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Assurance of Salvation

By Matthew Steven Black

There is nothing more important than knowing that you have eternal life. People today would never gamble with their eyes. How much would you give for one of your eyes? Both eyes? There is no amount of money because your sight is that precious. How much more should we never gamble with our never dying soul. Each of us will live forever somewhere. Where will you live for eternity? Have you considered that one day you and I will stand before God? God invites wretched sinners to come to him and be saved, washed from all their sin, and have eternal life.

People today are constantly making big promises. Television advertisements promise everything from whiter teeth to smoother-riding cars. All these promises are trivial, however, when compared to the promise of eternal life that God offers to man. It is sad that not every man has this eternal life. God's word says that there are two groups of people in this world. Consider the following verses.

What are the two groups of people?

1 John 5:11-12 | And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Everyone on earth either has the Son of God as Savior and Lord, and they have eternal life, or they do not have Jesus, God's Son, and they do not have life. Everyone has one of two destinations: heaven or hell.

Is it possible to know that I have eternal life?

1 John 5:13 | And I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

Knowing that you have eternal life is possible and vital for your growth in the Lord. Ultimately assurance is a work of the Holy Spirit in your heart.

1 John 3:24 | And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

1 John 4:13 | By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

There is the sense of the abiding presence of the Spirit that awakens a person when they are born again. Before we were believers, we were aware of the presence of God, but we ignored him. Now the presence of God has moved into us and has taken up residency within our soul.

Ezekiel 36:26-27 | I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 | Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Assurance of salvation is very important for the believer to grow. If a person is constantly living in fear and uncertainty regarding his own soul, they will live in a paralyzed spiritual state, unable to grow.

Can a true believer lack assurance of salvation?

It is quite common for even true believers to doubt their salvation from time to time. John addresses this in his first letter.

1 John 3:18-21 | Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. 19 By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; 20 for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. 21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God.

Lack of assurance may come for various reasons. First, a person may not actually be born again. They need Christ to save them. They feel their need of Christ and need to surrender and repent and come to Christ by believing that Christ died for them personally and rose again for them to be saved.

Second, a true child of God may lack assurance

because of a self-focus or because of sin, lack of fellowship, or lack of service to God. Self-focus sometimes looks too much at how weak my own faith is or how weak my repentance is. The truth is no one has perfect faith and repentance. Our salvation is not by works or self-effort, but by looking upon Christ and his sacrifice for us by faith. Sin grieves the Holy Spirit, so often the believer who has an area of sin that is not repented of will lack assurance of salvation, because they no longer sense the abiding presence of the Spirit who is constantly comforting us with the promises of God and convicting us of any sin in our lives. The surest way to full assurance comes from looking to the incredible sacrifice Christ made and pondering the wrath of God that he satisfied on my behalf. We remember our first love. Oh, how he loves us!

Once I'm rejoicing in what Christ has done, I am empowered again for obedience by the Spirit to serve God, pray, fellowship, evangelize, worship, sing, etc., for the Lord. Being a useful vessel for the Lord fortifies my assurance as long as I am obeying out of a response of love, and not under the burden of legalism.

How do I look to Christ for assurance?

Whether you lack assurance because you are not yet a Christian, or perhaps you are a Christian, but you've grieved the Holy Spirit by self-focus or sin, the pathway to assurance is the same. Remember the gospel. Gospel means "good news."

It is the incredible, joyous news that that no one has to go to hell and suffer there for eternity. God does not want people to suffer for their sins.

2 Peter 3:9 | The Lord is ... patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

The Lord is ready to receive anyone who willingly comes to him, no matter how bad a sinner they are. "God is love" (1 Jn. 4:8), but this does not mean he lowers his standard of perfect holiness. God has provided a way to satisfy his holy nature and his righteous wrath against our sin.

1 Peter 3:18 | For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.

Jesus Christ, God's perfect Son, was crucified in your place and paid the penalty of eternal hell for you, if you will believe. Jesus said, "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Lk 5:32). "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa 53:6). God will exchange our sinful deeds for Jesus' righteous deeds.

2 Corinthians 5:21 | God made him [Jesus] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

When you believe that Jesus died for your sins and in your place, Jesus exchanges your record of sin with his perfect record of righteousness. You would then have a perfect record for the Day of Judgment.

Looking to Christ means you trust that what Jesus did on the cross, he did for you personally. He loves you. He knows everything about you. There is not one thing he cannot forgive. Come for cleansing. Come and he will dwell in you, and you in him.

John 3:36 | Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

John 3:16 | God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Believe that Jesus gave his precious life's blood for you. He offers eternal life to anyone who will come to him.

Hebrews 3:7-8 | The Holy Spirit says, Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.

John 1:12-13 | But to all who did receive him [Jesus], who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

Ephesians 2:8-9 | For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Revelation 22:17 | And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

Matthew 11:25-30 | Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; 26 yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. 27 All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. 28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

As a Christian, how can I deal with doubts?

Once a person repents of his sin and accepts God's gift of eternal life, Satan will begin to intimidate him and will try to cast doubts in his mind. This can be expected since Jesus called Satan the "father" of lies (Jn 8:44). Read the following promises carefully and note what God has said he will do when a person asks Christ to save him.

John 10:28 | I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

John 6:37 | All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

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.

Conclusion: God wants every one of his children to have a full peace and assurance of salvation. It is faith alone that saves us. Stop looking to yourself and your power and look only to Christ. Trust that he died for you personally. He loves you.