

Five Facts About Believers

James 3:11-18 HCSB Does a spring pour out sweet and bitter water from the same opening? (12) Can a fig tree produce olives, my brothers, or a grapevine *produce* figs? Neither can a saltwater spring yield fresh water. (13) Who is wise and understanding among you? He should show his works by good conduct with wisdom's gentleness. (14) But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your heart, don't brag and lie in defiance of the truth. (15) Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. (16) For where envy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every kind of evil. (17) But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peace-loving, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, without favoritism and hypocrisy. (18) And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

There are a lot of people out there who claim to be followers of Christ. They call themselves Christians but they look, sound, and act a whole lot like the world. How do we know who are truly disciples? How can we be sure the vivifying work of the Spirit has begun in our OWN hearts? I would like to share with you five things to look for.

I. Their Conversion

- **Matthew 18:3 HCSB** "I assure you," He said, "unless you are converted and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.
- **Luke 22:31-33 HCSB** "Simon, Simon, look out! Satan has asked to sift you like wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And you, when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." 33 "Lord," he told Him, "I'm ready to go with You both to prison and to death!"

- A. From sin to Christ: salvation
- B. From self to Christ: submission

II. Their Confidence

- **Philippians 1:6 HCSB** I am sure of this, that He who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

- A. That God won't give up on them
- B. That God will complete what He began.

III. Their Confirmation

- **1 Corinthians 1:4-9 HCSB** 4 I always thank my God for you because of God's grace given to you in Christ Jesus, 5 that by Him you were made rich in everything--in all speaking and all knowledge-- 6 as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you, 7 so that you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. 8 He will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful; by Him you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

- A. It is not a ritual, rite, or sacrament.
- B. It is confirmation of security in Christ.

IV. Their Convictions

- **Galatians 5:1 HCSB** Christ has liberated us into freedom. Therefore stand firm and don't submit again to a yoke of slavery.

- A. Concerning liberty

- **Romans 14:16-23 HCSB** Therefore, do not let your good be slandered, **17** for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. **18** Whoever serves the Messiah in this way is acceptable to God and approved by men. **19** So then, we must pursue what promotes peace and what builds up one another. **20** Do not tear down God's work because of food. Everything is clean, but it is wrong for a man to cause stumbling by what he eats. **21** It is a noble thing not to eat meat, or drink wine, or do anything that makes your brother stumble. **22** Do you have faith? Keep it to yourself before God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. **23** But whoever doubts stands condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith, and everything that is not from faith is sin.

B. Concerning license

- **Galatians 5:13 HCSB** For you are called to freedom, brothers; only don't use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but serve one another through love.
- **1 Peter 2:16 HCSB** As God's slaves, *live* as free people, but don't use your freedom as a way to conceal evil.

C. Concerning legalism

- **Galatians 2:16, 20-21 HCSB** yet we know that no one is justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no human being will be justified. **20-21** and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. **21** I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.
- **Galatians 5:1-7 HCSB** Christ has liberated us into freedom. Therefore stand firm and don't submit again to a yoke of slavery. **2** Take note! I, Paul, tell you that if you get circumcised, Christ will not benefit you at all. **3** Again I testify to every man who gets circumcised that he is obligated to keep the entire law. **4** You who are trying to be justified by the law are alienated from Christ; you have fallen from grace! **5** For by the Spirit we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness from faith. **6** For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision accomplishes anything; what matters is faith working through love. **7** You were running well. Who prevented you from obeying the truth?

V. Their Compassion

- **Jude 1:22 HCSB** Have mercy on some who doubt;
 - A. Based on love for the lost
 - B. Based on the hatred of sin
 - C. Based on the reality of Hell