

Sign of Life #7—A true believer will not enjoy living in sin (2 Peter 2:7-8).

If we are to be followers (imitators) of _____ as His beloved _____ (Eph. 5:1), then we must L_____ the things that God loves and we must H_____ the things that God hates! What does the Lord Jesus love (Heb. 1:8-9)? _____ What does He hate (Heb. 1:9)? _____ Therefore we are to _____ the _____ and _____ the _____ (Amos 5:15). What are believers to abhor and hate (Rom. 12:9)? _____ Those who truly love the Lord will do what (Psalm 97:10)? _____ Those who truly fear the Lord will do what (Prov. 8:13)? _____ If we truly love God's Word then what are three things that we will hate (Psalm 119:104,113,128,163)?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

When Lot separated himself from Abraham, what city did he pitch his tent towards (Gen. 13:11-12)? _____ How are the men of this city described (Gen. 13:13)? _____ What kind of a man was Lot (2 Pet. 2:7-8)? _____ What is the one thing that the Lord hated about Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen.18:20)? _____ Would God destroy the city if there were found 50 righteous people living there (Gen. 18:23-26)? _____ Can the righteous Judge ever be unfair (Gen. 18:25)? _____ Would God destroy the city if there were only 10 righteous people (Gen. 18:27-32)? _____ Did the Lord destroy the city (2 Pet. 2:6; Jude 7)? _____ How did He destroy it (Gen. 19:24—25)? _____ Since we know that God destroyed the city, what does that tell us (compare Gen. 18:32)? _____ What did the Lord do for Lot (2 Peter 2:7; Gen. 19:15-16)? _____ Did Lot enjoy living in Sodom (2 Pet. 2:7-8)? _____ What were 2 things that disturbed him and caused him to be troubled within his own soul as he lived in that city? 1. (verse 7) _____ 2. (verse 8) _____

What advice did Lot give to the men of Sodom (Gen. 19:7)? _____ Did this help the situation? _____

When God's child sins, the Holy Spirit is _____ (Eph. 4:30) and God must _____ His child (Heb. 12:5-11) and that child must _____ his _____ (1 Jn. 1:9). What was Peter's great sin (Luke 22:57)? _____ How do we know Peter was a true believer (Luke 22:62)? _____

What is your attitude towards sin in your life?

"EXAMINE YOURSELVES WHETHER YE BE IN THE FAITH."

Sign of Life #8—A true believer is a person who performs good works

(3 John 11).

Read Ephesians 2:8-9 and Ephesians 2:10 and answer **True or False**:

- 1. _____ Good works are necessary for salvation.
- 2. _____ If salvation were of works, then it would be possible for a man to boast before God.
- 3. _____ Some people will someday be able to glory and boast in the presence of God (1 Cor. 1:29-31; Rom. 3:27).
- 4. _____ Good works are the fruit of salvation because God will work in the life of the true believer to produce good works.
- 5. _____ Only true believers can perform good works that are pleasing to God (compare Romans 8:8-9).
- 6. _____ God's perfect plan for the believer is that he might walk in good works and live a fruitful life (compare John 15:16).

What 2 verses in Ephesians chapter 2 teach the same truth as Titus 3:5? Verses ___ and _____. What verse in Ephesians chapter 2 teaches the same truth as Titus 3:1,8,14? Verse _____.

What is true about the person who truly belongs to God?(3 John 11) _____ What do we know about the person who keeps on (present tense) doing evil (3 John 11)? _____ According to 1 John 3:6, the person who has not seen God is the person who has not _____ God. Is this person saved? _____

Our Lord Jesus warned His disciples about what group of men (Matthew 7:15)? _____ What are these men like according to their outward appearance (Mt. 7:15)? _____ What are they really like on the inside (Mt.7:15)? _____ Find the verse in Acts 20 where Paul warns about this same danger: Verse_____ How can these men be known and recognized for what they really are (Matt. 7:16,20)? _____ Will a thorn bush bring forth grapes? _____ Will a grapevine bring forth thorns? _____ What should we expect from a grapevine? _____ What should we expect from an apple tree? _____ What should we expect from a good tree (Mt. 7:17)? _____ What should we expect from a bad tree? _____ What will a corrupt tree produce (Mt. 7:17)? _____ It's impossible for a good tree to produce _____ and it's impossible for a _____ to produce _____ (Mt. 7:18). What kind of tree does not bring forth good fruit (Mt. 7:18-19)? _____ What will happen to every corrupt tree (Mt. 7:19)? _____ Therefore what will happen to such false teachers and false prophets (compare 2 Pet. 2:1)? _____

Are all true believers fruitful (Matthew 13:8,23)? _____ Are some believers more fruitful than others (Mt.13:8,23)? _____ God desires that His children might bring forth _____ fruit (John 15:2) and that they might bear _____ fruit (John 15:8, also v.5). What is this fruit that the Lord was speaking about? In Galatians 5:22 we are told that the _____ of the _____ is 1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____ (just give the first 3). Let's find out if this is the same fruit that the Lord Jesus was speaking of in John chapters 14-16. In John 15:9-10 what fruit is being considered? _____ In John 14:27; 16:33 what fruit is being considered? _____ In John 15:11; 16:20,22 what fruit is being considered? _____ Is this the same fruit as in Galatians 5:22? _____

