

The  
evidence  
of life  
in Christ

# *Evidence of life in Christ*

The way the world is going, one day it might be an offence to be a Christian; so, if charged, what evidence could be brought to commit us of devotion the Jesus as our Lord and Saviour?

Our mission from Jesus Christ is to go and make disciples. Is our message supported by the image we project that we are calling people to be part of? Does the world we preach to see the Christ we represent? Is the evidence of Christ's work of transforming lives visible in the church we promote? It would appear that the world doesn't think so.

John MacArthur, in his book 'Only Jesus' is concerned with inadequate understanding of the Christian life.

“Countless churchgoers today believe that because they recited a prayer, signed on a dotted line, walked an aisle, or had some other experience, they are saved and should never question their salvation.

But Scripture encourages us to examine ourselves to determine if we are in the faith. (2 Cor. 13:5) Peter wrote, "*Be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you.*" (2 Peter 1:10) It is right to examine our lives and evaluate the fruit we bear, for "each tree is known by its own fruit."  
Luke 6:44

The Bible teaches clearly that the evidence of God's work in a life is the inevitable fruit of transformed behaviour. (1 John 3:10) Faith that does not result in righteous living is dead and cannot save. (James 2:14-17) Professing Christians utterly lacking the fruit of true righteousness will find no biblical basis for assurance of salvation.  
1 John 2:4

Real salvation is not only justification. It cannot be isolated from regeneration, sanctification, and ultimately glorification. Salvation is the work of God through which we are "*conformed to the image of His Son.*"  
Rom. 8:29

Genuine assurance comes from seeing the Holy Spirit's transforming work in one's life, not from clinging to the memory of some experience."

John Piper, in his book ‘Finally Alive’ writes of the same issues.

“Another reason for this treatment of the new birth is that there are millions of people who do not yet follow Christ. They are not born again. I pray that God might use this book as one means of their new birth. Some of them are church attenders and church members, even leaders. But they are not born again. They are cultural Christians. Religion is a formal, external thing. There has been no true inner awakening from spiritual death to spiritual life.”

“First Epistle of John is to drive home this very truth:

1 John 2:29: *“If you know that He is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of Him.”*

1 John 3:9: *“No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.”*

1 John 4:7: *“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.”*

1 John 5:4: *“Everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.”*

1 John 5:18: *“We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but He who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.”*

How does being born again relate to:

- God’s effectual calling *“Those whom He called He justified,”*  
Rom 8:30
- The new creation *“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation,”*  
2 Cor 5:17
- God’s drawing us to Christ *“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him,”*  
John 6:44
- God’s giving people to His Son *“All that the Father gives Me will come to Me,”*  
John 6:37

- God’s opening our hearts “*The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul,*” Acts 16:14
- God’s illumining our hearts “*God...has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,*” 2 Cor 4:6
- God’s taking the heart of stone out and giving us a heart of flesh “*I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh,*” Ezek 36:26
- God’s making us alive “*even when we were dead in our trespasses, [God] made us alive together with Christ,*” Eph 2:5
- God’s adopting us into His family “*You have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’*” Rom 8:15

John Piper asks the question. How does God’s act of regeneration relate to all these wonderful ways of describing what happened to us when God saved us?

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In order not to be deceived and miss the upward call of God we must look for some evidence of spiritual life in ourselves and also in those who claim to be a Christian so we can assist in their Christian maturity.

And the first evidence of conversion must be a conviction we are unworthy of mercy because of our disobedience and indifference to the almighty God of mercy. By grace we are saved. Convicting evidence begins when the seeker is convicted of their sinfulness and disobedience towards God that results in His condemnation. At which time they see by the power of the Spirit the glory of God in Christ Jesus who has made it possible by His death and resurrection they can be reconciled with God.

In total gratitude they will be willing to deny themselves and take up their cross daily. (Luke 9:23) Then they will know by the witness of the Spirit that God has regenerated His life in them; and for new life to arise there must be a death to self rule if God is to live and rule in us.

Then once the burden of guilt has been lifted, the mind will be illuminated by the Spirit, and with the heart changed, a new perspective on life is given according to the divine nature, and they are moved from death into life, indifference to God is replaced with a holy fear of God, and spiritual apathy gives way to a heart that hungers and thirsts for God as the greatest treasure in Christ who is now Lord.

