

## **THE KNOWING TEST**

The Gospel of John was written with an evangelistic purpose so that people might believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and thereby have eternal life (John 20:31). 1<sup>st</sup> John was written so that believers might have assurance of eternal life (1 John 5:13).

John writes 1<sup>st</sup> John to clarify what THE RIGHT KIND OF FAITH looks like. He uses the word “know” in one form or another 40 times. Fellowship is emphasized 4 times in chapter one, but after that, the dominant emphasis in the book is on KNOWING.

1<sup>st</sup> John presents a series of tests that distinguish true faith from that which is bogus, by which one can KNOW they have eternal life. The letter builds to the purpose statement of 1 John 5:13, where John says he wrote to believers “that you may know that you have eternal life.”

The tests in 1<sup>st</sup> John present a series of contrasts that serve to, 1) give evidence of true faith and hence, assurance to the true believer (cf. 5:13); and 2) to expose those who are bogus professors (cf. 2:26). Note the following series of tests:

1. ***The Apostolic Fellowship Test – 1:1-4***
2. ***The Perspective On Sin Test – 1:5-2:2***
3. ***The Obedience Test – 2:3-6***
4. ***The Love of the Brethren Test – 2:7-11***
5. ***The Spiritual Growth Test – 2:12-14***
6. ***The Love of the World Test – 2:15-17***
7. ***The Apostate Test – 2:18-23***
8. ***The Abiding Test – 2:24-29***
9. ***The Hope Test – 3:1-3***
10. ***The Righteousness Test – 3:4-10***
11. ***Love of the Brethren Test – 3:11-24***
12. ***The Confession Test – 4:1-6***
13. ***The Love Test – 4:7-21***
14. ***The Belief Test – 5:1-13***

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

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

John’s goal is that every true believer might have assurance of their salvation. There is a difference between security and assurance. The

weakest believer has security in Christ but may lack assurance. When it comes to assurance, there are two issues.

First, there is false assurance. People, such as the false teachers in view in the book of 1<sup>st</sup> John, claim to be Christian and avow that they are saved, but the problem is that they consistently fail the tests brought out in the book.

On the other hand, there is God-given, true assurance based on the criteria spelled out in the book of 1 John. It is possible to be weak in this area, and that is why John writes to strengthen the true believers.