

How Can You Know That God Chose You?

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[0 : 00] John chapter 15, starting at verse 12. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing.

But I have called you friends. For all that I have heard from my Father, I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another. If the world hates you, know that it hated me before it hated you.

If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. But because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

[1 : 08] Remember the word that I said to you, a servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.

But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.

Whoever hates me hates my Father also. If I had not done, I'm sorry, yeah, if I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin.

But now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. But the word that is written in the law must be fulfilled. They hated me without a cause.

But when the helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. And you also will bear witness about me because you have been with me from the beginning.

[2 : 16] This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God indeed. You may be seated. Would you pray with me?

Father, I pray that your word will go forth with power. That the word of Jesus Christ will be clear. I pray, Lord, that you will open the eyes of our heart to behold Christ as he speaks to his disciples. I pray that you will strip us of our good works. Strip us of our false assurance. I pray that you will drive us to depend on Christ, the true vine.

We pray, Lord, that for those who you call your friends, those for whom you died, that you will give a true assurance, a deeper hope, a more pure joy.

That you'll do all of this for your glory, for our good, and for Christ's sake we ask. Amen. Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, How do you know that God chose you?

[3 : 55] How do you know that God chose you? A Victorian lady in London once asked Charles Spurgeon, the preacher there, if it's possible to reconcile God's sovereignty with man's responsibility.

You've been in those debates. God's sovereignty or man's responsibility. Maybe you know the answer. Spurgeon said, I wouldn't try.

Why not? You don't reconcile friends. The Bible in some places puts a lot of emphasis on your responsibility and mine.

Choose this day whom you will serve. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord, said Joshua. Jesus commanded, repent and believe. There's a responsibility. You must respond to the gospel when you hear it.

That's on you to respond. In other words, when you don't respond with faith and repentance, believing in Christ, you are standing in defiance of King Jesus. You are rebelling against Him. [5 : 09] He says, obey my command. Jesus says, bear fruit. His commands are very clear. But look at verse 16 that we just read.

Jesus says, you did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit that abides.

Look at what he says in verse 19. You are not of the world. Why? Because I chose you out of this world. The Bible teaches that you will only repent if you have been chosen out of this world. Jesus says, you must be born again in order to believe. Babies don't choose to be born. That's something that the Spirit does. And Jesus says in this same chapter, apart from me, you can bear no fruit.

The emphasis on these verses is on God's sovereignty. So the big question for you and for me, how do I know? How can I know that God chose me?

[6 : 22] I believe in these passages here, this passage, these verses, our Lord Jesus gives us five answers to that question and a caution. So I'm going to try to bring to you five points of reflection.

You can know that God chose you. Five points of reflection and also one caution. Number one, you can know that God chose you if he causes you to love his friends.

You can know that God chose you, number one, if he causes you to love his friends. Do you?

Do you? Look at verse 12. Jesus says, this is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. In verse 14, he says, you are my friends if you do what I command you to do.

[7 : 40] Jesus is saying this, My people, those who belong to me, that I say are my friends, they will obey me.

My people will do what Israel, national Israel, could never do. That's why the New Testament calls Christians the true Israel. And that is to show divine love to one another.

My people, Jesus says, will keep God's moral law. They will respond in obedience to King Jesus. So the big question is, who are his friends?

Who are those that Jesus laid down his life for? He says, there's no greater love than to lay down your life for your friends. We need to make sense of what Jesus preaches here with all of Scripture. Is all of the world a friend of Christ? The obvious answer is no. But think about what this means. In Psalm 2, the world, left on its own, hates God.

[8 : 52] The world, left on its own, mocks King Jesus. The world, on its own, is at enmity with God. Ecclesiastes 9.3 says, Your heart, O child of man, every single one, is full of evil and madness.

So, who is it that's a friend of God? If that's how the whole world is. Well, Romans 5.10 answers that question. While we, we all, were enemies with God, He reconciled us by the death of His Son. So, who are the true friends of God? It's those who were reconciled to the Father by the death of the Son. It's those for whom Christ died.

There is no greater love than to lay down your life for your friends. You can know that God chose you. If He causes you to have that love for His friends.

What kind of love? Self-sacrificing love. He laid down His life for His friends. Do you love Christians?

[10 : 06] Do you love those for whom Jesus Christ, the Son, shed His precious blood? Think about all that is said in that phrase that Jesus, the God-man, the second person of the Trinity, He laid it all down.

