

1 John 5:10-12

[1 John 5:9-12](#) says,

1Jn 5:9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. ¹⁰ He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. ¹¹ And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹² He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

In the first declaration in this passage, we saw that God Himself has given testimony to the reality of His Son Jesus Christ and the salvific mandate associated with His name. The next witness occurs in [1 John 5:10](#),

1Jn 5:10 He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.

The second declaration is what we want to call an “internal” witness, a supernatural heart-felt witness and testimony that has been born on the heart of the true believer by the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit. Now, immediately someone is going to say that this is much too subjective – a kind of internal “feeling” that someone has. Feelings, they say, come and go and are very untrustworthy. Certainly that is accurate, but this is not some kind of emotional feeling, nor should it be understood as a feeling. This is clearly a “**witness**” from God. This is an objective reality and testimony that is placed in the heart of the believer at the new birth. It is the same Greek word “*martyria*” that was studied earlier and it clearly refers to someone providing clear and undeniable evidence to someone else. I like the way the Amplified Bible states it. It says that God’s witness is a “**divine attestation**”, a certification given to someone. I.e., God is attesting and testifying to something to and for the believer. The NIV, NASB, and ESV all call it a “**testimony**” that God has given.

If someone pays off their home or car, the bank will give them a document certifying that they have completely paid off their debt. Whenever I travel, I have a passport that certifies who I am and in what country I live. So, what John is saying in this verse is that God Himself has placed a kind of spiritual certification within the true believer so that they can know that they are saved. This is not some kind of arbitrary and fleeting kind of emotion that may be with us today, but gone tomorrow. Not at all. To the contrary, this is a genuine and divinely induced testimony placed on the heart of the true believer so that they can know with certainty that they are saved. If someone “claiming” to be saved has never sensed this or known this in their life, then in reality they have never been saved. This is an internal and divine witness, testimony, and certification given by God.

At a personal level, I can honestly and transparently testify that from the moment that I was saved to this very day that I have never doubted, questioned, or disbelieved this strong internal witness of God the Holy Spirit in my heart relative to the reality of the person and work of Jesus Christ – not one single time. When God Almighty does something in a person’s heart, it is NEVER subjective – never. We cannot impose a kind of failure motif on God where He does something, but in actuality it is not effective. In reality, that is actually impossible. When God does a work in and for an individual, that work is

always successful and it is always known and understood. This is the issue with easy-believism. People are lured into a pseudo-salvation, but they are never truly converted. Emotionally, they may feel very good about whatever they have experienced, but in reality many have never truly come to Christ and when trials and difficulties invade their life they find themselves doubting God's goodness and falling back into their carnality. If you have been saved, then you have this **"witness"** in your life, and it has made an indelible spiritual mark on your heart.

This particular work of God, far from being subjective, is the most objective reality that can occur in a person's life – the work of God within them. God never lies, He never says something that is not true. God never misleads or deceives. It is impossible for God to do that. This reality concerning the very nature of God is exactly what John stated in [1 John 1:5](#) when he declared,

1Jn 1:5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

Whatever witness that God provides is true, trustworthy, accurate, dependable, and reliable – and thank God that He has placed His unchanging truth on the believer's very heart. That is exactly why a genuine believer never needs to be nervous, anxious, overly-concerned, apprehensive, worried, frightened, or fearful. Why can we say that? Well, it is because he has this overriding and dominant witness of God regulating and controlling his life. It is because Jesus Christ is not just a mere man, but the actual Creator of all things. Nothing takes Christ by surprise, nor is He powerless to overcome that which may simply "appear" to be an unsurmountable difficulty. Do we not clearly understand that it is impossible for God to have a problem? Do we not understand that a sovereign, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient God never faces an obstacle or snag in His plans or outworkings? What could stop God from doing anything? What if you face the insurmountable – some illness, accident, calamity, high level of stress or distress in your life, or even immediate death? What about it? Well, if you truly know who God is and what He has done for you, what could possibly remove His care of your life from you? You see, that is the witness that the Holy Spirit bears on your heart and in your mind – that God is the Almighty God and that Jesus Christ is the Creator and Sustainer of all things. [John 1:1-4](#) declares,

