

June 7/8, 2025
"The Character Test"
Pastor Aaron Buer



SPEND DAILY TIME WITH GOD AS YOU READ, THINK, PRAY + ACT.

2025 Focus: 50 Key Truths

Each Friday, explore a key truth about our Christian faith and how we can live in light of this truth.

Day 1 [1John 1:5-10](#) | The Character Test

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 1 John 1:7

John writes to believers grappling with a fundamental question: How can they be certain their faith is real? False teachers had entered their community and created confusion about salvation and faith. John offers what might be called "assurance tests." The tests aren't hoops to jump through to earn God's love. Instead, they evaluate whether there's evidence of salvation in someone's life. Authentic believers don't continue in patterns of rebellion against God. Believers cannot lose their salvation, but true faith is evident in character transformation over time.

We all wrestle with doubts about our salvation at some point. John's words speak directly to our struggles with assurance, just as they did to his first-century readers. The character test isn't about perfection; it's about direction. If we find ourselves continually rebelling against God's leadership without any desire to change, the question isn't whether we might lose our salvation. The question is whether we've truly trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior. Authentic faith involves more than saying the right words. It requires surrendering our lives to Jesus and allowing him to transform us from the inside out.

TODAY: Take an honest look at your life. Do you see evidence of God's transforming work? Don't struggle in silence if you're battling doubts about salvation. Talk to your campus pastor, small group leader or trusted Christian friend who can point you toward the assurance that comes through Christ.

Day 2 [1John 2:3-6](#) | Obedience is Evidence

We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. 1 John 2:3

John declares that authentic faith produces obedience. Those who truly belong to God listen to his voice and obey him. John states bluntly that anyone who claims to know Jesus but shows no interest in doing what he taught is a liar. There is no such thing as authentic faith without obedience. John gets even more specific, explaining that whoever claims to know Jesus must live as Jesus did. Authentic believers become more like Jesus throughout their lives. This transformation is supernatural evidence of salvation because becoming Christlike is impossible through human effort alone.

We can see God's supernatural transforming work most clearly when he works against the grain of our sinful bent. Our obedience, combined with the Holy Spirit, equals transformation into Christlikeness. It's God's work when someone bent toward speaking harshly begins speaking with grace and kindness. We also see God's transforming work in areas of brokenness. When anger is transformed into self-control, worry gives way to peace

or when hatred gives way to love. The transformation of our sinful tendencies and our brokenness reveals the work of the Holy Spirit.

TODAY: Journal about how God has transformed you. Look back and identify areas where God has worked against your sinful bent or transformed your brokenness. Where have you seen movement from impatience to patience, harshness to gentleness, or other character changes that point to Christ's work in you?

Day 3 [1 John 1:5-7](#) | Don't Hide

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 1 John 1:5

John echoes a pattern present throughout Scripture. God is light, and darkness represents sin. The natural progression of sin is to hide it. Living in the light means living in alignment with who God is. It means confessing sin instead of hiding it. This tendency to hide sin appears early in the Bible in [Genesis 3](#). After Adam and Eve disobey God, they immediately hide from God instead of admitting their sin. When God calls to them, they cover themselves and try to avoid his presence. This pattern of sinning and then hiding has been going on ever since. John calls believers to break this cycle by walking in the light through honesty and transparency.

We follow the same pattern. Instead of confessing our failures to God and those around us, we often lie to ourselves about our actions. We say it's not really that bad and avoid admitting it to God or others. We prefer to live in the darkness because exposure feels uncomfortable. We often hide in three ways. 1) From ourselves by denying our problems. 2) From God by avoiding honest prayer. 3) From each other by maintaining facades. But the way of Jesus is to live in the light. Our relationship with God begins with admitting we are sinners who need rescue.

TODAY: Confess any sin in your life first to God and then to a trusted Christian friend. Bring it into the light instead of keeping it hidden in the darkness. For more discussion on assurance of your salvation and walking in the light, listen to the [Beyond the Weekend Podcast](#).

Day 4 [1 John 1:3-4](#) | God is Personal

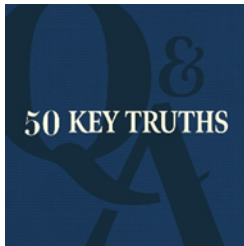
But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 1 John 2:1

John writes to encourage believers not to sin. He then immediately offers reassurance for when they do fall short. He introduces Jesus as their advocate—a word meaning "one who comes alongside to help." The closest parallel might be a defense attorney arguing in court. It's as though Jesus stands before the Father, defending believers when they sin. John explains Jesus can defend them because he is the atoning sacrifice for sin ([1 John 2:2](#)). The word "atoning" describes how Jesus absorbed God's judgment on sin when he died on the cross. Jesus paid the penalty that sin demanded. Because of his sacrificial death, Jesus can advocate for believers by declaring to the Father, "I paid for that sin."

It can be easy to think of Jesus as an advocate for Christians in general. But sometimes, it's harder to see him as our *personal* advocate and atoning sacrifice. But Jesus's atoning sacrifice and his role as advocate assure our salvation. We cannot lose the salvation Jesus won for us through his death and resurrection. We cannot out-sin God's grace. Even our battles, struggles and fights against sin serve as evidence of authentic faith rather than reasons to doubt our salvation.

TODAY: If you've never put your faith and trust in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, do so today. Simply tell Jesus you know you're a sinner and that you believe he died and rose again to pay for your sin. If you have believed,

give thanks to God by joining Ada Bible Worship as they sing "[Finished Work of Christ](#)." Praise God that there's "Nothing left for me to do, it is finished, it is finished, I'm completely forgiven."



Day 5 [Romans 1:1-4](#) | Question 22: Jesus's Resurrection

Question: What is the significance of Jesus's resurrection?

Answer: Jesus's resurrection proves his divinity, breaks death's power and makes our resurrection possible.

"...who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 1:4

Paul writes that Jesus was "appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection." Jesus was already God's Son, but this event confirms his divine identity. Jesus's *human* lineage connects him to King David, but his resurrection demonstrates his *divine* lineage with absolute clarity. This supernatural act authenticates everything Jesus claimed. The resurrection is God's declaration that he accepted Jesus's sacrifice. Jesus's teachings are true, and his identity is genuine. This physical resurrection also transformed Jesus's body into an immortal one. He is the firstfruits of a new human existence that conquered death itself ([1 Corinthians 15:20](#)).

Everything changed when Jesus walked out of the tomb. He broke death's grip on creation, destroying its power ([2 Timothy 1:10](#)). Jesus's resurrection enables and guarantees our own. Paul writes, "By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also" ([1 Corinthians 6:14](#)). Jesus's resurrection means our sin has been fully paid for and accepted by God. The new life Jesus lives is available to us through faith immediately, not just after we die. This is why Paul says, "Christ lives in me" ([Galatians 2:20](#)). The resurrection proves that Christianity isn't merely a moral code but a living relationship with the risen Christ who dwells in believers through his Spirit.

TODAY: Consider how Jesus's resurrection changes your life. Thank him for conquering death and making eternal life possible. Reflect on how his resurrection power is available now through his Spirit. Ask God to help you live as someone raised to new life in Christ. If you face difficulties, draw strength from knowing that the same power that raised Jesus is at work in you.