What all did Christ lay down for you who He calls His friends? John Gill helped me see this. Christ came down from heaven.

He laid aside His glory and royal majesty. He laid down His life. Not only His gold and silver and the riches of heaven, not only did He forsake all the riches that He could claim on the world He created, they were all His already.

But He laid all of that down. And what's more, He laid down His very life. There is nothing dearer to a man than Himself. His all.

And that's what Christ laid down for His friends. How do you know if you are Christ's friends? How do you know if Christ laid down His life for you?

[11:15] He says, those that I purchase with my blood, they will have my love one for another. It's a promise. You don't earn Christ's love by your obedience.

It's the opposite. It's Christ's obedience to His Father that earns a love that you're incapable of generating. He earned this love for you and puts it inside of you and inside of me.

King Jesus calls you to love His bride, His church, the family of God. King Jesus calls you to have that kind of self-sacrificing love for the family in the row next to you, in front or behind you.

that you would lay down your life one for another. God did not choose you because you were fruitful. God makes you fruitful because He chose you.

You can know that God chose you if He causes you more and more and more and more to love His friends. You can also know that God chose you, number two, if He bears fruit in your life.

[12:43] You can know that God did in fact choose you if He bears His fruit in your life. Does He?

Look at verse 15. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, He may give it to you.

These things I command you so that you will love one another. The ironic thing is that Jesus is promising something to the disciples that they don't have yet.

He says, you're my friends because you have it all. I've revealed the gospel to you, the plan of the Father. You have it all. And they're sitting there not understanding this great teaching.

[13:56] But remember, He has told them that the Spirit will come back and He'll remind you of these things. Can you just picture the joy and the humility of old man John, the old apostle now, looking back and the Spirit reminding him word for word what Christ promised.

He's saying, I did not understand this. Yet He's saying, I'm His friend. But a servant is the one who doesn't understand. I was a servant, but He's calling me a friend. The glorious truth here is this.

The best morality in the world will not prove a man to be a Christian. In the words of Charles Spurgeon, but if a man has no Christian love, it proves that he is not a child of God.

See, no amount of good works can prove to yourself you're a Christian or save you that way.

However, the caution is there. If there is no love that God has to put in your heart, we do have proof.

You are not engrafted into the true vine. But think about the encouragement. He's speaking as immediate audiences from the Lord Jesus Christ to the 12 disciples or the 11 that remain and He'll pull Paul into this.

[15:11] And to the disciples, He's giving these promises. And through the disciples to the church and through the church over the centuries to us. And that's why the disciples are an encouragement to us because the disciples did not bear fruit of selfless love toward one another.

Remember, who was it that washed their feet? They couldn't even wash each other's feet just a few hours prior. Jesus Christ Himself had to show that basic love toward them. The disciples did not know what their Master was doing.

They were servants. But by grace, Jesus says, you are my friends and you've been appointed to bear good fruit. It would happen eventually even if it wasn't evident yet. But that's who they already are.

He declared it of them. The disciples did not choose to follow Jesus Christ. But He says, by grace, I'm the one who called you. I'm the one who chose you.

And I am the one who am revealing to you all that the Father has shown to me. and that the Spirit will remind and inspire in the New Testament.

[16:18] The disciples did not obey Christ even to pray with Him. Later that night, they all fell asleep. Do you remember that? They did not abide in Him. The disciples, they forsook Christ.

They ran away from Him. They abandoned Jesus to save their own lives. So they thought. God did not choose the disciples because they were fruitful.

But because He chose them, look how fruitful He made His true disciples by the power of the Spirit. That same principle is true for you and me. What an encouragement.

God did not choose you because you were fruitful. He chose you because He will make you fruitful. Your obedience does not make you friends with Christ, but obedience does characterize all of Christ's true friends.

Jesus says, I choose you. You are my friend. Augustine, profound insight.

[17 : 27] What is a friend? A single soul dwelling in two bodies. Isn't that a beautiful way to describe our union to Christ?

A single soul. You are united spiritually with Christ. You're in this body on earth, but your soul is united to Him. You are friends with God through Jesus Christ.

You can know that God chose you if He bears fruit in your life. You can also know that God chose you, number three, if you are not of this world.

You can know that God chose you if you don't belong to this world. Do you? Are you of this world still?

Look at what He says in verse 18. If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own.

[18 : 38] But because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore, the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, a servant is not greater than his master.

