

Problem:

Rom 10:1-3 zeal without knowledge

lack of discernment makes our faith and fellowship either puny or presumptuous

Main Idea:

Confident faith comes through discernment

Confident fellowship comes through discernment

Implication:

feeling you are saved does not make it so

feeling the people around you are saved does not make it so

blessed assurance requires blessed discernment

Application:

it is normal to have questions and doubts - we all have them but God wants us to know

God wants us to know - "by this" - 1 John 2:3, 5; 3:10, 16, 19, 24; 4:2, 6, 13, 17; 5:1

you may have come to this place with a ton of questions but God has given real tangible answers.

Text:**Confident Faith comes through discernment**

1John 3:18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in **deed** and in **truth**.

1John 3:19 ¶ **By this we shall know (future) that we are of the truth** and **reassure** our heart before him;

1John 3:20 for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.

1John 3:21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have **confidence** before God;

1John 3:22 and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we **keep his commandments** and **do what pleases him**.

1John 3:23 And this is his commandment, that we **believe (aorist)** in the name of his Son Jesus Christ **and love one another (present)** just as he has commanded us.

1John 3:24a Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. **And by this we know that he abides in us**, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

(19) by this - (1 Jn 3:18) -

(20) feelings must follow facts -

(your heart deceitful - Jer 17:9)

(Satan deceitful - Rev 12:10)

(20) What does God say about you - Zech 3:1-5

Peter relied on what God said not himself - Jn 21:17

(21) confident faith comes through discernment

(23) do you believe - Jn 6:26-30

(23) do you love - 1 Jn 3:11-15

(24) do you have the Spirit - Jn 6:60-63

(24) abiding in deed and truth - Jn 17:20-23; 14:23

(24) through the Spirit He has given us - 14:15-17

Confident Fellowship comes through discernment

1John 4:1 ¶ Beloved, do not believe every **spirit**, but test the **spirits** to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

1John 4:2 **By this you know the Spirit of God (in others): every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,**

1John 4:3 and every **spirit** that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the **spirit** of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.

1John 4:4 Little children, **you are from God** and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

1John 4:5 **They** are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them.

1John 4:6 **We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.**

(1) test the spirits - 1 Tim 4:1-3; 2 Pet 2:1-3

(2-5a) confident fellowship come through discernment

(2) spirit confesses - Matt 16:17 - what comes out of their mouth?

(5b-6) hear my voice - John 10:1-5, 27-28 - what goes into their ears?

Articles for further study:

<https://www.gty.org/resources/positions/P02/discernment-spiritual-survival-for-a-church-in-crisis>

<http://www.ligonier.org/blog/discernment-thinking-gods-thoughts/>