

Can a Person Really Know That He Is Saved?

Bible Answers About Salvation

It is truly possible for a person to know that he/she is saved and is ready to meet God. In fact, God intends and desires us to have this assurance.

First, Paul shows very clearly that the man outside of Christ cannot live the Christian life. He said, "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish" (Romans 7:18 -19). It is essential for one to understand that it is not the condition of the Christian that is here described. A failure to understand this may lead to the repulsive error of Calvinism which contends that one may serve God with the spirit while at the same time practicing sin with his body. The condition Paul describes in these verses could never be true of the Christian. The Christian is not "carnal and sold under sin?"

Paul is describing the person outside of Christ who recognizes the value of God's law but does not have the ability to do it because sin imposes its will on him. Sin is a usurper and tyrant bringing the sinner under its control. As a person outside of Christ he cries out "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24). To that question comes the wonderful answer, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin" (Romans 7:25). Here is the summation after the ring of triumph which Paul couldn't hold in; being unable to live up to what his mind freely recognizes and wants, he ends up sinning so judicially as well as practically he belongs to sin apart from Jesus Christ.

In chapter 8 which is a continuation of the previous chapter, Paul said, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God {did;} sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and {as an offering} for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit" (Romans 8:1-5). Through the law of faith, the law of the Spirit, one is made free from the law of sin and death and is now able to live according to the Spirit (Romans 8:16).

Since the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God there must be some way for one to know that he/she is walking after the Spirit. The word of the Spirit is what gives us our assurance we are God's children. I know in my soul, in light of what the Spirit had written and preached, that I have submitted to the Christ on His terms. It is crucial for people to base their

assurance on the Scriptures and not on personal experiences. In writing to the young preacher Timothy, Paul said, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The only way one can know one is saved and is walking faithfully before God is by the Word of God because it provides all the information we need.

Having been "born again," as Jesus described (John 3:3-5), one can then claim all of the Bible's precious promises of assurance regarding salvation:

- "You are My friends, if you do what I command you" (John 15:14).
- "For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day" (2 Timothy 1:12).
- "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him" (1 John 2:5).
- "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death" (1 John 3:14).
- "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13).

These passages and others show that a person may rightly claim that he knows that he is saved, provided he has been born into a new life through faith and obedience to Jesus Christ. The reality of this faith and his new life in Christ will be shown, both to him and to others, by his love and obedience to the Word of God, and by his love for his fellow Christians. This will be confirmed in his own heart by the witness of the Holy Spirit through the word of God (Romans 8:16).

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