Signs of Faith

Selected Scriptures
6/6/2010

Introduction:

It behooves all of us to take some spiritual inventory regarding our relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ! Do you have saving faith? Are you a true believer?

I. Signs of a Living (Real) Faith

1. **Conscious of God & Spiritual Matters** *(1 John 4:6)*
2. **Attentiveness to God's Word** *(John 10:27)*
3. **Works/Service for Jesus** *(James 2:21-26)*
4. **Concern for Souls** *(Luke 8:39)*
5. **Sensitive to Sin** *(1 John 5:18; Acts 24:16)*
6. **Love for Jesus Christ** *(John 8:42)*
7. **Endurance in Faith** *(1 Cor. 15:2; Mark 13:13)*

II. Signs of a Dead Faith

1. **Disinterested in God & Spiritual Matters** *(1 John 4:6)*
2. **No Desire for God's Word** *(2 Tim. 4:4)*
3. **No Works/No Service for Jesus** *(James 2:20; James 2:26)*
4. **No Concern for Souls** *(Acts 13:8)*
5. **Insensitive to Sin** *(1 Tim. 4:2)*
6. **No Love for Jesus Christ** *(1 Cor. 16:22)*
7. **Defection/Apostasy from the Faith** *(1 John 2:19)*

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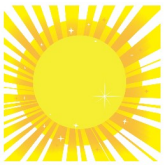

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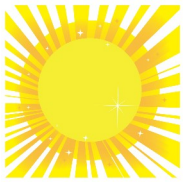

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Sign of a Dead Faith

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2. **Attentiveness to God's Word**
   Joh 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

   1 Peter 2:2-3
   As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

Sign of a Dead Faith

2. **No Desire for God's Word**
   2Ti 4:4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

Sign of a <u>Living</u> (Real) Faith

3. **Works/Service for Jesus**
   Jas 2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

   Jas 2:25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?

Sign of a <u>Dead</u> Faith

3. **No Works/No Service for Jesus**
   Jas 2:20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

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4. **Concern for Souls**
   Lu 8:39 Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him. (cp. Mark 5:1-f)

Sign of a <u>Dead</u> Faith

4. **No Concern for Souls**
   Ac 13:8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

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5. **Sensitive to Sin**
   1Jo 5:18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

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5. **Insensitive to Sin**
   1Ti 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

1 John 5:19
And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. *Ac 24:16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.*

Sign of a <u>Living</u> (Real) Faith

6. Love for Jesus Christ
Joh 8:42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

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6. No Love for Jesus Christ
1Co 16:22 If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.

Sign of a <u>Living</u> (Real) Faith

7. Endurance in Faith
1Co 15:2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

Mr 13:13 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall <u>endure unto the end, the same shall be saved</u> (Saved = delivered via Rapture)

Sign of a <u>Dead</u> Faith

7. Defection/Apostasy from the Faith
1Jo 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

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Introduction:

Illus. Physical exams are good (beneficial). If a problem is found, they allow you to do something about it before it is too late. If you are well, it is an encouragement to you.

Paul said, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith" - II Cor. 13:5 (in order to be in the faith, you must have true (genuine) saving faith).

This message is vitally important. We can be wrong in a lot of areas in life, but if we are wrong in this matter of having a genuine faith, we jeopardize our eternal salvation.

--What kind of faith really saves a person?

--How can a person tell whether or not he is exercising true saving faith?

Def. of faith: Faith is not a feeling, it is a confidence that God's Word is true and a conviction that it must be obeyed.

There are two types of faith: 1) Dead (unprofitable)
2) Living (profitable)

It behooves all of us to take some spiritual inventory regarding our relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ! Do you have saving faith? Are you a true believer?

Sign of a <u>Living</u> (Real) Faith

1. **Conscious of God & Spiritual Matters**
   1John 4:6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.
   v. 6
   "We are of God" - John and all fellow believers who know and believe God's truth, have their spiritual origin in God.

   "He that knoweth God heareth us" - Perhaps some of you today are <u>hearing</u> (accepting) what I am saying. Reason: You know God. Others could care less, because they are not of God.

   Before Saul of Tarsus knew God (through Christ), he did not, would not, could not hear God's messages. He, like those who stoned Stephen, would have stopped his ears at the message about Christ.

   "Truth. . . error" - There are really only two spirits (actually there are only two religions in the world) -
   --God's way - the Truth (Bible Christianity)
   --Man's way - the error (all other cults and world religions)

   There is <u>no in-between</u>.
   There are <u>no</u> other <u>alternatives</u>.
   Jesus said, "Blessed are your ears for they hear."

Sign of a <u>Dead</u> Faith

1. **Disinterested in God & Spiritual Matters**
   1Jo 4:6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

   I John 4:5 - "And the world heareth them" - Why does the world so readily give ear to false teachers?