Faith without works is _____ (James 2:17,20,26). Please match the following:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1. _____ Dead Faith | A. Faith and works |
| 2. _____ Living Faith | B. Body only (body without the spirit) |
| 3. _____ Dead Body (v.26) | C. Body and spirit |
| 4. _____ Living Body (v.26) | D. Faith only (faith without works) |

James teaches that a man is justified (declared righteous) by _____ (James 2:21,24) and Paul teaches that a man is justified by _____ (Romans 5:1). James teaches that Abraham was justified by _____ (James 2:21) and Paul teaches that Abraham was justified not by _____ but by _____ (Romans 4:1-5 and compare Romans 3:26-28). Does the Bible have any contradictions or mistakes (Jn. 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:16; Psalm 119:89,160; etc.)? _____ If we really understand what Paul was teaching and what James was teaching, we will find that there was no contradiction at all.

How was Abraham saved? What does the Bible teach (Romans 4:3)? _____

_____ Therefore, was Abraham saved by faith or by works? _____ Find the verse in Genesis 15 that teaches us that Abraham was justified (declared righteous) by faith: Verse _____. Do Paul and James both quote this verse (Romans 4:3 and James 2:23)? _____ When was Abraham justified by works (James 2:21)? _____

Did this event take place before or after Abraham was justified by faith (compare Genesis 15:6 with Genesis chapter 22)? _____ Answer **True or False:**

_____ Abraham was first justified by works and then later he was justified by faith.

_____ Abraham was first justified by faith and then later he was justified by works.

_____ In God's sight Abraham was declared righteous the moment he believed on the Lord (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3-5).

If it were true that Abraham earned his salvation by works, then what would it be possible for him to do (Eph. 2:9; Rom. 4:2)? _____

Did the Lord know that Abraham was a true believer (Gen. 15:5-6)? _____ Does the Lord know whether or not you are a true believer (2 Tim. 2:19; John 6:64)? _____ Who is the only person who really knows our hearts and is able to see if we really have faith in Christ (Jeremiah 17:10)? _____ The question we must answer is this: How did **men** know that Abraham was a man of faith? Was there anything in Abraham's life that **showed** that he had genuine faith in the Lord? How did Abraham **demonstrate** that he had a living and vital faith in his God? We will now seek to answer these questions.

In Genesis 12:2 God promised that out of Abraham would come a _____ What problem did Abraham have which made the promise seem as if it would not be fulfilled (Gen. 15:2-3)? _____ What great promise did the Lord give Abraham in Genesis 15:5? _____

_____ Did Abraham believe this promise (15:6)? _____ Was he justified (15:6)? _____ Was he justified by works or by faith? _____

What problem do we find in Genesis 16:1? _____

What did God promise to make Abraham (Gen. 17:5)? _____

_____ Did the Lord promise to give Abraham **seed** (descendants, children)--see Genesis 17:6-8? _____ What did the Lord promise to give to Abraham in Genesis 17:15-16? _____ When Abraham heard this promise, what was his initial reaction? (see Gen. 17:17)? _____

In Genesis 17:19 God again promises to give Abraham a _____ and his name would be _____. Did the Lord promise to give Isaac seed (17:19)? _____ Therefore Abraham knew that Isaac must have children! How was it possible for Sarah to have a son in her old age (Gen. 18:14)? _____ (compare Luke 1:34-37). Did the Lord keep His promise (Gen. 21:1-2)? _____ Read Romans 4:16-22.

In whom would Abraham's descendants be called, in Ishmael (Hagar's son) or in Isaac (Sarah's son)?--see Genesis 21:10-12 and Romans 9:7 _____ This means that the seed of Abraham promised in Genesis 15:5 would be the descendants of Isaac and not Ishmael. Who served as slaves in Egypt for 400 years, the seed of Ishmael or the seed of Isaac (Gen. 15:13)? _____ **True or False:** _____ Because of God's promises in Genesis 17:19 and 21:12, Abraham knew that Isaac must have children.

In Genesis 22 God put Abraham's faith to the test (see verse 1) and He gave Abraham an opportunity to **prove** to everyone that he was indeed a man of faith. James says that this was when Abraham was _____ by _____ (James 2:21). Here in Genesis 22 Abraham showed the world that his faith was not a dead faith, but his was a faith that worked (a living faith)!

What command did God give to Abraham (Gen. 22:2)? _____
 _____ (In other words, God told him to sacrifice and put to death His only son, which would involve slaying him with a knife and burning him with fire). When God gives a command, how does the man of faith respond (Heb. 11:8)? _____
 _____ Did Abraham obey God's command right away (Gen. 22:3)? _____ We know that God prevented Abraham from killing his son (Gen. 22:10-13), but did Abraham know that God was going to do this? _____ What did Abraham **intend** to do when he came to the place where God had told him of (Gen. 22:9-10)? _____
 _____ Did he actually intend to **slay** his son upon the altar? _____ **Thus, Abraham faced an impossible problem:**

1) God had given him a **PROMISE:**

Isaac will have children.

The man of faith must believe the promise. Abraham **did** believe the promise and Abraham knew that Isaac would have children because he was "fully persuaded that, what God had _____ He was _____ also to _____" (Romans 4:21).

