



THE  
**MARRIAGE**  
ENRICHMENT  
BOOK

**MATTHEW BLACK**

**2 | how to know  
you are God's**

*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus  
for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that  
we should walk in them.*

**EPHESIANS 2:10**

**C**hristians are God's workmanship, literally His masterpiece. God's fingerprints are all over His children. One of the most important books in the Bible defending the need for every Christian to display a life transformed by God's touch is the book of First John.

This is a letter written by the Apostle John to churches who were confused about what makes a person a Christian, or "born again." John's encouragement in the book is that people can know during their lives that they truly are God's child and that they will be accepted by Him on the day when we see Him face to face.

The Gnostics taught several erroneous things. They taught that Jesus was not God and did not become the Christ until just before he went to the cross. They taught that he was actually corrupted with a sinful nature. They believed that the physical could never be redeemed and that only the

spirit or soul was good. They concluded that you could act however you wanted and still be a Christian.

John writes the letter of 1 John to demonstrate that there is a radical transformation that occurs in the life of all of God's people. His purpose is to encourage true Christians in holiness and to give each of God's children joy and assurance in knowing the marks of God's work in their lives. There are at least eleven of these marks or "fingerprints" of God in every believer's life.

### **Evidences of True Salvation**

The essential point of 1 Jn. is that there are certain evidences and marks whereby you will definitely know if you have experienced the new birth.

John Piper summarizes the purpose of 1 Jn. by compiling all the reasons John has said he has written this letter. Piper's synopsis is helpful: "Summing up all the reasons for writing 1 Jn. goes like this: I am writing because you are true believers, but there are deceivers in your midst, and I want you to be rock-solid confident in your present possession of eternal life as regenerate children of God, so that you are not drawn away after sin. And if this letter has that effect my joy will be complete. So at the heart of his reason for writing is the desire to help them know they are born again—that they now have new spiritual life. Eternal life." The marks that follow are evidences of the Holy Spirit. They are like "God's fingerprints" on our lives.

### **1 - I Desire Intimate Fellowship with God**

Every Christian has within the spiritual compulsion and hunger for God's holy presence. it's like food! To look into the face of Jesus through prayer and the Word is a thrill!

1 John 1:3-4, “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. And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.”

## **2 - I Can No Longer Live Comfortably in My Sin**

If spiritual intimacy is like a food for the Christian, then sin is like a cancer. All you want to do as a child of God is get rid of it—keep it as far away as possible.

1 John 1:6, “If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”

## **3 - I Desire to Obey God from My Heart**

Our feelings and our circumstances change. As true Christians, we choose to glorify God no matter what we feel like.

1 John 2:3, “And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.”

## **4 - I Want to Live Separate from the World**

If you are a believer, you have rendered yourself dead to this world of sin. Specifically, you do not live for, and thereby worship the world’s pleasures, possessions, and pride. The world offers a false happiness. We know that true happiness is found in our holy fellowship with Christ.

1 John 2:15-17, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”

D. L. Moody put it best: “The man that is popular with the world is not a friend of Jesus. You cannot serve two masters. The world hates Christ, and if you are a friend of the world you cannot be a friend of His. You may be sure that something is wrong with you when everybody is your friend.”

### **5 - I Want to Confess Christ before All the World**

True Christians openly confess that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven. A true believer not only believes that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Ancient of Days come in human flesh to redeem guilty sinners, but each believer has the deep desire to confess the Person of Jesus Christ boldly.

1 John 2:23, “No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.”

Jesus essentially said the same thing, “So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven” (Mt. 10:32-33).

### **6 - I Long for Christ's 2nd Coming to Rescue Me**

The genuine child of God knows that one day, we shall be like Jesus! Our unsaved neighbors are looking for the next great thing in fashion or among the celebrities or the movies or games or technology or the next great job opportunity. As Christians, we want to use all that God gives us for the glory of God (including our technology, how we dress, our job, our family), but our great focus is the return of Christ. The focus is so consuming that it will actually purify the one who hopes in His return. We are very soon going to see Jesus, our great God and Savior, face to face.

1 John 3:1-3, “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are... Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.”

### **7 - I Suffer Rejection Because of My Faith**

Every true Christian should expect that his new pattern of life will be rejected in some way by the world. The apostle John says we should not be surprised.

1 John 3:13, “Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you.” Jesus said, “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you” (Jn. 15:18).

### **8 - I Live Life Together with My Forever Family**

Christ Himself had said earlier to the apostle John and the other eleven disciples, “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (Jn. 13:35). There are over 35 commands in the New Testament for Christians to live life together and serve “one another.”

1 John 5:1, “Everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.” 1 John 1:6, “if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”

### **9 - God Answers My Prayers**

One who is genuinely born again has such a union and closeness with the Lord that he is constantly breathing out prayers to God and seeing those prayers answered on a continual basis. It is God's indwelling Spirit, the Comforter, who

compels the Christian to pray instead of fret in times of great trial.

