

* The Heights Baptist Church * Series: Discipleship *
* Topic: The Measures of a Disciple * Scripture: 2 Peter 1:3-11 * 6/30/2024 *

MAIN POINT

We defined a disciple as someone who is growing in their relationship with Christ and helping others to do the same. One way we can know if we are growing in our walk with Christ is by measuring ourselves.

INTRODUCTION

When you were growing up, or when your kids were growing up, did you have a special way to measure how big the kids were getting?

Pediatricians have charts that show how tall an average child should be, and how heavy they should be. This average number is surrounded by an acceptable band, and even if outside this band, the big concern is whether the child is progressing at a good pace. As Christians, we should be growing in our walk with Christ. But the measuring stick isn't quite as simple as a tape-measure and a bathroom scale.

UNDERSTANDING

EXAMINE OURSELVES

ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ MATTHEW 7:21-23 AND 2 CORINTHIANS 13:5-6

What do these verses in 2 Corinthians direct us to do?

Examine ourselves, to see if we are in the faith. Test ourselves, to see if Jesus Christ is in us.

What might this test look like?

Matthew tells us there will be many people at the final judgment who may have thought they belonged to Christ, but in fact they didn't. A main part of the gospel message is that we are saved by grace alone through faith. But the gospel doesn't just save us. Saving faith results in us being given a new nature, and results in us receiving the Holy Spirit in our lives. The gospel should continue to affect our lives on this earth after we are saved. This does not mean we will reach sinless perfection in our current lives here on earth, but there should be evidence in our lives of our new nature.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 1 JOHN 5:11-13

What do these verses in 1 John tell us we can know?

We can know that we have eternal life! This is based solely on whether we have Christ in us. These verses help us keep a proper perspective on the test we've been discussing. We don't need to worry whether we are saved any time we stumble in our walk with Christ. We are saved by grace alone through faith in Christ! The book of 1 John takes a close look at how we can test ourselves as Christians. While 1 John 5:11-13 shows us salvation is based solely on whether we have Christ in us, the rest of this book looks at the evidences we should see in our lives that Christ is living in us.

REASONS FOR MEASURING OURSELVES

ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ THE FOLLOWING VERSES

What do these verses tell us about good reasons to measure ourselves, and bad reasons to measure ourselves?

- **Galatians 6:3-5:** To look at whether I am doing my part in serving the Lord.

- **Romans 12:3:** To gain a proper perspective of who we are in Christ.
- **Romans 8:1-4:** NOT to condemn ourselves if we aren't doing everything we think we should be doing.
- **Titus 3:5-7:** NOT to try to earn righteousness before God. This was accomplished entirely by Christ
- **2 Corinthians 10:12:** It is foolish to compare ourselves to others. Either we come out ahead, which can lead to the sin of pride, or we come out behind, which leads to the sins of envy and jealousy. Disciples of Christ are recognized by their love for each other (John 13:34-35). We are not competing with each other; we are on the same team!

Pastor Shay Osborne summarizes the reasons we are to measure ourselves these three practical ways:

1. To get an honest look at where I am in my Spiritual Growth.
 - a. To see how far I've come since walking with Jesus
 - b. To identify areas that I need to grow.
2. To identify areas where I need help and accountability.

PROPER MEASURING STICKS FOR MEASURING OURSELVES

ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ 1 THESSALONIANS 5:20-21, 1 JOHN 4:1-3, AND 2 TIMOTHY 2:15

What type of test are we told to carry out in these verses?

Don't believe everything you hear. Test the spirits and prophecies you hear, to see if they are from God. A key part of being able to do this is to grow in our knowledge of the scriptures, learning to correctly handle the word of truth.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ MATTHEW 7:16-20

What type of test are we told to carry out in these verses?

This test is, what kind of fruit am I bearing in my life? It's worth noting that these verses directly precede the verses we read earlier about many people saying "Lord, Lord" who will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ MATTHEW 4:19 AND ACTS 1:8

What is another evidence we should observe in our lives if we are walking with Christ?

We will be witnesses for Christ.

A LOOK AT WHAT 2 PETER 1:3-11 ADDS TO THESE THOUGHTS

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 2 PETER 1:3-4

Where do we get the strength to carry out our walk with Christ, and how do we tap into this power?

Our power comes from God, and we access it through our knowledge of him.

It's hard to rely on a promise someone has made to us if we aren't aware they made us that promise. How can we be better aware of the great and precious promises God has given us?

Again, spend quality time in God's word! One great example is the promise we read earlier from 1 John 5:11-13. We can know we have eternal life if we are in Christ.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 2 PETER 1:5-7

Our walk with Christ starts by faith, not by works. What do these verses tell us we need to add to our faith?