2) God had given him a **COMMAND:**

Kill your son!!

The man of faith must obey the command. Abraham **did** start to obey the command and as far as he was concerned he was going to put the knife to his son. Abraham knew that he intended to kill his son!

Thus the impossible problem:

HOW CAN A DEAD SON HAVE CHILDREN?

Such a thing is unthinkable! It is impossible! But God had given Abraham experience with the impossible! What else was impossible (Gen. 18:11-13)? _____
 _____ Was God able to bring forth life out of death (Romans 4:18-19)? _____ Abraham knew that it was impossible for dead Isaac to have children, but what else did he know (Genesis 18:14)? _____

(To avoid confusion, please use a King James Bible as you do these worksheets. Thank you!!)

Abraham knew that Isaac must die and he also knew that Isaac must have children! How can this be? By FAITH Abraham saw the solution!! He **believed** that God was _____ to _____ even from the _____ (Hebrews 11:19, read also verses 17-18). Look carefully at Genesis 22:5. Abraham told these men to wait behind because he and Isaac were going to go and worship (to Abraham "WORSHIP" meant that he would go and do exactly what God said, namely, sacrifice his son). In other words, Abraham was saying, "I and the lad will go yonder. I will then sacrifice my son, and "**we** will _____ to you" (Genesis 22:5—the first person plural "we" is made clear in the Hebrew text). "I'm going to put my son to death, but **we** are going to return to you alive!" Abraham believed God would raise him up and bring him back to life! What tremendous faith this man had! God tested his faith and Abraham gloriously passed the test!

This account in Genesis 22 is only a mere F _____ (Heb. 11:19) of a much greater sacrifice and a much greater resurrection. God prevented Abraham from delivering up his only son whom he loved (Gen. 22:12). But what did God eventually do many hundreds of years later (Rom. 8:32)? _____ But the Lord Jesus could not stay dead (see Acts 2:24) because He must have **SEED** (Isa. 53:10) and He must bring _____ unto glory (Heb. 2:10). So what did God do (Acts 4:10)? _____

Let us now return again to James 2. Is James 2:14 talking about a person who **has** faith or about a person who **says** he has faith? _____ Is it possible to actually **see** a person's faith? _____ If you were to meet a total stranger, could you tell whether or not he was a believer just by looking at him? _____ In order for a person to **prove** that he has faith, he must perform the good works which accompany genuine saving faith (see Ephesians 2:10 and Titus 3:8).

Did the person described in James 2:16 demonstrate that he had a living faith? _____
 What did he really prove (1 John 3:14)? _____

Even though he claimed to have faith, what kind of faith did he really have (James 2:17)?
 _____ Verse 18 teaches us that a person **shows** his faith by whether or not he performs good works! Saving faith is a faith that works! John Calvin once said, "Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is not alone." Works are the fruit of justification! The world is sick and tired of Christians shouting about grace and living like the devil! True believers need to **know that they are saved** and they need to **show that they are saved!**

Did the Apostle Paul teach that faith and works should go together (Ephesians 2:8-10 and Titus 3:8)? _____ Did Paul and James both agree that Abraham was justified by faith (Rom. 4:2-3 and James 2:23)? _____ Did the writer of Hebrews (maybe Paul?) and James both agree that Abraham was justified by works when he offered his son (Heb. 11:17-19 and James 2:21)? _____ Do the Scriptures contradict or do they harmonize perfectly?

A person with dead faith can easily believe there is one God, but who else believes this (James 2:19—"devils" = demons)? _____ Where are they going to end up (Matthew 25:41)? _____

Consider James 2:26. To tell if a body has life in it, you must look for signs of life! What are some signs of physical life?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

To tell if a person really has saving faith, you must look for signs of life also! What are some signs of spiritual life? 1. (1 John 3:14) _____

2. (1 John 2:3) _____
 3. (1 John 3:9) _____
- _____

Is your life fruitful or is it barren (see 2 Pet. 1:8)? Are you careful to maintain good works? Do you prove by your works that you are a man (or woman) of faith?

"EXAMINE YOURSELVES WHETHER YE BE IN THE FAITH."

9. A true believer confesses Christ (Romans 10:9-10).

The word **confess** comes from the Greek word **homologeō** (homo=same; **legeō** from a verb **legō**=to say) and therefore it means "to say the same thing as another, to agree with another person." The believer in Christ is to C_____ the Lord Jesus with his M_____ (Romans 10:9-10) and thus he is to vocally and publicly agree with what God has said concerning His Son (see 1 John 5:9-12).

Just as a label on a can is there to confess its contents, so a believer ought to confess their Lord and Saviour clearly, without being ashamed: "For the Scripture saith, Whosoever _____ on Him _____" (Romans 10:11). Every true believer should be able to say with Paul, "For I am _____ of the _____ (good news) of Christ; for it is the _____ of God unto _____ to everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). Was Christ ashamed to die for us openly and publicly (Matthew 27:39,54-55)?

Jesus, and shall it ever be, a mortal man ashamed of Thee?

Ashamed of Thee, whom angels praise, whose glories shine through endless days?

Ashamed of Jesus! Sooner far let evening blush to own a star;
He sheds the beams of light divine, o'er this benighted soul of mine.

