

Titles in this series:

Can we be Sure?
Forgiveness – The key to Freedom
Growing in Christ
Heaven
Help for Today
How can I know God's Will?
Investing for the Future
Jesus Christ is Coming Again
Life after Death
Living Water, Living Light
Our Wonderful Guest – The Holy Spirit
Prayer
The Bible – God's Word to us
The Fruit of the Spirit
What is a Real Christian?

Series – Problems People Face

Anger
Discouragement and Depression
Dealing with Guilt
Experiencing Loss and Grief
Fear – and how to deal with it
Loneliness
Relationships – How to improve them
Selfishness
When God doesn't explain why
Worry

Scripture is taken from the Holy Bible,
New International Version
and The New Living Bible.

Can we be
Sure?

Of Heaven?
Of Sins Forgiven?
Of Being A Child Of God?
What Does The Bible Say?



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Other booklets are available in this series as well as Daily Devotional material.

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Egerton C. Long

CAN WE BE SURE?

Can anyone, anywhere at anytime ever really be sure he or she is going to Heaven? Can a person who has accepted Jesus Christ as Saviour, be absolutely certain that their sins have been forgiven?

Can any person say definitely that he or she is a child of God and therefore is sure of eternal life? Can anyone say with strong conviction 'I know I am going to Heaven when I die?' What would you say?

Wouldn't it be less presumptuous for a person to say: 'I hope my sins are forgiven? I hope I am going to Heaven?'

In the same way is it right and honest for a pastor to say at a funeral service: 'Because of his/her faith in Jesus Christ while here on earth, our brother/sister today is face to face with Jesus Christ?'

CAN WE BE SURE?

Many Christians today have recurring doubts about their own personal salvation. They hope they are safe now and for eternity or they are trying hard to be saved. They are doing their best with their good works. But they do not have any assurance of salvation. They may feel they are not good enough. Many are like a little girl who, riding in an elevator, was heard to say: "I know we will get to the top all right but I am frightened we won't."

HOW TO RECEIVE JESUS AS YOUR SAVIOUR

If God has been speaking to you as you have read this booklet and if you are willing now to take Jesus Christ as your Saviour, here is what you should do:

Confess – tell God in your own simple words that you are a sinner, needing a Saviour. (Read Romans 3:23)

Accept – tell God that you see Jesus Christ your only Saviour and will accept Him now. (Read Romans 6:23)

Believe – that Jesus Christ has saved you because you asked Him to do so. (Read Romans 10:13)

If you have made this decision today then sign your name here and tell someone else what you have done. Join a church where you can hear God's Word preached and have fellowship with other believers.

I acknowledge myself to be a sinner in God's sight.

I accept Jesus Christ now as my Saviour.

I thank Him for saving me.

Date _____/_____/_____

Remember our assurance comes from:

1. Christ's work for us and His presence in our lives.
2. God's Word to us.
3. The Holy Spirit's witness within us.
4. The change that has come into our lives, since we accepted Christ.

Think over and accept by faith each of these four points. Ask God to help you believe more strongly in what Christ has done. Trust Him day by day to keep you in His love and care. Assurance will come and doubts will be replaced.

Read John 10:28-29 whenever Satan tempts you to doubt. *'I give them (My sheep) eternal life, and they shall never perish. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them from My Father's hand.'* These are the words of Christ and He can be trusted absolutely and always.

To be sure of your salvation is neither presumption nor arrogance, if it is based on God's Word and Christ's work. To doubt our salvation means we doubt the trustworthiness of God, who, in Christ, brings us back to Himself. As was once said 'God said it, I believe it, that settles it!' Can we be sure? Absolutely. God says we can. Why not believe what He has said? Today - now - and every day. Will you do it?

SPIRITUAL INSECURITY

Emotional insecurity troubles thousands of people everywhere. It may be caused by their family background or by a lack of love shown to them. It can come from low self-esteem or a sense of guilt, a season in their life of anxiety and fear. Insecurity can stem from any one of a dozen reasons. Sad to say, when it is present it can affect almost every part of our lives.

In much the same way, **spiritual insecurity** can also have devastating affects on believers in Jesus Christ. A well known English pastor, Rev. Francis Dixon, said that there are at least four areas that can be affected by lack of assurance. These are:

1. **Our testimony to the world around us.** How can a person who has doubts about his or her salvation and who suffers from 'spiritual insecurity' communicate a vital faith to others?
2. **Our service for Christ.** In the business world, if a person is always wondering whether he or she may lose their position today, tomorrow or the next day, they will never do their work well. His or her mind will constantly be filled with thoughts of personal problems and the insecurity of the future. That person is of little use to the employer. Obviously there can be similar results for a spiritually insecure person as far as his or her service for Christ is concerned.

