



The Good News

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"Try your own selves..."

By Michael McCleary

While it may seem that our society is quickly disintegrating into godlessness, the majority of Americans still claim to believe in God. They claim to believe in Jehovah God, not Allah or any other false deity that a small minority worships. And, while many self-proclaimed Christians conduct their lives any way they want, there are still those out there who do believe that God expects us to have some moral integrity. When we begin to sort through this small category of people, we will find that most of them, if not all, will claim to be a part of the body of Christ. Yet, they will represent many different "faiths" or "churches" that will teach many different and contradictory concepts about God, the Bible, and salvation. How can we determine what is right and acceptable to God? In **II Cor. 13**, Paul addresses sin among the brethren at Corinth. In doing so, he encourages each member of that congregation to "Try yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves." In application, the question must be asked, "How would one go about this? How can I test myself to determine if I am truly "in the faith"?" In testing ourselves to determine whether or not we are in the faith, it will be clear that there can be only two possible outcomes: either we are indeed in the faith, or we are rejected by the faith. So let us consider, "How would I be rejected by the faith?"

Consider whether or not I am "reprobate" – **Rom. 1:28** – Paul makes his point very clear in discussing the sins of the Gentile nations, how they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, but rather they wanted to consider all of the vile passions of sin. We find in this context that Paul discusses the sin of homosexuality. There are many who claim to be "in the faith" that openly teach that we should be more accepting of those in sin. Yet, Paul makes it clear that those who practice homosexuality and other sins are clearly rejected by

God. Therefore, why should the children of God accept activities that God Himself rejects? In this same context, being disobedient to parents is mentioned, along with whisperers and backbiters and a whole host of others sins. We find then someone who has a reprobate mind and sins in these ways cannot consider themselves "in the faith".

Do I have approved good works to go along with my profession? **Titus 1:16** – Paul warns Titus that there are those who will come along that claim to follow after God, but their works will show that they are not what they claim. These are called "hypocrites" and Jesus saves some of His most pointed denunciations for those in this category. Either they are not actually doing the good works they claim to do, or the works they do are not measuring up to God's standard. These are to be rebuked sharply (**Titus 1:13**) as they can easily carry others off in their sin.

Do I withstand truth, particularly when it shows me in need of correction? – **II Tim. 3:8** – Paul refers to men from Moses' time to draw a comparison to certain men that withstand truth in Paul's time. These men refuse to accept certain truths from the teaching of Christ and the apostles, and they can easily deceive others. We must be careful to examine ourselves to determine if we would truly change to fit God's word, or if we would withstand it, justifying our actions by claiming that the passages used are "open for interpretation" or some other excuse.

There are also some ways that we can know that we are "in the faith". But as we consider this lesson, let us never shy away from testing ourselves to see if we are indeed in the faith. If we find that we are in need of correction or adjustment, let us seek to please God in all things, not allowing pride to lead us down the road of rejection.