Ashamed of Jesus! That dear friend, on whom my hopes of heaven depend!
No; when I blush, be this my shame, That I no more revere His Name.

Till then, nor is my boasting vain, Till then I boast a Saviour slain;
And O, may this my glory be, That Christ is not ashamed of me."

—Joseph Grigg

What word means the opposite of "confess" (see John 1:20; 1 John 2:22-23)? _____ To confess is to say "YES"; to deny is to say "NO." In Luke 22:57-60 Peter **should** have said, "_____, I know Him" (v.57). "_____, I am one of them" (v.58). "_____, I was with Him" (verses 59-60). But Peter did not say YES. Peter _____ Him (verse 57). Even though Peter had a serious lapse of faith, what indication is there that Peter was a true believer (verse 62)? _____

Did Peter later CONFESS the Lord publicly before thousands of men (Acts 2:14,22-24, 29, 36, 41)? _____ If someone were to ask you this question, "Do you claim the Lord Jesus as your very own Saviour and Lord?", how would you respond? _____

The **confession** of our mouth must agree with the **conduct** of our life. Titus 1:16 describes a group of PROFESSORS (confessors, people who profess to know God). Please match:

1. _____ The message of their lips.	A. "We do not know God!"
2. _____ The message of their life.	B. "They are an ABOMINATION!"
3. _____ God's feeling towards them.	C. "We know God!"

Their walk is in conflict with their talk and this is an abomination to the Lord. Though they **claim** to know God, they are _____ and the _____ is *not* in them (1 John 2:3-4). May the world see that the Christ we name with our lips is the God we serve with our lives!

TRUE or FALSE:

_____ An unbeliever will never say that he is a Christian. Only true believers claim that they know the Lord and that they belong to Christ (Titus 1:16; 2 Timothy 2:19; 1 John 2:4,6,9).

_____ Every true believer will confess Christ and claim Him as his very own Saviour and Lord (Romans 10:9-11; 1 John 4:15).

_____ It is possible for a true believer to have a momentary lapse of faith and even deny the Lord (Luke 22:57-60).

What promise did the Lord give to those who would confess Him before men in Matthew 10:32? _____

In Luke 12:8? _____

In Revelation 3:5? _____

Who is the overcomer of Revelation 3:5 according to 1 John 5:5? _____

Note: There is a cost involved in confessing that Jesus is the Messiah (John 9:22) and because of this cost many fail to confess Him (John 12:42). During the great Christian persecutions of the 2nd and 3rd centuries by the Romans, those believers who would not deny the Lord even at the risk of great suffering were known as **CONFESSORS**. They were not ashamed to identify themselves with Jesus Christ even if it meant their own death.

Do you publicly confess Christ before your family, friends, loved-ones and neighbors? Do you gladly embrace Him and own Him as your Lord and as your God (John 20:28)? Are you unashamed to speak of Him and to tell others what He has done and what He has said? "*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith!*"

**"Now I've given to Jesus everything! Now I gladly own Him as my King!
"Now my raptured soul can only sing of Calvary!"**

–William R. Newell

We have been studying nine signs of spiritual life. If a person is really saved, then he should **know** that he is saved and he should **show** that he is saved. His life should point clearly to his wonderful Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. His life, as a child of God, should be distinctively different from those who do not know the Lord (see 1 Thess. 4:5). If I really have God's life, then that life should be manifested. "If any man be in _____ he is a _____ [or new creation]: old things are passed away: behold all things are become _____" (2 Cor. 5:17). The following matching problem will help you to remember what we have been studying:

A TRUE BELIEVER	
1. _____ ...believes the Word of God.	A. 1 John 3:14
2. _____ ...has a hunger for God's Word.	B. 1 Peter 2:2
3. _____ ...prays to his Heavenly Father.	C. 2 Peter 2:7-8
4. _____ ...loves the brethren.	D. 1 John 3:7-8
5. _____ ...obeys the Lord (keeps His Word).	E. 1 John 5:9-10
6. _____ ...does not continue in sin but lives a righteous life.	F. 1 John 2:3-4
7. _____ ...does not enjoy living in sin.	G. Romans 8:15-16
8. _____ ...performs good works.	H. Romans 10:9-10 and Matthew 10:32-33
9. _____ ...confesses Christ before men	I. James 2:14-26

These things ought to characterize the life of a true believer. If you are a true child of God, then you ought to **show it** and **live it**. A believer should **know** that he is saved and should **show** that he is saved. You ought to bear the family image (1 John 3:9-10). Someone once asked, *If you were arrested for being a Christian would there be enough evidence to convict you?* Could a worn and well-used Bible be brought forth? Could witnesses be summoned who could testify that you told them about your Saviour? Is there a Pastor who could testify that you have been an active, healthy, faithful, serving member of a Bible-believing, Christ-honoring local assembly of believers?

If these things do not characterize your life, then this means that there is a serious spiritual problem. Two possibilities exist (as was discussed earlier): **1) You could be spiritually sick.** That is, you are a true believer who is very carnal and in a backslidden state (1 Cor. 3:1-4). You need to get right with God. **2) You could be spiritually dead.** That is, you are not a true believer and you do not have God's life. You may have professed salvation but you may never have possessed salvation. We would urge you to get spiritual help from your Pastor or from another strong, God-fearing believer who would be able to offer sound spiritual counsel and help. Remember, nothing is more important than your relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ, and you need to do whatever is necessary so that you can have a real and right, healthy and happy relationship with the only true God.

