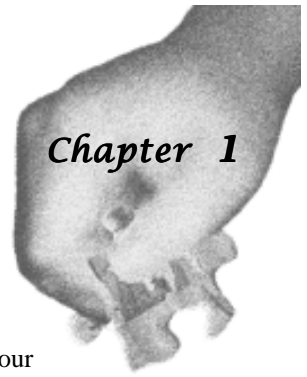


The Assurance Connection...

...How Sure Can You Be?



Chapter 1

Why Make This Connection?

If you have doubts about whether or not you are saved—or if you base the validity of your salvation on the wrong things—it will be difficult to remain confident and faithful in your Christian walk when the storms of life come your way. In addition, you have an enemy named Satan who will try to convince you that your decision to receive Christ was hollow, ineffective, even imaginary. Some Christians live their whole lives in fear they'll lose their salvation if they commit a certain vague sin. Some fear they were never saved in the first place, due to some sin they think is beyond God's willingness to forgive. As you'll learn in this study, the Bible says we Christians can *know*—with no doubts—that we are eternally saved and headed for heaven, despite what our feelings, circumstances or the devil may try to tell us.

What Were You Expecting?

When it comes to visualizing the supernatural, many people take their cues from Hollywood. In that world of make-believe, people who encounter dimensions other than the one we normally live in always get flashes of light, exciting “Surroundsound” music, The Force imparting miraculous powers, inter-dimensional visions, and angels ricocheting off the walls. From then on, all they have to do is tap their heels together three times, and all their problems are solved.

But in the *real* world, when we enter into a *real* relationship with the *real* God of the universe, it's usually not so dramatic. This is confusing to some people. To be sure, a few people *do* get the ricocheting-angels treatment. Some have very profound emotional experiences or are overwhelmed with a sense of peace or forgiveness. But usually, it doesn't happen that way.

Think back to when you received Jesus Christ into your heart. Can you remember some of the expectations you had? Write them down here. Were your expectations fulfilled?

Prayer Seed:

“Father, help me sense Your closeness and experience the witness of Your Spirit to my spirit. Give me that quiet confidence in my heart that I belong to You. Amen.”

Think About It:

Do you think we should rely on Hollywood, or our culture, or our own imaginations when looking for realistic expectations about God and how He interacts with people? Probably not. A much more reliable authority would be the source for *all* of our information about God, His Son Jesus Christ, salvation, heaven and hell, and much more: **The Bible.**

“What Can I Be Sure About?”

What does the Bible say you can be sure about when you asked Jesus Christ to be your Savior? Let’s look at five key points.

“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with Me.”

—Revelation 3:20

1 *You can be sure Christ has come into your life.*

What do you think “the door” in the verse to the left represents?

What does Jesus say He’ll do if a person opens that door?

How do you think one “opens the door” to Jesus?

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.”

—John 1:12 [NAS]

Have you done that? If so, when?

Read John 1:12. According to this verse, what two things does a person need to do in order to be called a child of God?

1. _____
2. _____

Have you done those two things? If so, when?

If you’re not sure you have actually taken that step of inviting Christ into your life as your Savior, go to Appendix #1 for some insight on how to go about it.

2 *You can be sure you were “reborn” as a “new creation.”*

Becoming a Christian isn’t like joining a club or taking out an insurance policy. And it’s not simply adopting a new philosophy. When you received Jesus Christ into your life, you were *literally* changed into a new being!

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

—2 Corinthians 5:17

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. Since you have invited Christ into your life, you are said to be “in Christ.” He’s in you, and you’re in Him! What does this verse say is true of those who are “in Christ”?

When the Bible says “the old has gone,” what do you think it’s talking about?

What would you say is some of the “new” that has come into your life?

Find and read **John 3:1-10** in your Bible. Before Nicodemus met Jesus, was he a very religious person? (see especially verses 1 & 10)

And yet, Jesus told Nicodemus he still had a great need. What was it? (verses 3 & 5)

Other Bible writers on the topic of being born spiritually:

Peter: “For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.” —**Peter 1:23**

John: “For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.” —**1 John 5:4**

3 *You can be sure all your sins—past, present and future—have been forgiven.*

“But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.” —**Isaiah 59:2**

“The soul who sins is the one who will die.” —**Ezekiel 18:20a**

“For the wages of sin is death.” —**Romans 6:23a**

According to the three verses above, what has kept us apart from God and would eventually lead us to eternal death?

