claim the name of Christian.

And then John goes on to say that this love will provide us with that assurance, but then seems to qualify that with wording to the effect that we can't entirely trust our heart alone in all matters of faith and practice, as the human heart is flawed, and the conscience can be misinformed, but God is greater than our hearts or our consciences, and sees all things

correctly. Nevertheless, a pure heart and a clean conscience is essential to the assurance of every believer, and will place us in a position to have our prayers answered when we approach His throne of grace. If our hearts are not right, and our conscience is not at peace, then we're not likely living in obedience to Him, and we will not have assurance of our faith or any earnest expectations of His answering our prayers. But, conversely, if our hearts are right toward our brothers, and our conscience is at ease concerning our routine practices, then we have much assurance of our faith, and we will pray with confidence in His presence because we are keeping His commandments.

I remember well the words of a well known pastor who came to our city and preached. He said that he had people come to him in the darkest hours of their lives, and asked him to pray for them when they were desperate. He said he was keenly aware of his responsibility to be in a right relationship with God at all times if he was to genuinely fulfill his position of shepherd of the flock, because they are depending on him. For this reason he must keep himself pure and clean at all times, so his prayers of intercession might not be hampered by his own misconduct. This had a profound impact on me when I heard it, and I have tried to live up to that standard since then, but I confess that the brother who preached this is most likely well out of my league. Nevertheless, that principle applies to every one of us, whether pastors or laymen, as every Christian will be called upon frequently, even daily, to pray for those around them and their families, and the fervent prayers of a **righteous man** avails much said James in his epistle. And a righteous man is an obedient man, with a heart that's right toward God and right toward his brethren.

So, the gist of these verses seems to be that our having a heart of love toward God and toward our brethren, and our having a clean conscience regarding our lifestyle, will afford us much confidence in both the authenticity of our faith, and our expectation of having our prayers answered by God. Now, the next verses.

#### **Verses 23-24:**

*23 This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. 24 The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him.[them] We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.*

Concerning the commandments of God, John uses the general summary that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and that we love one another. Implicit in the statement that we believe in Jesus Christ, is the fact that believing in who He is will be all the impetus necessary to obey the all those things that He told us. One only needs to know for sure that they're speaking to a king to know that they're under obligation to behave appropriately. I bet every one of you lets their foot off the accelerator of their car when they see a highway patrol car behind them. An accurate assessment of whom we are dealing with has a direct affect on our behaviors. Jesus said that He and the Father are one, (Jn 10:30) and, that all judgement had been given to Him, (Jn 5:22) knowing this, how should we respond to those things that He ordered us to do and not to do?

And perhaps the highest priority of those commandments of Jesus was for us to love one another. And *let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth* is the command of Jesus to His followers. (v. 18) Deed and truth are inseparable components of that love commanded by Jesus. There are multitudes of people who will say they love God, and multitudes that say they love Jesus, but among those multitudes there are few indeed who then demonstrate that profession by a solid knowledge of the truth, and a lifestyle of obedience to His commandments. One must love the true God, and the true Jesus, not ones they have conjured up in their own minds. To love a fictitious God that you're created in your own mind is to love an idol, fashioned in the image of your own liking. And you may really love that god, but he is no god at all, just an imaginary vapor that you're created to comfort your own conscience. This god will vanish away into nothing when you need him the most, and you'll be left with the real God to deal with, and asked to explain why you rejected Him and manufactured your own.

How do we prevent this from happening? How do we keep from being surprised at the returning of the real God and Savior at His appearing? Answer - By believing in Him as He is, in deed and in truth. By knowing Him in such a way that our very nature and heart attitudes are transformed into His likeness, and our love for Him, and for one another is real and true and demonstrates itself in heartfelt actions. For this to happen takes an act of God that's called by several names, some of which are regeneration, conversion, salvation, born again. While each of these has it's own distinctions, they are all

aspects of that most precious gift of saving faith bestowed by God by His grace alone. (Eph 2:8-10) There's no way to conjure it up by our own force of will, and it's not simply a choice that we wake up one morning and make because we're frustrated or bored, and want to start a new life, or we're emotionally moved by a talented preacher. All of these can be a part of that process, but there's one element that makes or breaks every profession of faith in Jesus Christ, and that's the new spirit that He places in us at the instant of genuine saving faith. This is that element that authenticates that regeneration has taken place, that a rebirth into a new life has really happened, and while it's invisible to everyone from the outside, it's overwhelmingly real and tangible to the recipients who have experienced it. It's much more than a short term modification of behaviors, it's an internal and permanent change of fundamental nature and affections. And this is the meaning of verse 24:

*The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him.[them] We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.*

The question has, and still is asked, why do so many people make a profession of Jesus Christ, start going to church, and then lose interest and quit? Doesn't this prove that it's just a hoax, because if it was real they wouldn't fall away? The answer to this is "Yes" that's exactly right, if it's real they will not fall away. But the falling away doesn't disprove the authenticity of God, but rather the non-authentic profession of those claimants, and there are truly multitudes of these as Jesus describes in His sermon on the mount. (Mat 7:13-14) And in that same group of passages Jesus went on to describe how to tell the true from the false. He says the true will be identified by their willful observance of His commandments, and likened them to ones who build their houses on stone foundations, rather than shifting sand.

In this verse John says that those who keep His commandments are those who abide, that is who live and exist in Him. The "in Him" means incorporated into His divine nature by the new Spirit that's resident in every true believer. Those who are "in Him" are partakers of His nature, and are being progressively transformed and sanctified by the work of the Holy Spirit. (1Pet 1:2) They obey Jesus Christ because they really want to obey Him, they love those things that He loves, and they hate those things that He hates, and this is absolutely contrary to normal human nature. It can only happen by an act of God, and when it does it is irreversible, and everlasting. None who experience this regeneration will ever totally and permanently fall away from their faith, though the scriptures admit that sin still can, and will, have its affects on everyone still living in this flesh and blood body.

The last sentence of this verse says: *We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.* We know we are His children, and have been redeemed by His blood, and infused with His Spirit by this new nature that He's given us, this new Spirit that is resident within us bears witness with our spirit that we are truly children of God, and our new desires, affections, and behaviors are the tangible evidence of assurance that He abides in us and we in Him. This is really the only thing we have. We don't look any different, we don't sound any different, we don't suddenly have great powers, we just have this internal rebirth of our heart's and mind's, and a whole new set of loves and appreciations, and the difference is night and day on the inside, even though we still look the same on the outside.

But if the internal change is true, then the results will be evident, and our speech, and our priorities, and our behaviors will by necessity begin to reflect that internal change, and by this we will know for certain that it is He, Christ Jesus, and the Spirit of God that abides in us, and is responsible for this new spirit that we've experienced. Either this has happened, or it hasn't, and it's invisible from the outside, so only God and the individuals themselves can know for sure until the day of judgement. Have you experienced this change of nature? If you have, then give Him glory, but if you haven't, then confess your sins to Him, and ask Him for that precious gift of saving faith while the opportunity still exists.

To Him be the glory, forever. Amen.

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