

## Criterion for Believing

**1 Jn 5:13, in the KJV (which is the correct reading)** reads “These things [i.e., the whole epistle] I have written unto you that believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life, *and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God.*” John, as he wrote in his gospel in Jn 2:23-24 and 5:24, here says that some may not have believed *in their heart* as Rom 10:9-10 says and if not, after hearing this letter read to them and evaluating the whole essence of the letter, may come to the certain conclusion that they have “believed” but not “unto Messiah” (Jn 3:15; 1 Jn 5:12,14, 15).

So those who say they believe, as in 1 Jn 5:13a, and claim to have passed out of death and into life as Jn 5:24, must “pass the bar” of 1 Jn 3:14, as the criterion is defined in verse 16 (criterion = *a standard by which a judgment can be based*, i.e., the basis, foundation, test, standard, proof, model, the pattern, which is Acts 4:32-37; Mk 9:11-12; Jn 13:34-35; 17:23) or else they have only believed in their minds, and not in their hearts. There are two kinds of “believing” — 1) in the mind (as those in Jn 2:23-24); and 2) in the heart (as those in Rom 10:9-10).

### Simon the Sorcerer

**The story of Simon the Sorcerer illustrates the mental** “believing” (Acts 8:9-23). Simon was a man skilled in the practice of magic arts in the city of Samaria. Verse 12 says Philip preached the good news of the kingdom of God in the name of Yahshua the Messiah to those in this region, baptizing men and women alike. Simon (verse 13) himself was one who “believed” and was “baptized” after hearing the message and continued on with Philip, observing signs and great miracles taking place through him. Simon “believed,” but his belief was obviously only *intellectual*. Simon’s *true condition* was exposed by the Apostle Peter (verse 20-23). After supposedly “believing” he was still in the “gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity.” Simon was *trapped within his mind*, thinking he “believed”, but he did not have the *power of the Holy Spirit* to overcome deep-set bitterness and the bondage of iniquity. He “believed” the message, seeing the signs and miracles he saw at the hand of Philip (Jn 2:23-25), yet craved the power and authority that was demonstrated through the apostles (verse 18-19). He had not yet believed *in his heart* (Rom 10:9-10), for Peter saw that Simon’s “heart was not right before God.” Some in our midst have “believed” also, but how could their hearts be “right” while immersed in deep-set *bitterness* — still under the *bondage to sin*?

Simon *envied* those who had authority and coveted this power and authority for himself. He craved *recognition* and *admiration* because of his great gifting. His motive was to still be someone “great” as he had always considered himself to be (verse 9-10). He was still in “bondage” to sin – thinking power and authority was something to be gained by *natural* means (verse 18). He was still a natural, fallen man, even though he “believed.” Peter said the *intention* of his heart needed to be *forgiven*. His *motive* was not right when he “believed.” His believing did not release him from *bitterness*, nor *bondage to sin*. “Gall of bitterness” is *long-lasting resentment* and rancor. He was *condemned* in his heart when exposed, for he knew his *intent* was not to be “right/clean” before God (verse 21). How could someone who *truly* believed remain in bitterness and the bondage to sin? If one truly believes in his heart, he is freed from any *obligation to the flesh* (Rom 8:12-13), and is able to *love* and *forgive* even if *unjustly treated* (Mt 18:32-35; Lk 17:4; 1 Pet 2:18-25; 1 Cor 13:4-7; 1 Jn 3:14). If we truly *believe*, we can *truly* love according to the commandment (1 Jn 3:14,18,19).

Bitterness is a *self-defense mechanism*. It is *self-justifying*, while *condemning others*. Simon was a person torn inside with bitterness and envy towards others who appeared “great” in his eyes. His *craving for authority* and *recognition* came from his lust for power and prestige.

The story does not go on to say whether Simon was forgiven or not, but there may have been hope that Simon came to “truly believe” once his real *condition* was exposed, once and for all. It does not say whether he did or not. Yet, if his heart *condemned* him as Peter spoke these piercing words directly to him, then he may have reached repentance and was truly saved. It seems by verse 24 that

Simon could have been saying this in *contriteness of heart*, judging the intent of his own heart as “wrong” before God, and desiring total forgiveness for his sins. In this way, his response to Peter would have been what John was urging those who “believed” in 1 Jn 5:13 to do. In other words, that they would *judge themselves* truly, realizing they had not yet passed out of death into life – *the life* of the Son of God (1 Jn 3:14; 5:12).

