

Are You a Believer?

If one is in Christ, he will abide with him until the end (Col 1:22, Eph 5:27). If he is not truly his, then his horns will eventually show (Pr 15:28).

The body of Christ is his church. The Lord does not cut off his hand or foot and he will not cut us off either (Eph 1:23). We are part of one another (Ro 12:5). No one can snatch a believer from his hand (Jn 10:29).

We have been created in Christ Jesus. We are a new creation (2 Co 5:17). God supplies all that we need (Phil. 1:19) to make it in this life (Ps 89:33).

Some profess to know Christ but by their works they deny him (Tit 1:16). Mere profession of faith is not evidence of possession of life in him. We should be walking with Him (1 Jn 2:5–6). Adrian Rogers said, "You're are not saved because you keep on walking. You keep on walking because you're saved." One knows he has passed from death to life because he has a love for the brethren (1 Jn 3:14).

As we would not expect a corpse to get up to work, we would not expect a make-believer to have right behavior and good works. The apostle Paul wrote: Even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together (Eph 2:6).

Jesus told a parable about seed and soils it fell on:

Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear! Mt 13:3–9

He explained the meaning of the parable:

Hear the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. But he who received seed on the good ground is he who

hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.” Mt 13:18–23

People fail to receive Christ for a variety of reasons (Ac 26:18). The apostle John wrote:

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us (1 Jn 2:19).

Some say they know him but they do not keep his commandments:

Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 Jn 2:4).

Some say they love him but they hate their brother:

If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar (1 Jn 4:20).

Some begin to see him but turn away:

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame (Heb 6:4–6).

Some begin to know him but go on sinning:

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses’ law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot (Heb 10:28-29).

For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: “A dog returns to his own vomit,” and, “a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.” 2 Pe 2:20–22

We must abide in him:

If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned (Jn 15:6).

We must overcome the world, flesh and the devil. John MacArthur writes:

2:7 him who overcomes. According to John's own definition, to be an overcomer is to be a Christian...[T]ree of life. True believers enjoy the promise of heaven.¹

If our fruits do not demonstrate that we've overcome, then likely have not.

We are to continue in the faith. MacArthur continues:

1:23 continue in the faith. Cf. Acts 11:23; 14:22. Those who have been reconciled will persevere in faith and obedience because, in addition to being declared righteous, they are actually made new creatures (2 Cor. 5:17) with a new disposition that loves God, hates sin, desires obedience, and is energized by the indwelling Holy Spirit (cf. John 8:30–32; 1 John 2:19). Rather than defect from the gospel they heard, true believers will remain solid on Christ who is the only foundation (1 Cor. 3:11), and faithful by the enabling grace of God (Phil. 1:6; 2:11–13).²

We have peace with God (Ro 5:1) and access to him (Ro 5:2). God will present us one day without spot or blemish: that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish (Eph 5:27).

¹ MacArthur, J., Jr. (Ed.). (1997). *The MacArthur Study Bible* (electronic ed., p. 1994). Nashville, TN: Word Pub.

² MacArthur, J., Jr. (Ed.). (1997). *The MacArthur Study Bible* (electronic ed., p. 1834). Nashville, TN: Word Pub.