10. A true believer continues in the faith because of God's great keeping power (Luke 22:32; 1 Peter 1:5).

We are now ready to consider one more sign of life which has to do with a believer's continuance in the faith. A true believer will struggle with sin and may fail in many ways. Sadly, he can be out of fellowship with the Lord even for prolonged periods of time (though we should confess our sins to God immediately—1 John 1:9). He can walk in the flesh and be carnal and even act like an unsaved person (1 Cor. 3:1-4). A true believer may fail the Lord in many ways but he will not let go of Jesus Christ and he will not let go of the gospel. The true believer may fall very hard on the deck of the "ship of faith" but he will not fall overboard, nor will he abandon ship.

Why are we able to hang onto our Saviour even in the most difficult of times? Is it because we are strong and able to "hold fast" to our Saviour, or is it because He is strong and will not let go of us (John 10:27-30)? _____ Read Psalm:37:24. Can a believer fall? _____ Will God allow him to be completely destroyed? _____ Who upholds the believer? _____

Peter's Lapse of Faith

Peter was one of the twelve disciples. He was a saved man. The Bible tells us that he was "clean" (John 13:9-10). This means that Peter already had his "salvation bath"; he was completely clean and had all his sins forgiven. Is the same thing true about you (Acts 10:43; Eph. 1:7)? _____

One day, however, Peter fell into a terrible sin. He denied the Lord and told others that he did not even know the Lord Jesus. How many times did Peter do this (Matthew 26:75)? _____ This was a very serious sin. When Peter realized the enormity of his sin, what did he do (Matthew 26:75, end of the verse)? _____ Peter was a saved man, a believer in Christ, but he fell down very hard on the ship of faith. Thankfully, he did not fall overboard. God made sure that this would not happen!

In Luke 22:34 what did Jesus predict would happen to Peter?

_____ In Luke 22:32, the Lord prayed that Peter's F _____ would not F _____. When Peter denied the Lord three times, it seems as though his faith did fail. Certainly, if Peter had truly been trusting the Lord during this difficult time, he would not have fallen into this sin. Yes, Peter certainly had a serious lapse of faith (he fell down very hard on the deck of the ship of faith), but his faith did not totally fail (he did not fall overboard; he did not abandon the ship). The idea in our Lord's prayer for Peter is this: "Peter, I'm praying that your faith will not totally fail." Peter's sin did not lead to a fall from which he could never recover. It was a serious fall but not a fatal fall. He failed but he did not utterly fail. His faith was eclipsed but it was not a total eclipse. He did not fall like Judas did, a fall from which there was no recovery. Peter fell but he recovered. Jesus prayed that he would recover, and that prayer was answered. Peter's faith did not fail, and on the Day of Pentecost Peter did not deny the Lord, but he bravely confessed Christ before thousands of people (Acts chapter 2)! Peter was a bold witness for the Lord the rest of his life.

"I have prayed **for thee**" (Luke 22:32). Is Peter the only one that enjoys such blessed intercession? Does the Lord Jesus pray for you that your faith will not fail? See Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34 and compare John 17:11,15. What would have happened if the Lord had not prayed for Peter? As believers, where would we be if it were not for our Lord's faithful intercession on our behalf? How thankful we should be for the way Christ intercedes for His own--ever living to make intercession for us! Christ prays for us that God will keep us (see the Lord's intercessory prayer in John 17, especially verse 11) and that our faith will not fail.

Contrast Peter with another disciple, Judas. Peter was cleansed and forgiven (John 13:9-10); Judas was unclean (John 13:10-11). Judas never had his salvation bath, but Peter was forgiven. Judas did not lose his salvation because you cannot lose what you never had. Peter fell into serious sin, but he repented and recovered. Judas recognized that he had sinned by betraying the Lord, but did he turn back to the Saviour (Matthew 27:3-5)? _____ Jesus said it would have been better if Judas had never been _____ (Mark 14:21). Judas rejected the Saviour that he pretended to love; Peter was grieved that he had failed His Lord whom he truly loved (Matthew 26:75).

Was Peter a Christ-denier? The answer is YES and NO. If you were to take a snapshot of Peter on the night when he denied the Lord, then you would see him as a Christ-denier. However, if you were to take a video of his entire Christian life, it would show a man who boldly confessed the Lord at every opportunity he had, and who, at the end of his life, instead of denying the Lord, was willing to be crucified for his faith. He was faithful even unto death. Judas, on the other hand, was a phony pretender, destined for hell (John 17:12).

A Life-Long Commitment

Just as marriage is supposed to be a life-long commitment, so also is believing in Christ. Your commitment to Him as a believer is not for just one week or one month or one year, but it is a permanent love relationship with the God who died and rose again for you. If you have discovered the truth, why would you go back to error? If you have found the way of life, why would you go back onto the road of destruction? If you have tasted of the Bread of Life (John 6:35), why would you return to the crumbs that never satisfy? If you have come to the light, why would you turn again to darkness? As the song says, "I have decided to follow Jesus, **no turning back, no turning back!**" God does not go back on His commitment to you. When you first came to Christ, what did God promise you (John 6:37)?

