

## **BIBLICAL ASSURANCE**

In Romans 8:16 Paul says that “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our Spirit that we are the children of God”. But the Spirit does not work in isolation. As the Spirit of truth, He ministers truth to the believer’s heart consistent with the Word of God (Jn. 14:17; 15:16; 16:13). People often quote 1 John 5:13 saying we can KNOW we have eternal life.

### **1 John 5:13 (NASB)**

**13** These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life.

It is certainly true that as believers we can KNOW we have eternal life. But it is important to note that the “you may know” of 1 John 5:13 is based on “These things I have written” meaning the “know” of 5:13 is based on all the previous “knows” in the letter.

For example, in 1 John 2:3 he writes, “Now by this we know that we know Him if we keep His commandments.” One can’t claim the “know” of 5:13 if they can’t claim the “know” of 2:3. In 3:14 John says, “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.” Again, one cannot claim the “know” of 5:13 if the “know” of 3:14 is not true.

1 John presents a series of “knowing” tests by which one can KNOW they have eternal life. And based on this John states in 1 John 5:13 that he wrote these things to those who believe that they might know they have eternal life.

True faith demonstrates itself in the ways John has brought out in the book. And those living in accordance with these evidences can claim the “know” of 1 John 5:13. In 1 John 2:20 John says believers have an anointing from the Spirit by which we “know all things” related to discerning who and what is of the truth (cf. 1 John 2:24-27).

The fact that a person is a believer will (generally and normally) be obvious. 1 John 3:7-10 indicates that it will be obvious in the fruit that is borne out in the life (cf. Mt. 12:33). If a person is truly saved one would expect confirmation evidences that go along with salvation (cf. Heb. 6:9). The major evidence of salvation relates to the “loves” of our life, and our practice tells on our heart.

The Bible says, “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.” (2 Cor. 13:5)

“Sense of sin and deep hatred of it, faith in Christ and love to Him, delight in holiness and longing after more of it, love for God’s people and distaste for the things of the world, – these are the signs and evidences which always accompany conversion.” - **J.C. Ryle**

What Ryle says is in keeping with the “that you may know” of 1 John 5:13. “That you may know” is not in isolation of a changed heart and life as seen through the lens of 1<sup>st</sup> John.