   "The world recognizes its own people and listens to the message which originates in its own circle" (Reinecker, citing Stott, p. 793).

   The world has been blinded by the "God of this world" - Satan (II Cor. 4:4).

"Birds of a feather flock together."

Illustration: Leprosy – the victim becomes insensitive and literally rubs away body parts.

Sign of a <u>Living</u> (Real) Faith

2. Attentiveness to God's Word

Joh 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

v. 27

"My sheep hear My voice" – He speaks to our hearts by means of His written word.

Note: His sheep <u>only</u> hear His voice, not the voice of a cultist or false prophet (v. 4-5, 8).

Implied by the words "**they follow Me"** is the fact that Jesus leads His sheep (as Psalm 23 states). We are not left to ourselves. He is with us always (Mt. 28:20).

1 Peter 2:2-3

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: <u>If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.</u>

The prerequisite to having a desire for God's Word is to taste of God's grace.

"If so be" - (i.e. "since you have tasted") This first-class condition assumes that they did taste of God's grace.

After that first taste, what they tasted was so refreshing, so satisfying that they should have further interest in what God has.

The more you taste of God's grace, the more you want to taste. The more you read, the more you want to read.

The incentive we have to desire God's Word is the fact that our taste buds have experienced His amazing grace!

You who have tasted (experienced) the truth of the grace of God should have a desire to experience more of His truth.

God is not calling on the lost to desire His Word. The unsaved do not crave His Word -- they abhor it! It's a bore! It doesn't make sense!

It was my experience of God's saving grace, that whet my appetite for His Word. Prior to hearing and believing the Gospel, His Word had no appear to me.

The word ***"taste"*** does not mean a mere sampling, but it means to fully experience. Just as the Lord Jesus *"tasted death for every man"* (Heb. 2:9).

Psalm 34:8 - *"O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him"*

If the Lord is good, His Word must also be good.

If you have tasted of His goodness, taste His Word and you will find it tot be every bit as good (since the Lord and His Word form a unity).

Do you want to hear God's truth? Is there in your heart a desire for spiritual things? Do you love to hear the Bible? If not, then perhaps you are not "of God", have never been born again. You will desire God's Word if you are saved

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2. No Desire for God's Word
2Ti 4:4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

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3. Works/Service for Jesus
Jas 2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

Illustration: a child. "Did you get into the pudding?" He/She says "No" but the evidence is all over his face!
"Abraham" – carried a lot of weight with the <u>Jews</u>

"Justified" – has two meanings in the N.T. –
1) To <u>declare</u> (pronounce) to be righteous before God (Ro. 3:24-28 {Justified Freely by faith}, 5:1; Lk. 18:14 {Publican was justified})
2) To <u>prove</u> (show) to be righteous before men (Mt. 11:19 {Wisdom is justified of her children}; Luke 7:29, 35; Ro. 3:4; I Tim:3:16 {Christ was proven to be righteous be the power of the Spirit. He promised that He would rise again and He did by the Sprit's power})

In this context, James is describing the proof/evidence (showing) of one's righteousness (cp. v. 18 – "shew").
NOTE: God's declaration of Abraham's righteousness (Gen. 15:6) occurred 30 years before he offered up Isaac (Gen. 22).
"Offered up Isaac" – see Heb. 11:17-19 –
God's commanding Abraham to offer up Isaac seemed inconsistent with God's promise to raise up a nation through Isaac – yet Abraham believed and obeyed and by his sacrificial obedience proved that his faith 30 years prior was real! Abraham believed God enough not to question Him when God asked him to offer Isaac.

Abraham's obedience proved the reality of his trust.

Jas 2:25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?

James now uses the opposite extreme (from that of Abraham). People might have said "How do you expect us to live up to Abraham?

"Rahab" – was a Gentile (Canaanite), a woman, immoral, without stature.
Rahab is in the list of heroes of the faith (Heb. 11:31).
See Josh. 2:1-14

"Received" = to welcome and serve
"Sent out" = indicates energetic action; she acted with urgency and personal concern for their safety.
Rahab responded with her mind (she knew her city was condemned), and her emotions ("their hearts melted" – Josh. 2:11), but she also responded with her will – she did something about it (she risked her life to protect the Jewish spies).
Rahab realized her obligation to meet the needs of God's people.

If you had real faith you would:
Love the saints: because God is love and He lives in you (I Jn. 4:7-8)
Love your mate: " " " " " " " " " " " " " "
Forgive – because God forgave you.
Serve – because God has been good to you
Witness – because God has saved you.

Sign of a Dead Faith

3. No Works/No Service for Jesus

Jas 2:20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

"Wilt thou know" = are you willing to know?
"Vain" = hollow, empty. One who has an outward shell of Christianity but no inner reality.

