

# 1 John - A Spiritual Assessment Tool

Annual reviews in the work place are often undertaken with fear, trepidation and sometimes, great reluctance. Few people look forward to being assessed. Often such reviews involve lots of paper work, meetings and peer assessment. Too, you may be asked to 'blow your own trumpet.' For a Christian to say 'Look, what a good boy am I' goes against what we perceive humility is all about.

While a review of your performance may produce moments of genuine discomfort they should be taken seriously. Sam O'Neil says: "I take these meetings seriously because I believe them to be important in terms of my professional development. They provide objective and honest feedback about my performance at work—including a look at what I am doing well and the areas where I need to improve. Oh, and I get a free lunch!"

There's a similar dynamic at play if we read 1 John as a spiritual assessment tool. Viewed this way, 1 John allows us to get a clear idea about the quality of our Christian life and performance. At the same time it is a valuable tool to see whether or not we actually believe the right things about God, Jesus, prayer, eternal life, the death of Christ and forgiveness of sins. 1 John also provides a variety of principles and practical tips.

1 John gives us seven tests to assess: genuineness, false fellowship, sanctity, righteousness, allegiance, behaviour, spirituality and love for God [1 John 16, 8, 10; 2:4, 6, 9; 4:20]. By applying the traits of a genuine authentic Christian to ourselves we can determine whether we actually a Christian or not [1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1; 5:1, 4, 18].

There are a further set of seven contrasts that allows us to receive honest feedback on:

- 1) our claim to be a Christian - light vs darkness 1:5-2:11;
- 2) our desires/ambitions/cravings - Father vs the world;
- 3) our belief system - Christ vs anti-Christ 2:18-2:28;
- 4) our behaviour/emotional feelings - good behaviour/attitudes vs evil behaviour/attitudes 2:29-3:24;
- 5) our spiritual discernment - Holy Spirit vs error 4:1-6;
- 6) our motives - genuine love vs pious pretence 4:7-21; and
- 7) am I born again? - God-born vs others 5:1-21.

Baxter writes: In 1 John "there is a downright spiritual simplicity which sees things as they really are. White is white, black is black, there is no middle ground. Here is no clandestine, mystery-mongering [brotherhood], with its head in the clouds and its feet swinging in space, but first hand witness to proven facts. . . No dark rooms or curtains of mystery."

Why not take the 1 John assessment today?