Jn 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

If you truly believe those words, they are talking about Jesus Christ. He spoke the worlds into existence from utterly nothing. If He can do that, then certainly any issue that you may have in your life could not even be considered a problem relative to what Christ can do in you and for you. He has no limits, no barriers. He has no one or anything that can stop Him. Now, if you truly believe that, it is for one reason only. Please appreciate that it is not because you are personally intelligent, perceptive, knowledgeable, judicious, shrewd, observant, or simply insightful. If someone believes that Christ has no limits and that nothing can stop Him, it is for one reason only – God has placed His testimony and His witness on their heart and on their mind. You cannot believe these things independent of God, nor will you. You believe them because you have this **"witness"** of God in your life. It is real and is fully operative in the believer's life. Men can believe in the big bang theory, cosmic slime, the ekpyrotic theory, the white hole theory, the matrix theory, the black hole theory, the quantum theory, or any other imaginative idea that men may

have simply because they choose to remain in rebellion to God. They can believe the testimony and witness of men, believe the scientists, believe the evening news, believe whatever they want, but in so doing they have often rejected the only true witness in all of life itself – God Himself. In that process, they have made God out to be a “**liar**” and all hope of eternal life vanishes with that damnable thinking and perspective. The truth is that “**In the beginning God created**”. Men without Christ are living under the wrath of God. They are utterly doomed and without hope, and there is only One who can save them and deliver them from eternal judgment and it is Christ Jesus the Lord.

Just think for a moment of all of the people who do not have this internal witness of the Holy Spirit in their life. Just think for a moment of all of the brilliant minds who completely deny and reject the reality of God’s existence. Just look for a moment at [1 Corinthians 2:10-14](#),

1Co 2:10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. ¹¹ For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. ¹³ These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. ¹⁴ But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

This entire passage is referring specifically to the internal witness of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life. Once again, this is not some kind of meaningless and arbitrary work of God in the believer’s life. This is how it works. This is the reality of the Christian life. This is what God always does, and if this work is not present in a person’s life, then they simply have not been saved. V14 is very clear when it declares that “**the natural man does NOT receive the things of the Spirit of God...**” It would be very accurate to say that he cannot receive them or even “**know**” them.

There is all the difference in the world between accepting the Word of God and knowing for certain that the things of God are actually true.¹ Whenever someone is always anxious, uncertain, and restless about life, it generally reveals that that person is not actually saved. I know that is a very strong statement, but it is true. It is not that a Christian cannot have doubts and fears, for they certainly can, but the reality of genuine biblical faith is that it creates a kind of divine confidence in God. The individual truly knows God and trusts Him with their life. There will be anxious moments for sure, but those moments will not deter the believer’s faith and confidence in God. In reality, they will actually strengthen them.

I have a wonderful friend who is a pastor and this past year he found out that he had ALS. It is a very debilitating disease and one that leads to a fairly quick death. The other day he gave thanks to God in a post on Facebook about how he had come to know the grace of God in a deeper way in his life, and rather than being bitter and angry he was very much at peace with God’s care of his life. He was thankful for so many things – his wife, his daughters, his mom and dad, his wife’s family, the church he pastors, and the great salvation that he has as he faces the unexpected brevity of his life. Do you know what it is that is sustaining this young man as he squarely faces death? It is this divine “**witness**” of God placed on his heart by God. It is the truth that eternal life is real and under the hand of a sovereign God that all is well – even in the worst of life’s trials. This is the power of God’s “**witness**”, and it is a very real

dynamic in the lives of true believers. It is not something that can be denied, but rather something that must be validated.