If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. When the Lord Jesus would minister in a town or village, there were many who would come and listen, but we're also told that many turned their backs and walked away, didn't believe, but some believed.

Even after He rose from the dead, we're told that same thing. Many came and they bore witness that Christ is alive. Over 500 witnesses. But yet many still did not believe.

They abandoned Him. Jesus says, Disciples, you abandon me, you will abandon me in the hours to come. But when my spirit is on you, I'm going to inspire the word of God, the New Testament.

[19 : 44] And the church for thousands of years will hold on to these words. And I will make them hear my word through what simple fishermen like you are going to put down in writing.

I will breathe out the rest of God's revelation through men like you. What a glorious promise. Jesus says, This is true for you, disciples, because you are my servants.

He's making an argument from the greater to the lesser. Christ is greater. The disciples and you and I, we are lesser. Whatever is true of the one who is greater, by consequence, becomes true of us.

He is the master. We are the servants. And He says, If they persecute the master, what would you expect as the servants? Of course they're going to come after you. And this came true, we read in Acts 1-3.

Jesus presented Himself alive to them after His suffering by many proofs. And He appeared to them for 40 days speaking to them about the kingdom of God. And then these disciples, including Paul, all of the apostles, went forth with this glorious revelation and the power of the Holy Spirit.

[20 : 56] And what did they do? In Acts 14, they heralded boldly for Jesus Christ. And they bore witness of the word of His grace.

All that Christ was promising them now, it comes out to play in the history of the church in the book of Acts. They would die as martyrs, but they knew the world hates them and hates the message of Christ because it first hated God Himself.

Well, how is this true for you and me? You are not of this world, according to verse 18, if you are hated by the world for Christ's sake because He chose you out of the world.

We experience the hatred of the world in mild ways. We need to be bracing ourselves and training ourselves and being disciplined to be hated even more. You are not of this world, according to verse 19, if you hear the voice of Christ, your Good Shepherd, calling you.

Do you hear Him? Or do you hear the clamor and the loud voices of the world over the voice of your Good Shepherd? You are not of the world, according to verse 19, if you are freed from the ruler of this world.

[22 : 12] And Christ is truly your master now. Satan can no longer claim any dominion over you. You are set free and you belong to Christ. You have a good master.

You are not of this world, according to verse 20, if you keep the words of Christ and His word given to you by the apostles. You keep the word of God.

You read the New Testament and His Spirit presses it to you as truth and He feeds your soul. We have a danger. Though we belong to Christ, our bodies are battling against sin.

Thomas Watson said, all the danger is when the world finds some way into your heart. He gives this awesome metaphor. He says, the water is useful for sailing the ship.

So the water would be like the world and the ship is your life. All the danger is when the water gets into the ship. And so the fear is when the world gets into the heart.

[23 : 13] Don't shipwreck your faith. Don't be entangled in this world. You do not belong to this world. Christ chose you out of the world.

And if the world hates you, take that as an encouragement that God chose you out of this world. God did not choose you because you were fruitful.

God makes you fruitful because He chose you. You can know that God chose you if you are not of this world.

Here comes the caution. If you don't believe in Jesus Christ, then you are perishing with this world. If you don't believe in Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, you remain in your sin.

[24 : 14] You remain under the wrath of God. You remain in bondage to this world that is perishing. Do you believe? Do you truly believe?

Look at what Jesus says starting in verse 21. All these things they do, to you, on account of my name because they do not know Him who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin.

But now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me hates my Father also. If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin.

But now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. The word that is written in their law must be fulfilled. They hated me without a cause.

If you mock those Christ calls His friends, He says, you persecute Christ Himself in verse 21. And this reveals in your heart you hate God.

[25 : 22] If you make excuses to deny His word, to protect your precious sin, then you don't know God. That's what He says in verse 22. If you will dismiss all of Christ's works that He revealed in Scripture, and you'll say it's made up, it's just something the men wrote down.

In verse 24, He says, you don't know the true salvation that all of those signs are pointing to. If you deny Christ, then you hate Him.

you rebel against King Jesus, although He has done nothing to deserve that. Tell me, are not many of you despairing at what has been said?

That's what George Whitefield asked a group after preaching the gospel. That despair, that caution, that's a blessing if it drives you to Christ.

He said, oh, that the world was filled with this despair. Jesus came down to save us, not only from the guilt of sin, but also from the power of sin.