We should remind ourselves often of Phil. 4:6-7, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

1 John 3:21-22, "We have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him."

### **10 - I Have Discernment Between Truth & Error**

True believers have the God-given spiritual discernment capability to tell when someone is teaching falsely especially when it comes to who Jesus is and what He has done on the Cross. The Bible – not feelings, trends, or what is "cool" – determines the standard of truth and practice. A person without God's indwelling presence cannot discern the things of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:14) and is often drawn into error.

1 John 4:6, "We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error."

### **11 - I Experience the Presence of the Holy Spirit**

"By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit" (1 Jn. 4:13).

It is through the Spirit of God that we can believe and repent. He gives us a new heart and a new spirit by His Spirit (Eze. 36:26-27). Through the Spirit, Christ's presence is within me, and He says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Heb. 13:5). What comfort this is for the true Christian.

**These Fingerprints Don't Save Us**

These marks of God in our life do not make us God's children, they show that we are God's children.

The children of a mom and dad did nothing to gain the family likeness. Being "born" is a gift. And being "born again" into God's family is a gift from God.

St. Paul explains this in Titus 2:4-7, "For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

He tells us in Ephesians 2:8-10, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

**What if I'm Not Sure?**

Often in life we are on a sort of "hamster wheel" that is the same thing every day with very little purpose. One day our we will have no more energy left, and the hamster wheel will come to an end. As you know, none of us were meant to live merely for the "hamster wheel." We were made for more than this. If we are asleep to this greater purpose, we need to be awakened.

Again, St. Paul tells us how this happens in Ephesians 2:1-7, “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup>in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— <sup>3</sup>among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.<sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— <sup>6</sup>and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

How does one who is “dead in sins” become “alive in Christ”? How does one who has strayed from the Lord come back to Him or become a member of His family?

### **Remember, Salvation is a Love Story**

Before you and your spouse can have love to give to one another, you need to first receive the fullness of God's love. God's love is a gift that you need to receive. Jesus told us that in order to receive His gift of salvation, we need to “repent” of ignoring God in our sins and “believe” that God sent His Son to die for our sins (Mark 1:15).

### **Christ Died For You**

“God is love” (1 Jn. 4:8), but this does not mean He lowers His standard of perfect holiness. God has provided a way to satisfy His holy nature and His righteous wrath against our sin. “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God” (1 Pet.



3:18). Jesus Christ, God's perfect Son, was crucified in your place and paid the penalty of eternal hell for you, if you will believe. Jesus said, "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:32). "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6).

### **Jesus Gives Us His Perfect Record**

God "made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21). When you believe that Jesus died for your sins and in your place, Jesus exchanges your record of sin with His perfect record of righteousness. You would then have a perfect record for the Day of Judgment.

### **God Will Make You New!**

When you believe in Christ, God also promises to transform you! He says, "...from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes" (Eze. 36:25-27). All who are part of God's kingdom have been born again. Jesus said, "unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Jn. 3:3).

### **How to Repent**

Repenting to God does not mean we have to punish ourselves for our sin. To repent literally means "to have a new perspective." If you are broken because of your sin and turn to Jesus for mercy, and He will save you. Repent and turn to Him. "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up" (Jms. 4:9-10). Say to God, "Against you, you

only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight..." (Psa. 51:4). "Jesus says, "I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:10).

### **Trust in Christ**

Jesus says: "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him." (Jn. 3:36). "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn. 3:16).

Believe that Jesus gave His precious life's blood *for you*. To all human beings, "the Holy Spirit says, Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts..." (Heb. 3:7-8).

St. John says: "But to all who did receive him [Jesus], who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (Jn. 1:12-13). "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). "And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price" (Rev. 22:17).

### **Conclusion**

For those who are truly born again, the eleven marks mentioned in this chapter will begin to show up in your life. It is not that these marks are present in full maturity in the life of every believer. That is not the case. But there is some indication of each one of these marks in the life of every true believer. Each person will have different degrees of these evidences, but they will all be present in one form or another.

As true believers, each of us wants to grow and change into Christ's image as soon as possible, but let me give you a

reminder from Martin Luther that that we will never attain full maturity until we see Jesus face to face. He says:

“This life, therefore, is not righteousness but growth in righteousness, not health but healing, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise. We are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it; the process is not yet finished but it is going on. This is not the end but it is the road; all does not yet gleam in glory but all is being purified.”

### **Questions**

1. Based on the “fingerprints” of God listed in the book of 1 John, where are you in your relationship with Jesus?
  - Is God calling you?
  - Have you been listening to Him?
  - Are you ready commit your life to Jesus?

### **Homework**

1. Read Ephesians 2:1-10 or John 3 once each day until we meet again.
2. If you are not sure if you have been born again, find a Christian friend or pastor in the church and ask them to show you how you can know you have eternal life.
3. If you have assurance God has saved you, take some time to write out your testimony of salvation using the following outline – (try to use Scripture in each point to describe what happened)
  - My life before Christ
  - How I came to know Christ
  - My life since I came to know Christ
  - My confession of Christ, i.e. “Jesus is my....”