Now, in [1 John 5:11](#) John makes two more of his seven statements from v9-12. [1 John 5:11](#) says,

1Jn 5:11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

First, he says that God **“has given”** us life, and then he says that God’s life **“is”** in His Son. Every believer has the life that God gives and that life is in Christ. We could say that the life is not only **“in”** Christ, but that the life is Christ. The verb **“has given”** is in the Greek aorist tense or the English past tense. This is something that every believer possesses immediately when they are saved – **“eternal life”**. Notice that it is clearly something that **“God”** actually gives to the individual. This is not some kind of work for it or work it out kind of salvation, but a once for all free gift from God. Right now, this very moment, as a believer you have, possess, and will have for eternity this **“eternal life”**. Please appreciate that this life represents two distinct areas. The first is the magnitude of this life, or the fact that it is eternal in its nature and therefore lasts forever. The actual word for **“eternal”** is *“aionios”* and represents that which is perpetual and everlasting. It means to have no end.² Everyone is eternal in the fact that each person will live forever, with the only question being **“where”**. The judgment of God will be eternal and there will be no appeal. The actual fires of hell are referred to as being **“eternal”** and **“unquenchable”**. For instance, [Matthew 25:41](#) says,

Mt 25:41 Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:

[2 Thessalonians 1:9](#) declares,

2Th 1:9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

Secondly it is a particular **“quality”** of life that reflects God in its outworkings in the believer. The way that John phrases it is that **“this life is in His Son”**. The life that God gives to the believer is directly linked to Christ. God’s life is found in the person of Christ. Whatever a person needs is found in the person of Christ. The life that men want is always focused on what they can have and do on the earth. The life that God provides is always focused on how much like Christ we can become. It really is quite amazing to see all of the different ways in which people seek to find life. It could be recreation, entertainment, alcohol, drugs, immorality, education, possessions, jobs – anything really. The construction of the phrase **“this life is in His Son”** means that the life that God gives is a present possession – something that we possess right now. The verb **“is”** is in the present tense indicating that God’s life is something that believers have now and keep on having. So, one of the evidences that someone actually does possess God’s life now is the quality and kind of life that they actually live now. It is not spiritually compatible or biblical to divorce the life of Christ within us from the actual life that we are presently living. John is extremely emphatic to reaffirm this truth in [1 John 5:12](#) when he says,

1Jn 5:12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

In other words, someone who is truly a Christian has God’s life, and that life has a very distinctive and defining quality to it. It reflects God. It reflects Christ. Once again, the tense of the verb **“has”** is in the present tense which simply indicates that it is a present possession and one that has a God-like quality

to it. Think of it this way. We have physical life, but we must receive life from God in order to be saved, and when we do receive His life, it is a kind of life that is genuinely reflective of Christ. If a person consistently disdains obedience to God's Word and is unwilling to submit their life to Christ, it is only reflective of the simple fact that they do not have the life of God in them. God's life always produces God's life in the believer. It really is that simple. The person who refuses to honor Christ in their life and who is consistently content with living as they please and doing those things that are utterly contrary to the will of God do not have God and do not know God. They are self-deceived and living under the wrath of God. The testimony of their life is that they believe God to be a "liar". [John 3:36](#) reiterates this truth when it proclaims the following,

Jn 3:36 He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

From a practical application of these truths, all that a person has to do is to complete a self-examination of their life. It should be immediately obvious as to whether or not they actually do possess God's life or if they do not. If they do possess God's life, then they are clearly reflecting Christ in all that they do. If they do not possess God's life, then their life is not reflecting Christ in what they do. Once again, it is that simple. So many people are evaluating the reality of whether or not they possess eternal life based on some decision that they made many years ago that has no bearing on their life today. However, the real test of whether someone is a Christian or not is the fact that their life is presently an ongoing testimony of Christ. It is a life that consistently, presently, and enduringly reflects Christ. That is when you can truly know that you possess God's life.

ENDNOTES

¹ Lloyd-Jones, 634.

² Zodhiates, 91.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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