As a result, the evidence is seen of those who will submit absolutely to His authority as our Lord and God and obey Him. *“The one who believes in the Son has eternal life; but the one who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.”* John 3:36

By this evidence we either confirm or contradict our claim to conversion by our conduct in seeking to please self or God. When we respond to the call of Jesus Christ to follow Him, we do so in the knowledge that He is both Lord and God. *‘Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”* (Matt 28:18) All authority on earth means there can be no other way of doing things but His way.

There is no better time to do things but when He says to do them. There can be no other reason for life but His life. For He has also said *“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”* John 14:6

Jesus also spoke these words to us to obey: *“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* Matt 28:18-20

As a result, we see Jesus didn't come to call religious people who would follow the old ways of life while observing some spiritual practices. Jesus came to make disciples who willingly die to that old life they lived in the world, by leaving behind all that the world offers in order to follow Him; to live the way He lived, and do all He taught and commanded us to do as His chosen people. Therefore, we must remember as His disciple we are to become like our master Jesus in all aspects of life on earth. Jesus has come that we may have an abundance of His life when we live

in His truth, when we follow His way, and live the life He gives us through the Spirit. We don't naturally have the Spirit of God in us to enable us to live this life; we must rely on God to work in us when we willingly surrender to His authority and dominion. As a result, we must be born again of God's Spirit to have the life only God can give.

### **The follower of Christ must be born again**

Those who come obediently to follow Jesus Christ are to be cleansed of their sin by His death on the cross. This prepares them so they can be born again with the divine life of God by the Spirit with God's DNA, as they are baptised into the death of Christ by the symbolic death of their previous life, so they can be raised up by the Spirit, (Rom 6:4-6) who will indwell them as the power of God so they can be holy as He is holy. As a consequence of the Spirit's presence dwelling in them, they can live as the children of God in His Kingdom, for they will be the brethren of Christ. They will be known as those who are in Christ. At this time, all that God desires for us according to His divine nature has been birthed into us who believe. The apostle Peter gives us this understanding. *'He has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.'*

2 Pet 1:4

*'Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.'*

1 John 3:2

If we want to know what we should look like so we can grow, we need to look no further than to Jesus Christ Himself. As He is we will be. The apostle John wrote: *'By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.'*

1 John 4:17

So we must see the making of disciples begins with a new spiritual birth. The Lord Jesus said; *"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."* (John3:3) This new birth is not physical but a spiritual birth. *Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the*

*kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'* John 3:5-7

The new life in Christ is not just a re-tread of the old life we lived before we knew Him. The new life in the spirit is a completely new existence. *'Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.'* 2 Cor 5:17

### **Christ's followers will live in submission to the Spirit**

With the Spirit of God in residence in us, He will stir up an interest to obey all that concerns the work of God. Therefore, if the Spirit is present in us, we should see evidence of His indwelling life, and a growing motivation to work out the will of God. The Spirit who makes us alive is also the one who leads us as God's children and teaches us all things.

Jesus spoke of the Spirit as our guardian. *'I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.'* John 14:16-20

So therefore *"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me. These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."* John 14:23-26

## **The Spirit leads us into all righteousness**

*'However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.'* Rom 8:9-11

## **The Spirit frees us from the dominion of sin to live under the dominion of God**

*'Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptised into Christ Jesus have been baptised into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.'* Rom 6:3-7

## **The Spirit gives us the life of Christ as we die with Him**

*'I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.'*

Gal 2:20

The evidence of the Spirit's life is referred to as the fruit of the Spirit. *'But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.'* (Gal 5:18) *'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.'*

Gal 5:22-23

Evidence of life is also the fruit of abiding in Christ who said all those who abide in Him will produce the fruit of His life. *"I am the vine, you are the branches; the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."*

John 5:5

There will also be evidence of our working with God to work out what He has worked in us; *‘So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.’* Phil 2:12-13

This is the work of sanctification which is highlighted by Paul this way. *‘If by the Spirit we are putting to death that which is earthly in us we will live. ‘So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.’* Rom 8:12-14