_____ Will God ever turn away from you (Hebrews 13:5)? _____ God will never divorce his believers and nothing can separate us from His L _____ (Romans 8:38-39).

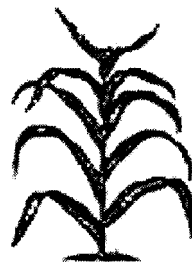
A Temporary Faith

In our Lord's parable of the sower, He describes seed that was tossed on stony ground (read Matthew 13:5-6). Stony ground means that there was a thin layer of soil covering a rock ledge. The plant sprang up but the soil was not deep and the roots could not go down deep to find water. Thus the plant soon W _____ A _____ (Matthew 13:6). The plant looked good when it first sprang up, but after some time had passed, it withered away.

Compare **Luke 8:6,13**. What is the one thing that is similar between the seed that fell on the rocky ground and the seed that fell on the good ground (compare verse 6 and verse 8)?



Rocky Ground (verse 6)



Good Ground (verse 8)

If you were to walk by these two growing plants (the one on rocky ground and the other on good ground) would you notice any difference **at first**? _____ What one thing is needed before you would be able to tell the difference (circle the correct answer):

- Fertilizer would be needed.
- Time would be needed to see if the plant will survive or wither away.
- Sunshine would be needed.

So it is with those who are stony ground hearers. At first, how do they receive the Word (see Luke 8:13)?

_____ For how long do they believe (Luke 8:13)? _____ This is a temporary faith where the person embraces the gospel (the good news) but only for a short time. What are the stony ground hearers lacking (Luke 8:13)? They have N _____ R _____ When things get rough and tough what do these so-called believers do (Luke 8:13)? _____ Do they continue in the faith grounded (having deep roots) and settled (compare Col. 1:23)? _____ They lack deep roots! The trees in the forest seem to be doing quite well on a nice sunny day, but when the hurricane comes, then we find out which trees did not have deep roots! The trees not having deep roots fall down and do not continue to stand with the other trees.

There are those who hear the gospel message and at first they seem to believe the good news and they are excited about spiritual things. They attach themselves temporarily to the Body of Christ and they seem to be genuine believers. Soon, however, persecution comes along. They begin to realize that living for Christ is not easy and is very costly. They begin to understand that being identified with Christ will result in the hatred of the world (John 15:18-19). True believers are treated as Christ was treated (John 15:20) and these superficial believers are not ready for this. "I did not realize all that is involved in being a follower of Jesus Christ. This is too difficult. This is not for me. I did not understand what I was getting into. I'm not going to be a believer any longer. This is too hard. I'll try something else."

In sharp contrast to the stony ground hearers are the good ground hearers. Read Luke 8:15. Those on good soil not only hear the Word but they also **K**_____ it. This word "keep" (Greek-*katecho*) means to "hold fast." The true believer hears God's Word and keeps it. He holds fast to the Lord Jesus and to His gospel and refuses to let go. He realizes that he has decided to follow Jesus and there is no turning back. As the hymn says, "Keep us, Lord, O keep us cleaving to thyself and still believing, till the hour of our receiving promised joys with Thee." The believer realizes that being on the solid Rock is the safest place he could ever be, and he refuses to abandon that sure foundation. When others were turning away from the Lord, why did Peter not turn away (John 6:67-68)?

A True Believer Holds Fast to Christ and to the Gospel

We have learned that the good ground hearer "holds fast" to the Lord Jesus Christ and His gospel (Luke 8:15). The book of Hebrews was written to Jewish people who had embraced Jesus Christ. These Jewish Christians were going through some very difficult times. They were suffering through great affliction and persecution (Heb. 10:32-33). Some of them had lost many of their earthly possessions (Heb. 10:34). They were discovering that the Christian life is not always a bed of roses. Because of these difficulties and trials, some of these Jewish people were wavering in their faith. Some were even in danger of turning away from Christ and from Christianity and going back to the religion of Judaism. The writer of Hebrews gave them some very strong warnings to try to prevent them from doing this. They needed to hold fast to the gospel which they had received. They must not let go of Jesus Christ. They must not turn away from Him.

Consider Hebrews 3:6--"But Christ as a son over his own house, whose house are we, if we **H**_____ **F**_____ the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the _____." This verse makes the amazing statement that believers are part of Christ's house. We are His house! We are part of a wonderful building: Jesus Christ is the builder and believers are the building (see Matthew 16:18; 1 Peter 2:5; Ephesians 2:20-22). Not only are we the **body of Christ** (1 Corinthians 12), but we are also the **building of Christ!**

Think of scaffolding which is erected around a building during times of construction or repair. Scaffolding is merely a **temporary attachment**. It is not a real and genuine part of the building. Proof of this is in the fact that the scaffolding does not continue with the building but rather it is taken down and removed. As we saw with the stony ground hearers, there are some people who temporarily attach themselves to Christ, but when things get difficult they fall away. They do not continue on. The part of the building which is true and genuine does not fall away, but the scaffolding does.