According to the three verses below, what has become of your sins now that you have confessed them to God and asked Christ to be your Savior?

Psalm 32:5 _____

Psalm 103:12 _____

Isaiah 43:25 _____

The Point: If our sins were keeping us separate from God, what can we say about our connection with God now that our sins are no longer an issue? It’s re-established and permanent!

“Does this mean I won’t sin any more?”

If you’re human, you will still sin from time to time. But as you grow more mature in the Lord, those episodes will become fewer and farther apart.

“What should I do when I sin?”

Sin will always strain and hamper your relationship with God—that’s why He says it’s bad. But when we agree with Him regarding its “badness”—which is what confession is—God will forgive our sins, blot them out, cast them away from us and forget them. This clears the way for a renewed, unhindered connection with God.

Think About It: In **John 3:5-6**, Jesus talked about being “born of water and of the Spirit.” Being “born of water” refers to physical birth—everyone who has ever lived has been “born of water.” But Jesus says that this doesn’t qualify you to enter the kingdom of God. Since God’s kingdom exists on a *spiritual* plane, we must also be born *spiritually*—a “second birth.” When you asked Jesus Christ into your life, you were born into the spiritual realm. Prior to that, you were dead spiritually, only a two-dimensional being: physical and mental. But when Christ’s Spirit entered your life, you gained a third dimension: spiritual! At long last, you and God are “on the same wavelength”!

Note: *Iniquities, transgressions* and *sins* all refer to the same thing: breaking God’s laws. The penalty for this: separation from Him.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” —**1 John 1:9**

4 *You can be sure a new relationship has been established between you and God.*

Before you received Christ into your life, you were dead spiritually, separated from God, guilty of sin and even called an “enemy of God” (**Romans 5:10**).

Look up the following verses in your Bible and write down how they describe your relationship with Him *now*. You may note several characteristics in some passages. In each case, complete this sentence:

“I once was lost, but now I’m...”

Amazing grace!
How sweet the
sound,
That saved a wretch
like me!
I once was lost, but
now am found,
Was blind, but now I
see!

—John Newton, 1779,
from the hymn,
“Amazing Grace”

John 15:15 _____

Romans 8:14-17 _____

1 Corinthians 6:17 _____

Ephesians 2:19 _____

5 *You can be sure you will never again be separated from God.*

“How long can I count on eternal life lasting?”

“Oh, sure,” you might be saying. “Things are going pretty good right now. I feel really connected to God, and I want to please Him in every way possible. But what happens if, say, a year from now, I really blow it? I mean really, really, *really* blow it? Will God re-evaluate my status? Will He take back the life He gave me? Will He give up on me? I was separated from God before—could it happen again?”

The Apostle Paul’s answer to that question is in **Romans 8:38-39**, printed on the left.

How many times does the word “except” appear in this passage? (Don’t spend too much time looking for it — it’s not there!) What does this tell you?

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

—**Romans 8:38-39**

Look up the following verses in your Bible. Draw a line to match each reference on the left with the fact about your eternal security on the right.

John 6:37

• Nothing and no one can ever pull you out.

John 10:27-29

• God will never desert or forsake you.

Hebrews 13:5

• Jesus will never throw you out.

**In other words, once you’re in the family of God,
you’re in for good!**

According to the passage to the right (**1 Peter 1:4-5**), who has reserved the gift of eternal life for you?

Does this give you confidence?

In what condition will it be kept for you?

Who will make sure you get there safely to receive it?

How many times do words or phrases such as “maybe”, “possibly”, “barring unforeseen circumstances” or “if all goes well” appear in this passage?

What does this tell you?