### **Being a new creation means a changed life**

The truly converted are not spiritually stationary; they are constantly moving in God’s direction, constantly desiring a deeper, and richer relationship with him. There is a number of ways the Bible speaks of conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ. *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”* (2 Cor 5:17) *“We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.”* (Eph 2:12) *“You are sons of God.”* (Gal 3:26) *“Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.”* (Rom 8:17) *“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price.”* 1 Cor 6:19-20

It is God’s will that spiritual growth is required in all His children, so there must be a hunger for the word of God if the Spirit is present, since knowledge of His word is necessary for spiritual growth. Otherwise, how will we know what Jesus commanded us to do as His disciples? And because of the Spirit inside us there should also be a passion for making disciples. *“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* Matt 28:18-20

If the work of disciplining is inadequate or missing in our Church experience, then the development and the maturity of the believer will be restricted, if not severely limited so that they never become the teacher they need to be in making disciples themselves.

Evidence of the Spirit's working in the believer affects every part of life. Spiritual growth also effects our emotional attachments as we find we no longer *"love the world or the things of the world."* (1 John 2:15) But we *"delight to do God's will."* (Psalm 40:8) There will be evidence of a new life in our spirit. *'Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.'*  
2 Cor 7:1

Further evidence will reveal God's promise that we shall be increasingly *"confirmed to the image of His Son."* (Rom 8:29) And as joint members of His body the Church, there will be sincere fellowship with the brethren of Christ. *'That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.'*  
1 John 1:3

There will be evidence of our love for one another in Christ. *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another."* (John 13:34) This love follows God's nature made alive in the believer, *'Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.'*  
1 Cor 13:4-8

If we are one body in Christ, we will not be separated from others who might be making us feel uncomfortable with their zeal.

To quote John Piper referring to the Apostle John's first letter.

*"This is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. Do not be surprised,*

*brothers, that the world hates you. We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers.*’ 1 John 3:11–14

So, what would it be like for any of us to be like Cain? It would mean that anytime some weakness or bad habit in our lives is exposed by contrast to someone else’s goodness, instead of dealing with the weakness or the bad habit, we keep away from those whose lives make us feel defective. We don’t kill them. We avoid them. Or worse, we find ways to criticize them so as to neutralize the part of their lives that was making us feel convicted. We feel like the best way to nullify someone’s good point is to draw attention to his bad point. And so we protect ourselves from whatever good he might be for us.

But John’s point is: Love doesn’t act like that. Love is glad when our brothers and sisters are making progress in good habits or good attitudes or good behaviour. Love rejoices in this growth. And if it happens to be faster than our own growth, then love is humble and rejoices with those who rejoice.

So the lesson for us is: Everywhere you see some growth, some virtue, some spiritual discipline, some good habit, or good attitude, rejoice in it. Give thanks for it. Compliment it. Don’t resent it. Don’t be like Cain. Respond the opposite from Cain. Be inspired by other people’s goodness. Love is humble. Love delights in other people’s good. Love doesn’t protect its own flaws. Love takes steps to change them. What a beautiful fellowship where everyone is rejoicing in each other’s strengths, not resenting them! This is what the love of God looks like when the new birth gives it life in the people of God.” ‘Finally Alive’ pages 158-59

Further evidence of this new life taking hold of the believer means attention will be given to meditating on God's word (Matt 4:4, John 17:17) to prayer (Eph 6:18, Phil 4:6) to spiritual worship (Eph 5:18-20) in witnessing to Christ (Acts 1:8) in Christian fellowship (Heb 10:24-25) and in self-discipline, and self-control. Gal 5:23, Titus 1:8

In the Church, all those who are in Christ will know there is one body, and one life, His life in them. *‘For just as the body is one and has many*

*members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptised into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.’* (Cor 12:13-14) *‘God has so composed the body, giving greater honour to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.’* 1 Cor 12:24-27

Evidence of our ongoing spiritual relationships is of utmost importance in the new life in Christ. When Jesus told those who called on Him as Lord that they should depart from Him, it was on the basis that He never knew them. *I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’* Matt 7:23

The indwelling Spirit is the basis for our intimate relationship with the Father, the Son by the Spirit. *‘Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?’* (1 Cor 3:16) *‘However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.’* Rom 8:9

Because of poor teaching in the Church in many places, and bad examples being set for the people, there has never been a shortage of those who claim to be converted to Jesus, but their life tells a different story. The Apostle John is quite merciless in his comments to those who say one thing and practice another. *“The man who says, ‘I know him,’ but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”* (1John 2:4) *“Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.”* (1 John 2:6) *“Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness.”* (1 John 2:9) Jesus said *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.”* Matt 7:21

In order to make sure we are on the right path; we need to obey the Lord and seek to abide in His love through a relationship that will endure when we do all things according to His grace and power.