Another verse that speaks about "holding fast" is Hebrews 3:14--"For we are made partakers of Christ, if we **H**_____ the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the _____." The word "hold" (Greek-*katecho*) means "hold fast" and it is the same word that we found in Hebrews 3:6 and Luke 8:16 ("keep"). When we first trusted Christ we put our confidence in Him and we trusted Him fully. We are to continue to cling to Him and trust Him throughout our Christian life. We must never let go of our confidence in Him. The Saviour that we met when we first trusted Him for salvation is the same Saviour who will be with us at our deathbed, at the very end of our life. At the end of our life our hope is still in Jesus Christ and we can still say, "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' Name!" We can cling to Him until the very

end. He has been faithful to us all the way along--"having loved his _____ who were in the world, he loved them unto the _____" (John 13:1). Does His love for us ever end? _____ Should we trust Him to the very end? _____

In 1 Corinthians 15:2 we are reminded of the importance of **holding fast** to the gospel which has been given to us: "By which also ye are _____, if ye **keep in memory** (**hold fast**) what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain." "Keep in memory" (Greek--*katecho*) means to **hold fast**. It is the same word we saw in Hebrews 3:6,14 and also in Luke 8:15 ("keep"). When we were first saved, we received a very important message. What was this message (1 Cor. 15:3-4)?

Should we believe this message and hold fast to this good news all the days of our life? _____ What would you think of a person who says that he believes on Christ, and then three weeks later he says, "I don't really believe that Christ died for my sins, and I'm not sure He really rose again from the dead either. The early Christians thought that He rose again, but I'm not convinced about this." Does this person sound like a true, genuine believer? _____ Paul did not want people to believe in V _____ (1 Corinthians 15:2), but rather he wanted people to believe for real.

Does God want people to draw back and turn away from the Saviour (Hebrews 10:38)? _____ Does this please Him (Hebrews 10:38)? _____ See Hebrews 10:39. Are you a person who draws back or are you a person who continues to believe?

_____ See Hebrews 10:23--"Let us _____ the profession of our faith without _____ (for He is faithful that promised)." Our faithful God will help us to remain faithful! Is He able to keep you from falling (Jude 24)? _____

A True Believer Continues in the Faith

There is good news for every believer in Christ. Someday God will present you "H _____ and unblamable (blameless, faultless) and unprovable (above reproach) in His sight" (Colossians 1:22). At that day, you will be totally without sin and no one will ever be able to find fault with you! Can people find fault with you now? _____ That day when believers will be presented faultless is also described in two other places: 1) Jude 24--"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to _____ you _____ before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy;" 2) Ephesians 5:27--"That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having _____ or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without _____." What a day of rejoicing that will be! In our heavenly future, we will never have to worry about sin again!

In that glorious future day we will be presented holy (Colossians 1:22), but today we need to C _____ in the F _____ (Colossians 1:23). Colossians 1:23 is not describing someone who is merely temporarily attached to Christ, but rather it is describing a person who continues in the faith, having deep roots ("grounded and settled"), and who holds fast to the gospel message which he has heard. He refuses to move away from the hope of the gospel. He is not going to budge! Is there any reason we should budge and move away from Christ? If someone could find a better Saviour than Jesus Christ, then we could budge, but is that going to happen? _____ If someone could find a better book than the Bible, then we could budge, but will such a book ever be found? _____ If someone could find some good news that is better than the gospel of Jesus Christ, then we could budge, but will this ever happen? _____ When the giant oak tree has its roots deep into the ground, there is no reason to budge, not even when a hurricane comes. When the believer has his roots deep into Jesus Christ, then there is no reason to move! God wants us to be "steadfast, _____, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

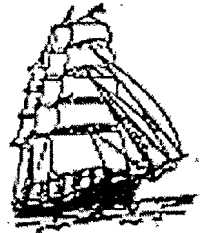
Stay in the Ship or You Will Perish!

In Acts 27, God has given us a wonderful illustration of the need to continue in the faith.

The Ship of Acts 27

In Acts 27 we have the account of Paul and others in his ship being caught in a violent storm. From every indication it seemed that all the men would perish in the sea. But God had other plans. How many of the crewmen would be lost (Acts 27:22)?

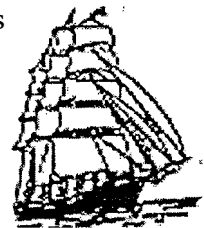
_____ How many would be saved (Acts 27:24)? _____ Who said so (Acts 27:25)? _____ Although the safety of all on board was promised by God, in verse 31 Paul warned them to _____ in the ship. This warning was necessary because in verse 30 we learn that the crewmen were about to abandon ship. If they had left the ship, would they have been saved (verse 31)? _____ Did they **all** remain in the ship as Paul told them to do in verse 31? _____ Were they **all** saved (verse 44)? _____



Paul's Ship

The Ship of Faith

Every believer is on the ship of faith (John 6:47; Acts 16:31). Will any of these believers be lost (John 10:28-30)? _____ Who said so? _____ Even though the safety of all true believers is promised by God, yet God still gives **strong warnings** to believers and tells them to **take heed** lest they should _____ from the living God (Hebrews 3:12). God encourages believers to **stay in the ship of faith** (see Col. 1:23 "_____ in the faith"; Acts 13:43 "_____ in the grace of God"; Acts 14:22 "_____ in the faith").



