

A. Four Tests of Discipleship V.1-11

(Or Four Tests of the Genuine Christian)

Introduction

Chapter 2 of 1 John sets out for us 4 tests of discipleship, or to put it another way, 4 tests of the genuine Christian, followed by some words of assurance, or characteristics of those who have passed the test.

Firstly, however, it is important for us to note John's attitude as he presents these tests. He starts with the words, "my dear children" or "my little children." His heart is very tender towards those to whom he is writing, and so he adopts an affectionate and personal tone. A great example for all Christians, particularly Pastors.

1. Right Attitude to Sin Vs 1-2

- The Desire not to sin. Too often as Christians we tend to excuse sin, rather than detest it - Isaiah 55:7; Ephesians 4:22; 1 Peter 2:11, 24.
- Admission/Confession of sin. This is implied here in Vs1 and was clearly stated in chapter 1:9
- Dependence on Christ, when we do sin, (Wuest: "if anyone commits an act of sin") as our advocate, that is, one called to your side, one who pleads or champions your cause, one Who will intercede for us, one who pleads our case. Only Jesus, the sinless Son of God can plead our case. Romans 8:34
- Dependence on Christ's sacrifice, Christ's atoning sacrifice, the sacrifice which satisfies the Father. 1 John 4:10
This should be a great incentive not to sin

2. Obedience to Christ Vs 3-5

- Vs3 "We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands." (Wuest: "if we are continually having a solicitous, watchful care in keeping his commands") John 14: 15, 21, 23; 1 John 2:17

3. Living as Jesus Lived Vs 6

- Vs6 (Amplified) "Whoever says he abides in Him ought [as a personal debt or moral obligation] to walk and conduct himself in the same way in which He walked and conducted Himself."
- This involves showing the character and nature of Jesus in all we do, in such areas as service, love, compassion humility etc etc. John 13:15; 1 Peter 2:21; Philippians 2:5-11

4. Genuine Love Vs 7-11

- The Command of Jesus. Vs5; John 13:34-35
- Expressed as Obedience. John 14:15, 23
- Expressed in care for others. Vs9-11; 1 John 3:17-18; 4:19-21

B. Words of Assurance Vs 12-14

(Or: Characteristics of those who have passed the test)

1. Sins Forgiven - (put away permanently) Vs 12

- Vs12 "I am writing to you, little children, because for His name's sake your sins are forgiven [pardoned through His name and on account of confessing His name]." (Amplified) 1 John 1:9; Acts 2:38; 26:17-18; Ephesians 1:7

2. Knowing Jesus Vs 13a, 13c, 14a

- Vs13a (RP Vs14a) "I am writing to you, fathers, because you have come to know (recognize, be aware of, and understand) Him Who [has existed] from the beginning." Kenneth Wuest says "These fathers were older men, mature in the Christian life, having lived in fellowship with the Lord Jesus for many years, and having thus gained much personal knowledge of Him by experience." But just in case we think only older ones can really know Jesus, John then uses the same phrase for "little children", those under instruction. (Vs13c) See also John 17:3; Philippians 3:10; Ephesians 1:7.

3. Overcome the Evil One Vs 13b, 14c

- Vs13b "I am writing to you, young men, because you have been victorious over the wicked [one]." 1 John 4:4; 5:3-5

4. Strength Vs 14b

- Vs14b "I write to you, young men, because you are strong and vigorous," (Amplified) or "because you are strong with endowed strength" (Wuest) Ephesians 6:10;

5. The Word of God Lives in You Vs 14

- Deuteronomy 11:18-19; Psalm 119:11,15,16; Colossians 3:16;

Scripture Quotations from the New International Version (NIV), Kenneth Wuest's Expanded Translation (Wuest) and Amplified Bible.