We need to heed His words written for our guidance. *"Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."* (John 15:9-19) *"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you."* John 14:16-17

The Lord our God works for our highest good to see us transformed into His likeness through an intimate spiritual relationship, both individually and collectively as His body on earth. He wants us to know what it is like to mature as His disciples so that many can be delivered from the darkness into the glory of the Son of God.

*"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."* (John 13:34-35) *"The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me."* John 17:22-23

In the end, if we don't have the Spirit of Christ in us, motivating our life, leading us into deeper obedience and likeness in Christ, we are not in Christ, and we are still dead in our sin. A determined person may be able to fake some evidence of the born again life; but closer examination will expose weeds where there should be wheat, lemons instead of oranges, and self interest where there should be devotion to God. But a spiritual soul made alive by the Spirit will find the life of Christ irresistibly rising up in their hearts as rivers of living water, (John 7:38-39) bringing joy and peace overflowing into all aspects of their life in the world. Even though the real believer will still be able to look back over their life with a feeling of loathing for the way they lived before God did His work in them. Ezekiel 36:31

An absence of the evidence of the indwelling Christ will mean those who are against Christ will find us acceptable in their company. So, we are

not completely devoted to God and His purpose of calling people out of the darkness of the world into the light of the Kingdom of God, and their further transformation into the likeness of His Son; and we claim to be a Christian, we have probably not understood what that really means from God's point of view.

*'Beloved, let's love one another; for love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love. By this the love of God was revealed in us, that God has sent His only Son into the world so that we may live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; **if we love one another, God remains in us, and His love is perfected in us.**'*

1 John 4:7:12

If there is an absence of evidence to convict us of the Christian life, and we want to be saved, it's not too late. Today is the day of salvation, we can come to Jesus and take up our cross daily so we can be born of the Spirit and walk with God.

Our faithfulness to Jesus should encourage us to be the very best witnesses to Him and His purpose as we possibly can be.

The evidence we need to see in everyone who claims the name of Christ is that we have died with Christ, and now Christ lives in us. There is a passage of scripture for every situation and this is:

*That according to the riches of His glory He may grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

Eph 3:16-19

And the fullness of God **IS** Christ. New life comes from God, by the powerful work of the Spirit, for the glory of God, And He will achieve what He wills. For who can deny Him?

So there needs to be evidence we are no longer in the business of comforting ourselves, and an increasing reflection of Christ achieving His desires for Holiness in us who are called to be like Him. So that we, as well as the world, can know we are His chosen people called to serve Him only.

Do we really demonstrate have the second birth?

Is there convicting evidence that we are serving the Lord and His mission and no longer look like the world?

What habitually occupies our minds, the concerns of the world or the kingdom of God?

Those who actually abide in Christ produce the fruit of that relationship in reaching the world with His good news.

To quote John Piper

“God's work and your work come together like this:

God causes the new birth through the seed of the word, the gospel.

God brings about the new birth through your telling people the gospel.

God regenerates people through the news about who Christ is and what He has done on the cross and in the resurrection.

God gives new life to dead hearts through your words when you speak the gospel.

Why are we here? *"That you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light."* We are in the marvellous light of the love and power and wisdom of Christ so that our joy in that marvellous light might be filled up through proclaiming the excellencies of Christ.

Why? Because that's how others will be born again-by hearing the good news.”

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*We will be like Him*, (1 John 3:2) it begins now, or it will never happen.

If we Abide in Him and we will be like Him. Amen

# Living Water Resources

## Come to the River

*‘Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly My disciples.”’* John 8:31

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If you are a true believer in Jesus today, or if you are an unbeliever, or if you are a phony believer, thinking you believe when you don’t, these words of Jesus are meant for you.

He said, *“If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples.”* Now that you have believed, here is how you can know what you now are. You can know if your belief is real: you *are now* my true disciples if you go on abiding in my word.

John Piper

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