Looking at verse 5, how much effort are we to exert to add these qualities to our faith?

Make every effort to add these qualities to our faith.

What are some specific ways Jesus set examples for us in these areas?

Jesus sacrificed Himself as a ransom for all people (1 Timothy 2:5-6). He loved his disciples to the end, choosing to take on the role of a servant for us. Many specific examples could be given.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 2 PETER 1:8-11

What do these verses tell us about the benefits of adding the qualities listed in verses 5-7 to our lives?

These qualities prevent us from becoming unproductive in our walk with Christ (vs 8-9), they provide a test that helps us confirm our calling and election (verse 10), and they help keep us from stumbling (vs 10). Even though salvation is through faith alone, we will be rewarded in heaven for what we do here as Christians, so adding these qualities to our faith helps us look forward to a rich welcome in heaven (vs11).

Peter wrote this section of his letter in preparation for warning against false teachers in Chapter 2 who were causing believers to doubt their faith. How might these qualities reassure those who are struggling to be confident in their salvation?

As we begin to see changes and transformations occurring in our lives, we can be assured that God has called us to Himself. These changes serve to “confirm your calling and election.” The opposite is also true. If your life shows no positive changes and this causes you no concern, then you should wonder and question whether you are a true believer in Jesus Christ. If you respond positively to the challenge, you will find encouragement in the words, you will never stumble. This does not mean that you will never have a problem or that you will never sin again. You can be assured of a glorious welcome into your eternal home. God will never change His mind about you, nor will He alter the means by which you get to heaven. The assurance of heaven that true believers have in Jesus is not found in their own goodness, but in Christ alone.

APPLICATION

Consider reading the book of 1 John this week (It’s only five chapters long), while meditating on the qualities it describes that should be evident in the life of someone who is walking with Jesus.

When are you most tempted to depend on your own power rather than God’s divine power to live and grow in godliness? What does it take to turn from self-dependence to a dependence on God?

Are there certain promises of God you need to be reminded of this week? What can we do to help us remember to apply the gospel to all areas of our life?

In what areas of your life is God challenging you to add to your faith as you grow as a disciple of Christ? What is one practical way you can respond to this challenge?

PRAYER

(This prayer is based on Colossians 1:9-14) We joyfully thank you Father for having qualified us to share in the inheritance of your holy people in the kingdom of light. We thank you that you rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son you love, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. God we ask that you would fill us with the knowledge of your will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that we may live a life worthy of you and please you in every way. Help us bear fruit in every good work and grow in the knowledge of you, being strengthened with all power according to your glorious might so that we may have great endurance and patience. In Jesus’ name we pray.

COMMENTARY

2 PETER 1:3-11

1:3-4. Peter next reminded his readers of the resources they had through knowing Christ. He provides believers everything they need for life and godliness. Life is eternal life, whereas godliness is godly living; the latter cannot be obtained without the former. The divine call of believers served as a foundation for Peter's appeal for godly living. Christ calls to Himself those whom God has saved, and this calling is brought about by His own glory and goodness. Christ's glory and goodness combine and seem to refer to the moral excellence of Christ. By these—by Christ's glory and goodness—He has given us very great and precious promises. The content of these great promises includes sharing in the divine nature. Peter did not mean that believers become gods or that they share in the divine nature of God in every way. He meant that they participate in God's moral excellence and will one day be morally perfected. Participation in the divine nature is possible only after escaping the corruption in the world because of evil desires. Jesus Christ offers the only way of escape from the rebellion of this evil world system that is opposed to and alienated from God.

1:5-7. Because of God's generous provision in Christ, Peter encouraged his readers to build upon their foundation of faith—their initial acceptance of God's love—with the Christian virtues of goodness ... knowledge ... self-control ... endurance ... godliness ... brotherly affection, and love. These graces, sometimes called the "ladder of faith," are the fruit of sharing in the divine nature. Each successive quality seems to spring from the previous one.

1:8-9. Useful and fruitful Christians have an abundance of the qualities mentioned in verses 5-7. On the other hand, those who lack them are blind and shortsighted because they have forgotten the cleansing from their past sins; they deliberately forget the background from which God delivered them. "Past sins" refers to sins committed before professing faith in Christ.

1:10-11. Because of God's grace, gifts, and the knowledge of Christ (vv. 3-9), Peter commanded his readers to make every effort to prove the reality of their calling and election to salvation; they would do so by godly living (vv. 5-7). Two results follow: (1) they will never stumble; (2) they will receive a glorious entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.