

PASSING THE TEST

DECEMBER 28, 2025

2 COR. 13:5

Why did Paul instruct them to do a self-examination to determine whether or not they are in the faith? He knew many struggled with knowing the certainty of their salvation. There are many who are saved but think they're not; and many think they are but are not. So, he instructs them to examine themselves to be sure they pass the test.

1 JOHN 5:12-13

John's purpose is to give us certainty about our salvation. To give us assurance, not hope. What's the test?

What It's Not

It's not evaluating our performance. Paul didn't say to examine our behavior or spiritual performance. He says to examine ourselves to be sure we are in the faith. He says to assess our faith or our believing. He doesn't ask "Are you behaving like a Christian?" but "Are you believing like a Christian?" Do you believe in Christ alone for your salvation?

In Context

2 Corinthians was written to address certain super-apostles that crept into the church to undermine Paul's authority and apostleship. How can someone so weak and unimpressive really be an apostle?

- **2 COR. 12:5-10 NLT** Paul's response is powerful. His strength comes from Christ, not self. If you think I'm disqualified because my strength is in Christ, not myself, then maybe you need to examine yourselves. Are you trusting in self or Christ?

Root not Fruit

JOHN 15:1-5

The self-examination Paul instructed them to conduct targeted the root, not fruit of what they believed. Paul knew fruit can be faked and behavior can be managed, but faith is the root of our spiritual lives, **COL. 2:5-7**.

Questions

- Do I believe Jesus alone saves? Not Jesus plus...

- Is my trust in Christ alone for my righteousness?
- Are Christ's finished works sufficient to save me?
- Do I see myself weak and in need of His strength? **EPH. 6:10**
- Is my peace with God based on what I've done, or in what Christ has done for me? **ROM. 5:1 NLT**
- Am I saved by good works or for good works? **EPH. 2:8-10 NLT.**

Test Results

- Our self-examination should always drive us to Jesus, not to self.
- It should produce humility, **LUKE 18:10-14 NLT.** If our faith is in our performance, we'll never have true peace.
- Our works will be genuine not fake, because they are an outflow of the life of the vine, **JOHN 15:5 NLT.**

CONCLUSION: To examine our fruit alone to determine if we're in the faith can lead to guilt and condemnation. By examining the root, we pass the test and know we are in the faith and have eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.