[26 : 40] You do not belong to the world. If you are caught up in the pattern of this world, and you are secretly loving sin more than you love your Savior, you need to be warned.

This world is perishing. Do you belong to this perishing world, or do you belong to Christ? If you belong to Christ, He chose you out of this world. So the big question today is this, how do you know that God chose you out of the world?

Do you want to know that? Do you want to know that God has chosen me? Then there's one thing He calls you to do. Repent.

Every person who believes and repents is chosen by God. That means the Holy Spirit is causing you to give up your pride, to turn to Him, to humble yourself, to receive His free salvation.

As we walk through His Scripture, as we read these words, we're hearing the words of Jesus Christ Himself. Do you see Him? If you're opening your eyes, it's the Spirit causing you to behold Jesus.

[27 : 59] You see God when you see Jesus. He lives for you off of the pages of the Bible, before your eyes. So to walk away from Him, to reject Him, is to hate Him, is to despise Him.

And it makes us no better than those who would put Him on a cross in a few hours. Now the comfort is many of us have heard the Gospel and the Spirit has shown us the Lord, but we're still tangled up with the world.

And the church was born out of those who cried, crucify Him. And the disciples who fled Him to spare their life, He said, I laid down my life for you and I call you friends when you abandoned me.

So every time we have forsaken Christ, it drives us back just like the disciples to rely on Him, not ourselves. And to receive His free salvation, to rest in Him, to abide in Him, to truly see Him, our Good Shepherd, and to follow Him more and more each day.

Be comforted by this promise. You did not choose God. God has chosen you. While you're running away, He calls to you, come to me.

[29 : 16] Come to me and find rest for your soul. You're not going to find it anywhere else. And God did not choose you because you were being fruitful already, but because He has chosen you, He promises He will bear His fruit in your life so that He gets all the glory.

But if you don't believe in Jesus Christ, then you are perishing with this world. There is a world that is yet to come. Two more points of reflection.

You can know that God chose you if His Spirit strengthens your faith in Christ. You can know that God chose you if His Holy Spirit is strengthening your faith in Him.

Look at verse 26. Jesus says, when the Helper comes, see, you need the Helper. You need the God Himself, the Holy Spirit, to apply all of this to make it so in your life.

When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from My Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness about Me.

[30 : 28] So if you do believe, if you have the gift of faith from God, it's because the Spirit is bearing witness to you. It is God, the Holy Spirit, bearing witness, causing you to believe by faith.

So He says, when the Helper comes, beginning of verse 26, He will bear witness about Me. End of verse 26. And what He says in the middle gives us a wonderful doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

He says two things about this sending or proceeding of the Spirit. First He says, the Spirit whom I will send. Do you see that in verse 26? The Spirit whom I will send, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father.

So, a couple of points that we need to pay attention and hold on to here. The Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ Himself is revealing, the Holy Spirit proceeds in the active, continuous tense.

This is a doctrine called eternal generation or eternal procession. Like, the Holy Spirit is always proceeding from God the Father. The Holy Spirit did not come into being or was not a created being.

[31 : 41] The Holy Spirit has eternally been proceeding in the present tense continuously from the Father. But yet, there's a special pouring out of the Spirit that was reserved for the fullness of time when the Son would accomplish His work.

And then, He, as He ascends, He says, it's good for you. It's good for you that I go because then I will send the Spirit to apply it, who? To my friends. My friends will get the helper, the same helper that I got.

The Holy Spirit will bear witness to the friends of Christ, to the truth that Jesus Christ is not a seed of Adam's cursed line, but Jesus Christ was born to be the promised seed of woman.

In Luke 1, verse 35, we're told that it was the power of the Most High that overshadowed Mary.

Remember, the helper, that word is paraclete, advocate, witness, comforter.

And a paraclete is one who knew the character of the person that they're bearing witness about.

The Holy Spirit knew Jesus from the very beginning. The moment of conception, and before that an eternity past as being the one God.

[32 : 57] The Holy Spirit bears witness to the truth of who Jesus is. The Holy Spirit also bore witness to the truth that Jesus withstood every temptation and He remained sinless.

He showed the perfect love of heaven on earth on behalf of fallen mankind. We're told in Luke 4, 11, it was the Holy Spirit that drove Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted.

It was the Holy Spirit that brought Jesus back and by the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ ministered. The Holy Spirit bears witness to the truth that Jesus fulfilled the mission that the Father gave Him to accomplish.