The Ship of Faith

Just as God used Paul's warning as a **means** of keeping the crewmen safe, so God uses many warnings (such as we find in Hebrews 3:6,12,14; 1 Cor. 15:2; Heb. 10:38; etc.) as a **MEANS** of keeping the believer safe and secure in Christ forever. In a similar way, a loving parent may give a young child very strong warnings about the dangers of walking out into the street. The purpose of these warnings is to keep the child safe. The parent could help the child keep safe by saying, "You will not be hit by a car if you stay off the road and don't even go near the road." It would be foolish to say, "You will not be hit by a car so you can go anywhere you want to go and if you want to wander in the road, that's fine." Likewise God would never say, "Since you are saved and eternally secure, you can live any way you please and you can turn away from Christ and abandon the faith if you wish."

Think again of the illustration in Acts 27. Who was it that really kept the crewmen safe (circle the best answer):

- The crewmen kept themselves safe because they remained in the ship (v.31).
- God kept the crewmen safe (v.24).

Now apply this to the believer and circle the correct answer:

- The believer keeps himself safe and secure in Christ by continuing in the faith.
- God keeps the believer safe and secure in Christ (1 Pet. 1:5; John 17:12).

The True Believer is Safe Because of God's Keeping Power

We cannot keep ourselves safe and we cannot keep ourselves saved. This is God's work. He not only saves us, but He keeps us saved. He keeps us from F _____ (Jude 24). He keeps our F _____ from failing (Luke 22:32). True, there are times when we falter and fail and sin, as Peter did, but even then, God will convict us and chasten us and help us to recover. How does God keep His believers safe? Does God keep us **apart from** faith (whether we keep on believing in Him or not) or does God keep us **through** faith (1 Peter 1:5)?

_____ God is faithful and He keeps us faithful!
 God keeps our faith from failing (Luke 22:32). Of course, we can have a lapse of faith as Peter did, but

God will not allow our faith to totally fail. God keeps us on the deck of the ship of faith. We may fall down very hard on the deck, and may even get injured on the deck. But God will never let us fall overboard. We are kept on that deck by His great power (1 Peter 1 :5). If it were up to us, we would fall off the deck very quickly!

Practical Examples

A. A person once made this statement: "I was a member of a young people's gospel team. We were all saved, and we had some success in preaching the gospel, but one member of the team got into worldly company. He married a very worldly girl. He denied his Christian profession of faith, and he died a drunkard. Now you see, he was a Christian; he went to heaven; however, he was a carnal Christian and he did not have the reward of a spiritual Christian." The person who made this statement assumed that this man was a saved man, but was this a safe assumption? We know that only God knows the hearts of men, yet, in the light of our study, would you say that this person was probably saved (as the above paragraph claims) or probably unsaved?

Note: Were the Corinthian believers carnal (1 Cor. 3:1-4)? _____ Would these Corinthian believers continue to the very end (1 Cor. 1:8)? _____ Beware lest we use carnality as an excuse. Many who claim to be carnal believers might be headed for eternal destruction. Paul assumed that the Corinthian believers were holding fast to the gospel that he preached to them (1 Cor. 15:2). Some who think that they are carnal and think they will be saved so as by fire will really be lost so as by fire (the lake of fire). Some who think they will be saved by the "skin of their teeth" will actually be lost in the lake of fire where there will be "weeping and gnashing" of teeth.

B. A chapel speaker once said, "Dear young people, there are two ways to go to heaven, the spiritual way and the carnal way. It is so much better to take the spiritual way!" One young person thought to himself, "I am a Christian, but I do not mind sitting in the bleachers. I choose to go to heaven the carnal way!" In light of our study, do you think this is the attitude a true believer should have? _____

C. Many people profess to be Christians, but their daily lives do not differ from thousands of unbelievers all around them. They are rarely, if ever, found at the prayer meeting. They have no family worship; they seldom read the Scriptures; they will not talk with you about the things of God; their walk is thoroughly worldly; yet they are quite sure they are bound for heaven! You ask them how they know they are saved and they will tell you that many years ago they "accepted" Christ and "once saved always saved" is now their comfort. Are they really giving evidence that they are truly saved? _____ It's true that if a person is once saved, he will always be saved, but each person needs to make sure that he is really saved and that he really has a right relationship with God's only Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ!

D. Thomas Cranmer was the moving force of the Protestant Reformation in the mid 16th century in England. In 1555 he was excommunicated by the Roman Catholic Church in Rome. As pressures mounted Cranmer weakened and he even signed a statement in which he denied the Christian faith. Just before he was to be put to death by Queen Mary (who was strongly Catholic and who caused almost 300 people to be burned, thus earning for herself the name "BLOODY MARY") he renounced his denial, and once more and in the strongest terms declared his faith in Christ. In dramatic fashion he showed how he felt about his denial of the principles of the Reformation. The hand which had signed the denial he held firmly in the flames until it was burned to a crisp. Then the flames scorched his body, and he died the death of a martyr. Cranmer was similar to Peter in that he failed his Lord but then recovered. Do you think you will someday see Thomas Cranmer in heaven (Rev. 2:10-11)? _____. May God help us to be faithful to Christ to the very last breath that we take!

* * * * *

Congratulations, you have completed the NEW BELIEVER NOTES. You have looked up hundreds of verses and we trust that God has taught you precious truths from His Word. May you have and enjoy God's very best in Christ Jesus!