

**ASSURANCE STRUGGLES**  
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*"And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" I John 11-13.*

I firmly believe that the Word of God is true and whatever it promises will be done. It is the deed to the real estate He promises in Heaven. It tells of the finished work of His Son upon the cross in our behalf. The Bible is not the word of man but the WORD OF GOD. As such it will deliver whatever the Lord has promised us. Why then do so many people struggle with doubts concerning their future? The Bible clearly promises that *"God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"* II Peter 3:9. God's desire is for all men to hear the Gospel, believe on His Son, and be saved. The Bible clearly teaches that God cannot lie. His promises are sure and we can depend on them. You should be as sure of where you are going for eternity as you are of where you are right now. Now let me reveal a number of reasons why multitudes do not know they are saved nor have any sure hope for eternity

**MANY BASE THEIR HOPE OF HEAVEN ON THE WORKS THEY DO.** Mankind hates to admit that we are all members of the fallen race, deserving Hell and not Heaven. All false religions rely on some form of works or ritual to please the Lord. The Catholic church expects its followers to partake of the mass, rely on prayers, baptism and other indulgences. Mary is glorified as the way of salvation and prayers are a means of earning joy now and in

the hereafter. Yet not one dogma of the church guarantees Heaven as a sure thing to any follower. The Word of God clearly condemns works as a means of salvation. *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast"* Eph. 2:8-9. The Jew depends on keeping the law, yet Romans 3:20 clearly warns, "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight". Millions of Protestants in our major denominations have never been willing to accept the Bible warning that *"all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags"* Isa. 64:6. No amount of good works will ever bring assurance of salvation.

Perhaps you are one that has **SUBSTITUTED SOMETHING ELSE** for the salvation experience. An infant baptism does not indicate nor facilitate the salvation of your soul. Nor does loyal membership in some church. Reformation is fine as far as it goes, but is not the same as being reborn. Some substitute an emotional experience in some way having a religious high; but again this is not salvation. It simply is not something that we ourselves can do for the redemption of our soul. Jesus told Nicodemus, a master of Israel, *"Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God"* John 3:3. Only the giver of life can offer the new birth. Our theories must be set aside for His plan which alone guarantees salvation. You will never be sure of Heaven without being sure you have had the new birth experience. The confusion of false teaching can also advance false hope or tragic error.

Sadly, **MANY HAVE NEVER DEALT WITH THE SIN QUESTION.** You will never know you have been saved until you admit you are lost. Modern religion lists all people as children of God, who in themselves are capable of good, making them acceptable before God. This is a deadly lie. *"All have*

*sinned and come short of the glory of God"* Rom.3:23. Paul was clear in saying, "there is none good, no not one" Rom. 3:10. Until we can acknowledge we deserve death, we will never be sure of life. Our condition outside of Jesus Christ is hopeless. When we realize our utter sinfulness then we are ready to be clothed upon by the righteousness of Christ. If you are too proud to see yourself as a sinner, you will never be sure of eternity and where you will spend it. You must confess your sin, acknowledge your guilt and accept the provision Christ has made for you.

A fourth reason for doubts concerning eternity has to do with **FAILING TO PUT FAITH IN GOD'S WORD**. In the fifth chapter of I John we are told of the importance of the record of God.

If one doubts the Word and the record within he is said to be calling God a liar. (I John 5:10)

In the Bible God speaks of Himself and this must not be doubted but believed. Anything else is to challenge the truth of God's promises. If you cannot believe Him you have not truly received Him. The promises of God, given in His word, become the basis for our belief. How can one trust in something one doubts? It is impossible! In all history the Word of God has never failed. Hitch your faith to the eternal, infallible Word of God and you can know it will never fail you. God has never failed to keep His Word.

Some are not sure of Heaven saying **IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW FOR SURE IN THIS LIFE..** This again is a sad turning from all that the Word teaches. What kind of a God would want us to wonder if we were His own? What sense would it make for Him to dangle us with no sure footing for now and eternity? What earthly, loving, father would refuse to assure his son of his sonship? Certainly not one who cared. Paul said, *"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to*

*keep that which I have committed unto him against that day"* II Tim. 1:12. Let me assure you, dear sinner, you can and should know with great clarity that you are saved and ready for eternity. Your salvation is not a thing of possibility but eternal reality. These seem to be five of the main reasons why the religious unsaved can not be sure of Heaven. You must know Him as Saviour, accept His redemption, and then you will know the thrill of His provision. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. *"I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"* John 14:1-3. Is this not a wonderful promise? If you place your faith in Him He guarantees to return for you and carry you to Heaven. Praise God!