Dead faith is a counterfeit faith that puts a person to sleep (spiritually) with a false confidence of eternal life.

You may have been deluded by the devil! And accepted an imitation.

Jas 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Just as the body (external) without the spirit (internal) is dead, so Faith (internal) without works (external) is dead also.
In His Original creation, God joined the body and Spirit together. In his new creation, He joins faith and deeds together. " What God joins together we dare not put asunder." Blanchard, p,. 175

James is saying: Faith and works are inseparable. A faith that does nothing is of no more value than a lifeless corpse.

Paul's theme : No man can produce justification by good deeds.
James' theme: No man can prove justification without good deeds.

Sign of a <u>Living</u> (Real) Faith

4. Concern for Souls

Lu 8:39 Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him. (cp. Mark 5:1-f)

Ex. The woman at the well

John 4:28-29

The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

Sign of a <u>Dead</u> Faith

4. No Concern for Souls

Ac 13:8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

Elymas was not just a passive hindrance, but one who <u>actively</u> and <u>zealously</u> sought to hinder.

--"Withstood" = imperfect tense. He continually stood in the way. No doubt he was in Paul's face constantly and seductively trying to divert Paul from fulfilling his mission

--"Seeking" = from a root which refers to zeal

Sign of a <u>Living</u> (Real) Faith

5. Sensitive to Sin

1Jo 5:18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

"Is born of God" - perfect passive participle.

1) The new birth begins at a point in time but has continual abiding results (as evident by the perfect tense)

2) The new birth is a work of God (not man) (as evident by the passive voice)

"Sinneth not" - The present tense verb implies a continual or habitual activity. He is not saying that a believer does not have a sin nature or that he does not ever commit acts of sin (I Jn. 1:8; 2:1), but that his life will not be marked by an overwhelming, sold-out-to, unrepentant lifestyle of sin.

"A child of God may sin; but his normal condition is one of resistance to sin" (Findlay, cited by Hiebert, p. 264).

Can such a monster exist as a life-long "unsaintly saint"??

Why is it impossible for a born-again believer to live a lifestyle characterized by sin?

1. He has been <u>transformed</u> ("new creature" - II Cor. 5:17)
2. He has a new <u>nature</u> (Col. 3:10)
3. The <u>Spirit</u> lives inside (Rom. 8:9)
4. God <u>spanks</u> those who are His (Heb. 12:6)

"Keepeth" - to guard; to conscientiously protect

"Himself" - *heauton* - T.R. - a reflexive pronoun, meaning that one who is born of God conscientiously pays careful attention to his relationship to sin.

In this epistle, the born-again believer is identified as one who:

--keeps His "commandments" (2:3, 4; 3:22, 24; 5:2, 3)

--keeps His "word" (2:5)

and now,

--keeps himself

"Keepeth himself" - in v. 21, John again appeals to believers to "keep themselves" from idols.

Prov. 4:23 - Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life.

It is evident that even in the believer's guarding of his heart, it is God doing it in him (Phil. 2:13 - For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

Christ protects us from the enslavement of Satan. We were slaves to sin, but not anymore. Rom. 6:17-18 - But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

Satan cannot recapture the believer. Lk. 22:31-32 -And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired *to have* you, that he may sift *you* as wheat:

32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

"Wicked one" = Satan

"Ruined himself, his (Satan's) whole purpose and effort are to ruin others. Wickedness is the element in which he lives and delights" (Morgan, cited by Hiebert, p. 267).

"Toucheth him not" - In this context, word "toucheth" means "to lay hold of"; to "grab on to"; to "cling tightly to and not let go" – as in John 20:17, where Jesus said to Mary after His resurrection: "Stop clinging onto Me."

"The verb "touch" (*haptetai*) denotes more than a superficial touch, but rather suggests firm contact. In the middle voice, it means "lay hold on" or "fasten to," and thus conveys the picture of the evil one seeking to fasten his grip on the believer. The present tense depicts his persistent effort." (Hiebert, p. 267).

Satan cannot lay hold of us and keep a Christian captive. He cannot harm or damage our relationship to God.

He can make our physical life miserable at times (EX: Job), but cannot do permanent damage to our spiritual life.

Though the wicked one may "lay a hand" on you, he cannot "lay hold of" you (King, p. 123).

The devil <u>can</u> afflict a Christian physically (EX: Paul's thorn in the flesh came by a messenger of Satan—a demon—I Cor. 12). But the devil cannot latch on to and destroy a Christian spiritually.

God puts as it were an invisible wall of protection around his own. Satan may try to dig his grimy fingers into us and bring us captive, but at every attempt his fingers (as it were) collide with that barrier (whether angelic or otherwise - cp. Heb. 1:14). And we elude his grasp by God's grace.

Sign of a <u>Dead</u> Faith

5. Insensitive to Sin

1Ti 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

1 John 5:19
And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

"In wickedness" - lit. in the Wicked (one); a reference to Satan as in v. 18.

