STARTING OUT AS A CHRISTIAN · STUDY NOTES

Study 3: Assurance of salvation

For personal study or groups

Your name

biblehelp.net

How to use these notes. Watch each part's video on biblehelp.net, or read the text below. Look up each passage in your own Bible and write the answer on the lines. The verses are printed at the back if you need them. At the end there are questions to think about on your own or to discuss in a group.

PART 1

Facts, not feelings

Can I be sure?

This study is about a personal assurance of salvation: the certainty of forgiveness in Christ, and the sure knowledge that we shall enter heaven, not hell, when we die.

Some people doubt their salvation because they started with mistaken ideas of what the Christian life would be like. For example, you may imagine (wrongly) that if God has saved you, you will never sin again, or that nothing unpleasant will ever happen to you with God on your side. Ideas like these soon lead to disappointment! But that is not because God has rejected you; it is simply because you had false expectations to begin with. That is why our first study was so important: it is vital to be clear about what the Christian message really is.

1. If we are saved, God wants us to know it

God does not want us to be anxious about our salvation for ever. He wants us to be certain of it, and so to rejoice in it, knowing that God is with us in life and in death. God wants us not only to be saved, but to know that we are saved.

1 **Look up 1 John 5:13**

Why did John write these things?

2 **Look up Luke 12:32**

What is the Father pleased to give His flock?

2. How can I be sure that I am really saved?

This question could be put another way: "How can I be sure I am one of those God has chosen?" (see study 2).

Questions like these may come when a Christian has a less dramatic "experience" than expected, or when early feelings have become less intense. But it is wrong to assume that being saved will "feel" like anything in particular; our feelings vary a great deal. They have more to do with the condition of our body than the condition of our soul. **Your salvation depends on facts, not feelings.** Facts are the only safe ground for our salvation.

Fact 1: Christ was punished for sin 2,000 years ago. In a nutshell, we can be sure of our salvation because of what God has done in His Son, Jesus Christ. If salvation depended on our goodness, we would never be sure of it. But because it depends on what God did, we can be absolutely certain. Read for yourself what God has done to save sinners like you: He gave His Son, Jesus, to die for us.

3 **Look up John 3:16**

What did God give, and what is promised to everyone who believes in Him?

4 **Look up Romans 5:8**

When did Christ die for us?

PART 2

God keeps His promises

Fact 2: God has promised salvation to all who repent and believe

If we have turned to God in repentance and trust Christ's death alone for our salvation, then the following promises are made to us. But before we look at them, remember that God cannot lie.

5 **Look up Titus 1:2**

What can God not do?

Remember too that to doubt anything God says is to call Him a liar.

6 **Look up 1 John 1:10**

If we say we have not sinned, what are we calling God?

Now look at these promises:

7 **Look up John 5:24**

What does the one who believes have, and what will not happen to him?

8 **Look up 1 Thessalonians 5:9**

What has God not appointed us to? What has He appointed us to receive?

9 **Look up Romans 8:1**

What is there no longer for those who are in Christ Jesus?

10 **Look up 1 John 1:9**

What two things does God do when we confess our sins?

3. How can I be sure my repentance and faith are genuine?

Although our salvation was won by Christ's death in our place, it is received by faith. Faith is the hand that takes the gift of eternal life, and repentance is the natural response of a heart that wants to please God. But how can we be sure our repentance and faith are real? We know they are real by the way they change our lives. The fruit of repentance and faith is a life of love and obedience to God.

11 **Look up Matthew 3:8**

What should repentance produce?

See also: Matthew 7:17.

Faith, like repentance, is also seen in deeds that please God.

12 **Look up James 2:18**

How is faith shown?

When we notice these changes in our lives, we know that God has been at work within us, and this assures us of our salvation. We won't reach the standard we would like, but if we are walking with Christ we shall see improvement.

Another great proof of our salvation is our love for fellow believers. We have a growing love for other Christians, simply because they are Christians.

13 **Look up 1 John 3:14**

How do we know that we have passed from death to life?