“And God has reserved for His children the priceless gift of eternal life; it is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. And God, in His mighty power, will make sure that you get there safely to receive it, because you are trusting Him. It will be yours in that coming last day for all to see.”
—**1 Peter 1:4-5** [TLB]

“What if I don’t ‘feel’ saved?”

Everyone is “wired” differently. Some people are quite emotional, others very calm and objective. Some seem intuitively aware of every tiny occurrence around them, while others tend to notice only nuclear explosions in their immediate neighborhood. How you respond to receiving Christ into your life will be greatly affected by how God has made you. But regardless of your “wiring,” your feelings will come and go. It’s important to base your convictions regarding what’s real and what isn’t on something more solid than feelings.

Look up **2 Corinthians 5:7** in your Bible. What does it say we “walk by” (or in some Bible translations, “live by”)—that is, what are we supposed to depend on to regulate our lives, to determine right and wrong, to validate whether a certain course of action is the best one, etc.? Choose one of the following:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feelings | <input type="checkbox"/> Suggestions of others | <input type="checkbox"/> If it seems right |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faith | <input type="checkbox"/> Trial & error | <input type="checkbox"/> Logic |

But what do we base our faith on? In what do we place it?

This train diagram¹ illustrates the relationship between **fact, faith** and **feeling**. The engine, Fact, represents what we know to be true on the basis of the Word of God. The coal car, Faith, represents our beliefs and our confidence in certain truths, which produce attitudes and actions in us. When we say we have faith in something, we are saying we believe it to be absolutely true, and we are willing to take action based on that belief.



The caboose, Feeling, represents our subjective, emotional sensitivities and impressions. The train will run with or without the caboose, but it goes nowhere without the engine. Also, the train moves only if you shovel coal from the coal car into the engine. The caboose has no ability to power a train. In the same way, our Christian lives will move only if we place our *faith* in the *facts* of God’s Word. Looking to our feelings to validate our eternal status will always get us into trouble. But if we put our faith in the facts found in God’s Word, our feelings will eventually tag along!

“Can God take back this salvation which Christ has purchased? Absolutely not! Since the debt was paid, for God to demand it again from us would be unrighteous. The same righteousness which formerly called for our condemnation now calls for our justification. What powerful security this gives to our salvation! Even a worldly judge would not demand the same fine to be paid twice.”²
—Watchman Nee

Here's a summary of the five things you can be sure about now that you have asked Jesus Christ to be your Savior:

1. You can be sure Christ has come into your life.
2. You can be sure you were “reborn” as a “new creation.”
3. You can be sure all your sins—past, present and future—have been forgiven.
4. You can be sure a new relationship has been established between you and God.
5. You can be sure you will never again be separated from God.

Note: Why “Personal Application”? Don't study the Bible without intending to apply what you learn to your life. Do something about it!

Personal Application:

How sure are you now?

On a scale of one to ten, how sure are you that if you were to die tonight, you would immediately go to heaven to spend eternity with God?

<i>Not at all sure</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	<i>Absolutely sure</i>
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If you circled anything less than “10,” what is causing you to have doubts about this issue? What is keeping you from being “absolutely sure”?

Note: For some helpful principles on memorizing Scripture, see Appendix #2.

Scripture Memory Verse:

The Assurance Connection—

“And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life: he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

—1 John 5:11-12

Wrap Up:
Jesus asks you,
“Will you trust
Me with your
eternity?”

About 1 John 5:11-12: At my wedding my friend handed me an envelope. “This is for you and your wife,” he said. Of course, I was quite offended. Why would my friend be so cheap as to give us an envelope as a wedding gift? I had plenty of envelopes at home in my desk. The nerve! But later, I looked *inside* the envelope and found a \$100 bill! The very moment I received the envelope, I received the \$100 bill. He who had the envelope, had the money. In the same way, when you received Jesus into your life, you also received eternal life, because eternal life is *in Jesus!*

¹Bright, William R., *Have You Heard of the Four Spiritual Laws?* (San Bernardino, CA: Campus Crusade for Christ, 1965), p. 12.

²Nee, Watchman, *The Assurance, Security and Joy of Salvation* (Living Stream Ministry), p. 5.