We read this in Luke 4, 18. Jesus said, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.

So when Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as the helper, He knows the help of the Holy Spirit so intimately. This is the Spirit that helped Jesus Christ Himself that He is giving as a gift to His friends.

[34 : 10] That same Holy Spirit is your helper. A Puritan named Jeremy Taylor said, It is impossible for a soul to despair who remembers that your helper is the omnipotent God.

You can know that God chose you if His Spirit is strengthening your faith in Christ. God did not choose you because you were fruitful, but God chose you and put His Spirit in you to bear the fruit of Christ.

in your life to help you walk and follow Him. Finally, you can know that God chose you if you bear witness of who Christ is to you.

You can know that God chose you if you are one who bears witness of who Christ is to you. Do you?

Do you bear witness of Christ? Jesus promises that His friends will do this. In verse 27, You also will bear witness because you have been with me from the beginning.

[35 : 22] The disciples would receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit and they would go out into the whole world declaring the gospel, the good news that God came to save sinners like me and like you.

And it's every true believer following Christ that has the delight, the joy of bearing witness to their Savior, the one that you know. He is the one I heard His voice and He calls to you too.

Isn't this amazing? God did not need to use disciples. He does not need to use people like you and me in this mission to save sinners. His Holy Spirit is the powerful working agent.

But yet He says, you will bear witness. That's one of the purposes for which I have chosen you. I am including you in this mission.

Why? Because you're my friends. And because it gives the Lord Jesus great joy and all of heaven celebrates when the Spirit applies the gospel and brings another son or daughter into the kingdom.

[36 : 25] He wants His joy to be your own. He includes us in His mission to share His joy with us. Charles Spurgeon said, to be a soul winner is the happiest thing in the world.

Every time God brings a soul to believe in Christ, He brings a part of heaven to earth. Do you know the joy of being a witness to Jesus Christ?

We're told that God rejoices when He opens the eyes of the blind to see Him. In Luke 10, 21, we're told Jesus Christ rejoiced in the Holy Spirit.

He rejoiced in the Holy Spirit filling Him. And He says, I thank You, Father. There it is. Father, Holy Spirit, Son, the triune God rejoicing together. And what is He so pleased and joyful about?

I praise You, Father, that You have revealed to these little children the gospel. For such was Your gracious will. It's been said that friendship cuts your sorrows in half and it doubles your joys.

[37 : 41] Jesus says, You are my friends. Your sorrows you bring to me. I bear your sorrows with you. My joy I give to you. My joy is doubled by your friendship.

God lacks nothing, but He doubles. He doubles it in us. He expounds and magnifies His joyful character by involving us in His mission. If that saying is true of people, how much more is it true of our Lord Jesus?

Jesus Christ doesn't cut your sorrows in half. He says, Give me all of your sorrows. He bears all of our sorrows on our behalf. And we're told that in Jesus Christ is fullness of joy.

not just a double joy from a human friendship. It's fullness of joy in Christ alone. You can know that God chose you if you bear witness of who Jesus Christ is to you.

You get to share in His joy of seeing His name go forth. The hymn gets it so right. It says, Jesus, what a friend for sinners.

[38 : 49] Jesus, lover of my soul. Friends may fail me, foes assail me. He, my Savior, makes me whole. Hallelujah, what a Savior.

Hallelujah, what a friend. Saving, helping, keeping, loving. He is with me to the end.

Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, you can know more assurance. You can know more of this love. You can have more of this divine joy.

The reason is because you did not choose God. Jesus says, I chose you. What comfort we have in this. God did not choose you because you were faithful or fruitful.

but because he has put this gift of faith and opened your eyes, he promises he will make you fruitful so that he gets all of the glory in your life and in mine.

[39 : 54] Let's pray from 2 Corinthians 5.17. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come. Father, we confess we are united to you only because of Jesus Christ.

It's a mystery to us. We're like these little children that you've revealed yourself to us. There's no other explanation except that this is your good pleasure. You have chosen us.

You have called us your friends. We praise you, God the Son, that you are the true vine. We praise you that we've experienced, we've tasted new life in you.

We ask, Father, that you will make your love real in our lives. Make your love our own. Help us to see this. We want to see this peaceful fruit of righteousness.

[40 : 55] because we are engrafted into Christ. Please teach us what it means to abide in our Savior and rest in Him as our friend. We pray this for your glory and for Christ's sake.
Amen.