Lit. "The entire world lies in the wicked one." The imagery is of the world lying unconscious in the devil's lap (lulled to sleep – "Rockabye Baby" - oblivious to their dangerous position and predicament).

The unconverted are passively under the complete control and domination of the wicked one. At any time he wants, he pulls the strings and his people like puppets obey his bidding.

Therefore, it does not surprise me when the world acts wickedly.

What are the marks of someone who is lying in the comfortable lap of Satan?

1. They are very <u>content</u> to be without Christ and His salvation.
2. They assume (by their seemingly comfortable life) that <u>all is well</u> (nothing to worry about)
3. They do <u>not want to be disturbed</u>! When you shake their cradle with the gospel, they get upset.
4. They are very <u>sleepy</u> (in a deep fog) regarding spiritual things.
   [They are not turned in; if they come to a Bible-preaching church, they sit there like zombies and remain unaffected by the Bible's truth.]

The world (in its masses of humanity) will always be "nonresistant" to the deceptions of Satan.
"The <u>whole</u> world" - no one excluded; even those who assume they are "their own man" and under no one's control or influence, are deceived by Satan as he smiles at their delusion and cradles them in his arms.

Ac 24:16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

Sign of a <u>Living</u> (Real) Faith

6. Love for Jesus Christ

Joh 8:42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

Loving Jesus Christ is one of the main marks of a child of God.

The Scripture teaches that if one does not love Jesus Christ, he is headed for eternal destruction and damnation.

What a love for Jesus Christ Paul came to have! He who formerly hated Jesus Christ and sought to persecute anyone who belonged to Him (Acts 9:1-4) would later come to love Him. (Paul's love is reflected in all of his epistles, but mainly in his lifestyle devoted to Christ).

The acid test of loving Jesus Christ is found in obedience to His Word: "IF ye love Me, keep My commandments."

The reason we love Jesus Christ is because of His oneness with God the Father. He came from the Father's presence and was sent to the earth by the Father's authority.

As 1 John 5:1 teaches, if you love the Father, you will love the Son. You can't love one without loving the other also.

Do you love Jesus?

--When we sing songs of praise and adoration to Him, is your heart in it? (EX: "Oh, How I Love Jesus"; "Jesus is the Sweetest Name I Know")

--Do you desire to spend time in His presence? (as Mary the sister of Martha did)

--Are you motivated to live for Him, tell of Him, give to Him, and glorify Him? (Paul called himself a slave of Jesus Christ?

Sign of a <u>Dead</u> Faith

6. No Love for Jesus Christ

1Co 16:22 If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.

"Love" = *phileo* (affection).

A curse is pronounced on anyone who does not have a heart for Jesus.

Everyone who gets saved will have *agape & phileo* love for Christ.

Note: the rhyming, transliterated words ***"Anathema, Maranatha"***

If a person loves Jesus Christ, he will also love His appearing (II Tim. 4:8).
If he cannot say "Maranatha" ("Our Lord, come"), perhaps it is because he loves the world, or his flesh and not the Lord.

Sign of a <u>Living</u> (Real) Faith

7. Endurance in Faith

1Co 15:2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

"If ye keep in memory" = If you firmly hold on to (cp. Jn. 8:31; Col. 1:23)
Anyone who departs from the faith never really believed it to begin with (I Tim. 4:1).
Only those who hold firmly to Christ's Word are His disciples indeed (John 8:31; cp II Cor.13:5; II Jn. 9)
"Our salvation is kept by Christ's holding us fast, not primarily by our holding Him fast. Our holding onto Him is evidence that He is holding onto us" (MacArthur, p.399)
Mr 13:13 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall <u>endure unto the end, the same shall be saved</u> (Saved = delivered via Rapture)

Sign of a <u>Dead</u> Faith

7. Defection/Apostasy from the Faith

1Jo 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

"They went out" - active voice - they of their own volition went out.
--They left us, but didn't belong to us (they were not part of us [Christ's body] because they were never part of Christ).
"Continued with us" - a mark of a true child of God is his relentless desire to remain in fellowship with other believers.
One who abhors the house of God manifests that he is not part of the family of God.

“Manifest” - Many (for a time) slide into a fellowship of believers at a local church, appear to be saved, go through the motions of Christianity, only to later defect (never to be seen or heard from again) – and thereby reveal (out in the open) that they were never truly one with us in Christ.

These heretics did <u>not</u> merely go out from one church into another, but as Judas Iscariot, they defected altogether (Hiebert, p. 110).
“Their departure proved that they had a different spiritual origin; they belonged to another camp.” (Hiebert, p. 111).
The defection of the heretics (no doubt) had the effect of <u>purifying</u> the church (Hiebert, p. 111).