

Growing In Love for Christ

Out of The Word

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There are many times we defend our position of how to come to Christ by grace, through faith, in Christ, at baptism, but never defend how to abide in Christ. *For example*, we usually say attend church regularly, make sure you take communion every Sunday, and here is a new Bible with your name on it! These are good points to share with the new Christian, however this is what I refer to as wiffle ball Christianity (*a light perforated ball used in a type of baseball*). It's no wonder many Christians' faith can seem so shallow and cold. Often times, these new Christians fall away or become discouraged and the seed never really grows because there is no depth of soil (Mark 4:4-9). What can we learn so this doesn't happen to us? There are some important evidences and signs, however, for us to be certain that we have gladly and sincerely received Christ and truly returned to God: (1) One good evidence is a steadfastness and perseverance. It was Joseph in the book of Genesis who declared '*How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?*' (Genesis 39:9). That is a beautiful picture of the true Christian, he/she will be willing to give up anything which stands between him/her and Heaven. A religion that cost nothing dear friend is worth nothing! Many view Christianity as some moral therapy, self-help easy believeism system. If the Christian is not steadfast and godly, it's evident they have not counted the cost of discipleship (Hebrews 12:14, Luke 14:28). (2) Second, the Christian will grow in love towards the person of Christ. I can think of no greater piece of golden evidence of one who has a sincere faith in Christ. The soul who has received Christ will desire to study Him and thirst for Him. Jesus' person, His work, His glory, His natures, His love, and His grace. The Christian will cry out like Paul, '*Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord*' (Phil. 3:8). It will be evident within the true Christian one will love the things Christ loves and hate the things Christ hates. For example, one will hate sin and love holiness, one will hate abortion of babies, and love upholding the dignity of all human life, one will hate same sex marriage and love upholding the sanctity of Biblical marriage between one man and one woman (Gen. 1:27, 2:24). Indeed, a deep love for Christ is one of the most spiritual of evidences, because I very much doubt if an unregenerate man can love Christ for his own sake at all. It is a beautiful sign of growth, when our love for the person of Christ grows, when we meditate much upon it, and when we think much about it. What a beautiful thing to remember and desire the beauty of Christs' person. This dear friend, is how we can search our hearts in difficult times. Why? Because of all the evil in the world, let us not become bitter but search the evil in our own hearts, and what better time to do this than during the time of Christmas while we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ and to follow those ways of worship that Christ has appointed.

Merry Christmas to all of Perry County.

From Preacher, Josh Yonts and the First Christian Church of Pinckneyville