If someone can justify himself, even though *objectively* (by the Word of God) he is condemned, if he continues in that deception about himself he will eventually become a servant of the evil one. They call darkness light. They are deceived by their own evil heart. Satan’s servants go on just as “happy as can be” even though they know they have no true *confidence* they have obeyed our Master’s Words, having passed out of death into life (Jn 5:24; 1 Jn 3:14-16,21). They are condemned by their own “wicked thoughts and deeds” and love only in “tongue” (if that), but not in truth and deed. What they say they believe does not match up to the *reality* of what our Master commanded from his disciples (Jn 13:34-35).

### **The Reason we are Saved**

**1 Jn 5:14-15 shows us the reason that we were saved, to accomplish His will as Isa 53:10, that the pleasure of YHWH would prosper** as evidenced by our *bearing abundant fruit* as Jn 15:5-8 says. We were saved to do what is *pleasing to Him* (1 Jn 3:22), that our petitions could be heard in heaven when we lift up the morning and evening sacrifice (Rom 12:1-2). We all pray for His will to be done (Mt 6:9-11). So, 1 Jn 5:14-15 implies that if we do not have this *confidence in Him* our life is void of purpose (Eph 4:11-16). We are either *not saved at all* or we are not doing the things that *please Him* (1 Jn 3:22; 1 Jn 3:14,16-18,19-21). So if our hearts do condemn us then God also does, and this is the reason John wrote this letter (1 Jn 5:13).

So, now you (whoever you are), whose heart condemns you, can be saved from condemnation (Rom 8:1,4), for there is no condemnation for those who walk according to the Spirit (1 Jn 1:6-7). Otherwise, there is no way you can have confidence before Him. 1 Jn 5:14 (#3954) – If we are saved and freed from condemnation, we will have confidence and boldness as Heb 3:6 and 4:16 speak of. We are to explain 1 Jn 3:20-21 to people on this basis. That is, in light of the confidence (#3954) a true believer has, knowing he has passed out of death and into life.

If 1 Tim 2:1-9, especially verse 8, is not the case in any given community, dysfunction takes over and the people *go wild*. Pr 29:18 — Wherever there is “no prophetic vision” the people go unrestrained. As you can see from the last verse in Judges, the people were left to do what was right in their own eyes. If the teacher who teaches this is taught by the prophets (receiving “prophetic vision” and passing it on) then we can expect a revolution in our minchot and tribes, to start the Race on the Rock (Mt 7:24; Lk 6:48-49).

### **Dysfunction**

**The example in Mt 18 of the proper functioning of a community brings clarity to every situation. If a brother seems to be doing something wrong and is seen by someone else in the community, and if that is taken care of according to the true pattern of Mt 18, then order is established** (Jms 5:19-20; 2 Tim 2:23-26). It is only after lots of “talk” is passed from one person to another and another, to try to figure out what to do about this sinning brother, that *dysfunction* starts. If the leaders must have a meeting before a sinner can be talked to, then the community is bogged down in meetings and every situation becomes a *major ordeal*. We must come to the place that the communities function normally, with brothers and sisters *loving one another* enough to go to one another as we are commanded (Eph 4:15; Mt 18:15). Then we can come to the minchah with a good conscience, *believing*.

The way 1 Jn 5:13 is written in the NKJV is the right way, except for the addition of the word *continue*. I t is in italics to show that it was (incorrectly) added in by the translator, because they did not understand the verse. 1 Jn 5:12 is absolutely fact, as we have said. Eternal life is a *free gift*, but who does He give it to? What John says in 1 Jn 5:13 is his concluding statement or his summation, his final

argument. It is to *affirm* those who “believe unto Him” as Jn 3:15 reads in John’s gospel, and to show others that their belief is *not* unto Him (not unto salvation), as those in Jn 2:23-25, so that they may, after all, put their total trust in the Son and receive Him as Jn 5:24 describes and 1 Jn 3:14 affirms, and is confirmed by the Spirit who is given to them (2 Cor 5:15,17; 1 Jn 3:23-24).

#### **Affirmation and Confirmation**

**Rom 8:14,16,17 — Verse 17 is the affirmation and confirmation, as the word “if” indicates, just as Col 1:23 and Mt 24:13 and Jn 15:8 are qualified. The whole New Testament confirms our true belief as 1 Jn 5:13 says about John’s letter, through the “proofs” of Jn 15:8 and Jn 14:15 and 1 Jn 2:4 and Heb 4:12, etc., etc., etc. Our Master, who is the Word of God, is the one who discerns what kind of “belief” we have, and entrusts us with His Spirit accordingly. Remember, the two words in Jn 2:23-24 translated as “believe” and “commit” or “entrust” are both #4100 in the Greek.**

**Paul describes the dysfunctional community in 1 Cor 11:17-34. Verse 19 speaks of *self-willed divisions*.** Verses 17-34 is just one example of dysfunction of the Body of Messiah in the place Paul addresses in 1 Cor 1:2 and in every other place or locality to which this letter was sent. Paul pleaded with them in *every place*, as in 1 Tim 2:8, that it would be so there as described in 1 Cor 1:10. Any other expression would be disorder, a malfunctioning body (1 Cor 12:12).