Quite often, I find someone who seems to have accepted Christ, but still have times they are caused to wonder about their security and assurance of Heaven. This is all orchestrated by Satan in one way or another. A Christian can be buffeted by **FACTORS THAT ALLOW DOUBT**. Sometimes this creeps in during great stress and strain in the trying times of life. When things seem to be going wrong, Satan loves to stir the thought of doubt. Backsliding, or holding on to a sin that convicts us can ruin our sense of assurance. Getting out of the will of God can do it. Neglect of daily Bible reading, or prayer and failure to be in the services of your church will kindle the spark of doubt. Even in life if you get away from the warmth of the sun the chill of shadows will surround you. That is why the believer is commanded to walk in the light. Whatever cools your ardor for the Lord will chill your hopes for eternity. That does not mean you have lost your salvation, but have simply slipped away from the place of most

blessing. Return to the close walk and get back busy for God and your doubts will flee away. Always remember, what you do after being saved by the power of God, does not remove the new birth He worked upon you. It is His gift to you, purchased by Christ's blood and by His power you are sealed into the family of God. No one can change this eternal relationship, but God Himself. He promises He will not leave a member of His family behind. *"Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world"* Matt. 28:20.

Finally allow me to show you from the book of I John the five ways to be sure you are saved. We might call them evidences of our salvation. These things you will find in your life if you are truly a child of God. Thirty two times in the five chapters of the book the word KNOW is used. I choose to call these evidences **FIVE WAYS TO KNOW I AM SAVED**. The first is **THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT**. *"He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself"* I John 5:10. Before you were saved all the conviction came to you from the outside. The Gospel tract, the sermon, or the witness of a friend, spoke to you of your need. Finally, you responded and became a believer. At that moment you were born by the Spirit into the family of God. He came into your life and from then on you sensed Him within. The believer is convicted from within when something is wrong. You are also warmed and filled with His presence when you do right. He gives a peace and a leadership you can sense if you are really His child. You can sense His inward guidance and blessing day by day. He will be in you forever *"until the day of redemption"* Eph 4:30.

You can be assured secondly by **THE WORD OF GOD**. There are so very many beautiful promises to be accepted by faith and claimed for your own. John 3:16 promises, *"whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have*

*everlasting life"*. If you truly have believed in Christ then the promise is yours. *"Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"* Rom. 10:13. If you have called, then you are saved. The Word of God is His promise and your proof. Don't doubt, but simply believe it.. To doubt His promises is to call Him a liar. (I John 5:10) *"But to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name"* John 1:12. Believing He is the Son of God, have you received Him? Then the Bible teaches you are a child of God. This is what faith is all about. *"This is the record, that God hath given us eternal life"* I John 5:11. Now why don't you just believe it and rest in the finished work of Christ. He alone can save, and you alone can believe. Let it be settled in your heart.

Another sign of your conversion is **A LOVE TOWARD THE BRETHREN**. *"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren"* I John 3:14. The test is simple. What crowd do you love to be around? Whose company do you like to keep. I don't like skunks, but skunks like skunks. Do you feel at home around the cursing, sinning crowd? Do Godly Christians make you feel ill at ease? It is a simple test. You will love to be around those who are the most like yourself. *"Everyone that loveth, is born of God"* I John 4:7-8. If you love Christians and love to be in fellowship with them, it gives clear indication that you are one of them.

Further proof of your salvation will be **A DESIRE TO OBEY GOD'S COMMANDMENTS**. *"Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him"* I John 2:4-5. I am disturbed by a number of those who profess to be Christians but seem to have no desire to

please and serve the Lord. A true believer will want to go to church and read the Bible. His children will have a desire to please their Father. This is a natural sign of sonship and belonging to the Father. Do you enjoy doing the things of God and seek to obey Him? Then you can rest assured you are a member of the family.

A fifth evidence of your salvation will be **A CHANGE IN YOUR LIFE AND DESIRES.** *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"* II Cor. 5:17. When Christ truly comes into your life changes will be made. Sin will become distasteful and the things of God will take their place. *"Everyone that doeth righteousness is born of him"* I John 2:29. Take a close look at your life. Are you different from the Christ rejecting sinners around you? Have old habits dropped away and a new desire to please God grown within? Then rejoice for that is an evidence of the change Christ has made in your life. Your family and friends should notice the change as you forsake things of sin and seek to please Him.

Finally, it is all wrapped up in the understanding of what the Gospel really is and offers to all. It is the good news that Jesus died for you. That He was buried and rose again on the third day. That He ascended into Heaven from which He will soon come to receive His own. True assurance comes not from what you have done but what He has done. The Gospel is God's work for us in Christ. It was completed by Him in our behalf 2,000 years ago. We are in no way involved in His finished redemptive work but become a believing recipient of it. Man cannot contribute anything to his salvation. *"Salvation belongeth unto the Lord"* Psm. 3:8. The Gospel is God accepting His Son and the sacrifice He made for us. God has accepted Him in our place and we are safe,

forgiven and accepted by God in Christ. His resurrection is the promise of ours. Dependence on external actions is not good. This leads to wondering if you meant it or prayed right, raised the hand or went forward. Salvation is not dependent on the mode of decision but our trust in what is written.

God in Christ entered the world and died for you. As our substitute He lived and died and rose again. Believing this with your heart allows His perfect work to be applied to save you. It is His power that makes us sons of God and His power that keeps us forever. The eternal life He gives is as eternal as the giver Himself. Now snuggle up close and leave it with Him. Praise God!.