4. Review

God wants you to know you are His child, and to enjoy your salvation. God's promises are clear and enough, and our feelings don't change them! Our assurance comes mainly from trusting what God has done and believing what God has said. The question is not "How strong are my feelings?" or even "How great is my faith?", but "How true is God to His promises?" When we say "I know I'm forgiven", we are simply saying that we believe God. That is very different from proud boasting. In fact, it is the height of pride to argue with God when He tells us we are forgiven!

Facts, not feelings

Feelings come and go. Your assurance rests on what Christ has done and on what God has promised, and God cannot lie.

THINK IT THROUGH

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. When you want to be sure you are saved, why is it better to trust God's promises than your feelings?

2. Which of God's promises in this study means most to you, and why?

3. What changes has God made in your life since you trusted Christ?

HIDE IT IN YOUR HEART

Memory verse for study 3

Learn this verse by heart this week. Cut out the card and keep it where you will see it.

STARTING OUT AS A CHRISTIAN · STUDY 3 · MEMORY VERSE

“I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

1 John 5:13

Berean Standard Bible · biblehelp.net

“I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.” (Psalm 119:11, BSB)

AT THE BACK

The Bible passages (BSB)

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

2 **Luke 12:32** *Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom.*

3 **John 3:16** *For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that everyone who believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

4 **Romans 5:8** *But God proves His love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

5 **Titus 1:2** *in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began.*

6 **1 John 1:10** *If we say we have not sinned, we make Him out to be a liar, and His word is not in us.*

7 **John 5:24** *Truly, truly, I tell you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not come under judgment. Indeed, he has crossed over from death to life.*

8 **1 Thessalonians 5:9** *For God has not appointed us to suffer wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

9 **Romans 8:1** *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

10 **1 John 1:9** *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

11 **Matthew 3:8** *Produce fruit, then, in keeping with repentance.*

12 **James 2:18** *But someone will say, "You have faith and I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.*

13 **1 John 3:14** *We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. The one who does not love remains in death.*

Scripture: Berean Standard Bible (BSB), public domain. Quotations keep its American spelling. Like many English Bibles, it often says 'man', 'he' or 'brothers' where it means people in general, men and women alike.

FOR GROUP LEADERS

Study 3: Assurance of salvation

> **Memory verse:** “I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.” (1 John 5:13). Say it together at the end, and ask who can say it without looking.

Aims

- Show that God wants believers to know they are saved.
- Ground assurance on facts (what Christ has done, what God has promised), not on feelings.
- Show how genuine repentance and faith are seen: changed lives and love for other believers.

Suggested timing (about 60 minutes)

- **5 min** Welcome and short prayer.
- **20 min** Part 1 video (4 min); 1 John 5:13, Luke 12:32, John 3:16 and Romans 5:8.
- **30 min** Part 2 video (5 min); Titus 1:2, 1 John 1:10, John 5:24, 1 Thessalonians 5:9, Romans 8:1, 1 John 1:9, Matthew 3:8, James 2:18, 1 John 3:14 and the discussion questions.
- **5 min** Summary and closing prayer.

Tips

- Some new believers are troubled by doubts. Be gentle; point them to Christ and to God's promises.
- Distinguish assurance from presumption: assurance believes God's word; it is not boasting.
- The "fruit" test is for encouragement, not for measuring each other.

Answers to watch for

- **1 John 5:13:** written so that believers may know they have eternal life.
- **Luke 12:32:** your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom.
- **John 3:16:** God gave His one and only Son.
- **Romans 5:8:** while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
- **Titus 1:2:** God cannot lie.
- **1 John 1:10:** claiming we have not sinned makes God out to be a liar.
- **John 5:24:** whoever believes has eternal life and has crossed over from death to life.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:9:** God appointed us to receive salvation, not wrath.
- **Romans 8:1:** no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.
- **1 John 1:9:** if we confess our sins, He will forgive us.
- **Matthew 3:8:** produce fruit in keeping with repentance.
- **James 2:18:** faith shown by deeds.
- **1 John 3:14:** we know we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers.