

## Testing Positive

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What first crossed your mind when you saw the title of this article? Covid, right? We look at a positive covid test as bad news! Of course, it's possible to have certain symptoms (fever, chills, cough, etc.) when the cause is something other than covid. Putting that lovely mile-long swab up your nose lets you know if it really is covid.

Not all positive tests are bad things. Peter and James wrote about the testing of our faith (James 1:3; 1 Peter 1:7). Now there's a case where testing positive is the best of news! So, is your faith genuine, or is it a mere pretense?

Rapid covid tests are looking for the presence of certain proteins characteristic of the virus. If the test finds those proteins, you test positive – you're infected!

Genuine faith also has characteristics distinguishing it from the pretend variety. For example, Biblical faith works. *“What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but does not have works? . . . Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead”* (James 2:14, 17). Obviously dead faith isn't genuine faith!

In 1 Thessalonians 5:8 Paul illustrated spiritual warfare by urging us to put on *“the breastplate of faith and love.”* Yes, love characterizes genuine faith. In fact, Galatians 5:6 commends *“faith working through love.”* 1 Corinthians 13:13 adds “hope” to the mix. And Paul urged Timothy to *“pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness”* (1 Timothy 6:11).

Some of Paul's detractors wanted to examine his apostolic credentials. Paul told them, *“Test yourselves!”* (2 Corinthians 13:5). That's not bad advice for all of us.

Test yourself. Do you test positive?

## Living My Best Life?

“Living my best life” is a popular phrase used on social media to describe good things in a person's life. However, its origin doesn't come from the most wholesome of sources. The phrase is featured in the 2018 hip hop song “Smile” by Lil' Duval and contains derogatory and explicit language which is repeated over 50 times in the 4-minute song. The infamous “F-word” appears at least four times within the lyrics of the popular tune.

It seems that once a catchy phrase becomes in vogue, the source doesn't seem to matter. I believe this is the case with “living my best life.” I've observed the use of the phrase on social media and the #livingmybestlife appears on posts about family gatherings, fishing trips and cooking good things to eat. I've seen it on kid's ball games and camping trips and just about anything that is “good” in life.

As Christians we must carefully consider how we present ourselves to the unbelieving world. Remember that we are not to be conformed to this world but are to be transformed by having a spiritual attitude concerning all aspects of life (Romans 12:1-2).

Are we at liberty to live our best life? We most certainly are, because we trust in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy (1 Timothy 6:17). For the Christian, living my best life means living for Christ and sharing the message of salvation to those around us. Living my best life means that I live humbly in servitude to my Lord and fellowman (Mark 12:30-31).

So the next time you want to show off your “best life,” why not take a photo during family bible study, bible class, worship, or visiting in the foyer after church; post it with #livingmybestlife. By doing so, you'll show the world what living the best life is really all about!

--Jay Launius (Maud, TX) adapted

## The Anchor Of The Soul

A ship securely anchored seldom drifts from its harbor; and a life firmly fastened to the will of God is not easily shaken from its moorings. Despite life's uncertainties there is a God upon whom we can depend. He inspires hope in the human heart, saying, *“I will never leave you, nor will I ever forsake you...”* (Hebrews 13:5). Such hope is the Christian's spiritual anchor. The inspired writer offers a most beautiful description of Christian hope when he says: *“This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek”* (Hebrews 6:19-20). Ours is a hope both sure and steadfast.

Our hope is sure because it is grounded in the word of God. Jesus says, *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away”* (Matthew 24:35). Because the word of Christ will be our standard of judgment on the last day (John 12:48), it is imperative that we closely and carefully study and apply its teachings.

Our hope is steadfast because it is inseparably connected to the nature and presence of God. The nature of God provides strong encouragement in as much as it is impossible for God to lie (Hebrews 6:18). We can trust God's promises completely. Our hope is anchored in heaven, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us and always lives to make intercession on our behalf (Hebrews 6:20; 7:25).

As Christians, we do not need to despair in the storms of life. We have an anchor to keep the soul, one that is both sure and steadfast. Our God, who cannot lie, has promised that, if we remain faithful, we will receive the crown of life (Revelation 2:10). This is our calm assurance, a peace that passes understanding (Philippians 4:7).

--Glen Elliot (Greenbriar, AR)