Paul meant what he said in 1 Cor 11:19, that the factions are destructive to the Temple (1 Cor 3:16-17), and that those who are genuine, approved workmen may become known (2 Tim 2:15). In the New American Bible it reads “a workman who causes no disgrace... imparting the word of truth without deviation” (1 Jn 2:27-28).

Whoever causes *divisions* (a factious person, as someone who is *unwilling to forgive* his brother, but holds a “grudge”, Tit 3:10-11; Pr 6:19) is an abomination to God. But in 1 Cor 11:19 Paul says that there must be divisions among you (1 Cor 11:17-19). How else will the ones that are *approved or authentic* be known among us? It is the separation of the authentic from the inauthentic, and the final revelation of the difference, as 1 Cor 11:28-32. Those who cause *strife* are not peacemakers and will not be known as the *Sons of God* (Mt 5:9). Those who cause strife among the Edah distort the witness (Mt 12:30), and Mt 5:3-10 can never be said about them.

So, those who sow *seeds of division* are tares, planted by the evil one (Jn 8:44; 2 Cor 11:4; Mt 13:36-43). Those who cause this division by planting seeds of *discord* will finally be uprooted and burned in the fire (Mt 13:49-50). So those who cause discord, the discordant ones, serve to *highlight* the authentic sons of God (1 Jn 5:12).

#### **Confidence vs. Pride**

**1 Jn 3:18-19 and 20-21 — If our hearts do not condemn us we have confidence toward God, but if our hearts do condemn us we do not have confidence toward God; we maybe loving in word or in tongue only. So, then we do not actually *know* we have passed out of death and into life (verse 14) unless we have the confirmation of the Holy Spirit (1 Jn 3:14 and 24). 1 Jn 3:17-18 and Jms 2:14-16 present the two kinds of belief. In 1 Jn 3:24 the Holy Spirit confirms our assurance and confidence that we have passed out of death and into life only *when we are loving one another* as 1 Jn 3:23 (as we are commanded). 1 Jn 2:4 — Don’t you think that one’s heart would condemn him if this were so? That is, unless he be dull and calloused already, as Satan’s servant, and is being filled with a false sense of security and confidence, as a tare becomes when fully grown (pride as Satan’s sin). Mt 13:25-30 — The wheat grows in humility, the tares in pride. Mt 5:5 — Meekness, represented by the wheat, does not connote *weakness*, but rather *strength under control*. It has the meaning of *humility* and *self-discipline*. As the Master taught in Jn 12:26, the Father honors the one who serves Him where He is. The one who serves Him is *highlighted* among all who do not serve our Master and Savior in humility. To be *honored* and to be *highlighted* is the same. 1 Cor 11:19 — *Distinguished* among the dishonorable servants (Mt 25:30) with recognized worth, worthy of Messiah, as in Rev 3:4, recognized as valid. *Highlight* means a part on which *light is brightest*.**

*Honor* in Jn 12:26 is to prize as valuable to Him (#5091), suitable to Him, as a Son of His right hand (Mal 3:16-18). Mal 3:18 says it very clearly, as does Dan 12:10. Do you understand?

### **Cravings of the Worthless**

The proud ones who strive for recognition, respect, and admiration are still in the bondage of bitterness and iniquity (Acts 8:23) — under the dominion of a *worthless spirit*. They are craving *recognition* only to soothe their own worthlessness. It is amazing how some of the most *gifted* people are beset with worthlessness. Perhaps their bitterness is over not being recognized, so they strive all the more, but still aren't satisfied because spiritual leaders sense their strife and are hindered from trusting or recognizing them, and so their bitterness and frustration increases, plunging them into a downward spiral. In their strife to be recognized they *neglect* their children, who then grow up without their much-needed attention, and become bitter themselves, etc., and disqualify their fathers all the more with their outlandish behavior. Unless the worthless spirit is exposed and the person can name it and renounce it, he will never put it under foot. God is not *fooled* (Heb 4:13; Gal 6:7; Jn 2:24), nor can we be, for by what a man is *overcome*, by this he is *enslaved* (2 Pet 2:19). The humble are not overcome, but receive *grace* and become *wise* (Jms 4:6; Mt 25:2-4).

There are five wise and five fools (Pr 1:7).

So, remember Jms 5:19-20 and 2 Tim 2:23-26.