3. **Our growth as a believer.** If we are not sure we really belong to Jesus Christ, we will never grow spiritually. A plant will not develop if it is constantly being dug up so that someone can look at its roots.
4. **Our joy will be lost.** If we are suffering from spiritual insecurity, we will never know the peace of God or the joy that is possible in Christ. We would be like a woman who was never certain whether her husband would come home to her that evening or not. For her, the marriage had no joy because it had no certainty or security.

WE CAN HAVE ASSURANCE

What is the meaning of the word 'assurance'? A dictionary says: 'Secure confidence that removes all possible doubt.' A spiritual definition might be: 'The sure and certain knowledge of our own personal salvation and eternal security through faith in Jesus Christ.'

One writer defined it this way: 'Assurance is the believer's strong conviction that, because he or she has received Jesus Christ, they are now in possession of a salvation in which he or she will be eternally kept.'

A NOTE OF CERTAINTY

The writers of our Bible obviously knew the reality of assurance. Look at these words from the Old and New Testaments:

If you still do not have assurance, do not be discouraged. Go back to the basics again. Tell the Lord your problem. Remember you have committed your life to Him. Read again a verse on salvation and assurance such as John 3:16 or John 5:24. Mark them in your Bible and memorise them. Don't let Satan have the victory. Stand against his attacks with the Word of God in your hand and in your heart. He is a defeated foe and Christ can always give you the victory over doubts and fears.

Yes, assurance can be lost – for example, through sin as we have already seen. Grieving the Spirit of God will bring coldness into your heart, but He, the Spirit of God, will do His utmost to bring you back to the place of fellowship. He does this through His conviction that can bring repentance. 1 John 1:9 is a key verse. *'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.'* Confess what you have done wrong and then count on God's forgiveness. Remember to forgive yourself as that often stands in the way of the assurance of sins forgiven.

Never forget: walking closely with the Lord is one of the greatest secrets of assurance and peace!

An inconsistent life will also bring doubts. If a Christian is not living for the Lord day by day, it will not be long before doubts will creep in and assurance can easily be lost.

David, the Psalmist, realised that to have God's peace in his heart he must live according to God's word. In Psalm 119:165 he wrote: *'Greater peace have they that love your law and nothing can make them stumble.'* John the apostle said it also in 1 John 3:18, 19: *'Let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth, This is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in His presence whenever our hearts condemn us.'* To have assurance and peace, we need to live according to the Word and will of God.

CAN DOUBTS STILL COME?

CAN ASSURANCE BE LOST?

Yes, doubts can still come. We are still here on earth and therefore subject to temptations, including the temptation to doubt God's Word. We have a cruel and persistent foe, Satan. I have known Christians of long standing, men and women who have served the Lord for many years, who have real and disturbing doubts especially when they are terminally ill. Satan loves to attack us when we are at our weakest – sometimes he attacks at our strongest moments also.

Job said: *'I know that my redeemer lives.'* (Job 19:25)

David said: *'I will fear no evil for you are with me.'* (Psalm 23:4)

Isaiah said: *'You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.'* (Isaiah 26:3) *'The fruit of righteousness shall be peace.'* (Isaiah 32:17)

The Apostle Paul wrote: *'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?'* (Romans 8:35) He answers his own question by stating plainly that *'Nothing'* can do that – read v. 38-39 also: *'I am convinced neither death nor life....neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'* In writing to Timothy, Paul said: *'I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him for that day.'* (2 Timothy 1:12)

The Apostle John wrote: *'He who has the Son has life.'* (1 John 5:12) Again, *'You who believe in the name of the Son of God....may know that you have eternal life.'* (1 John 5:13)

These men spoke out of their hearts and out of their own personal faith in and knowledge of God. If they could know such assurance, why can't we have the same certainty?

ASSURANCE COMES FROM BELIEVING WHAT GOD HAS SAID

When you came to Christ initially you believed that God **could** save you and make you His child. Now you must believe that He **has** saved you. If you doubt God's promise, you are saying 'I did my part, I accepted Christ. But I'm not sure God has done His part.' Yet what does Romans 10:13 say? *"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* Did you in all sincerity call on Jesus Christ to save you? You did? Then what does this verse say? If you called, **Jesus Christ has saved you.**

Read 1 John 5:10. *'Anyone who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about His Son.'* These are strong words and you should be careful that you do not say in effect, 'I did my part, God did not do His!'

Then look again at 1 John 5:13: *'I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.'* That could be your spiritual birth certificate. This verse should confirm to you your own personal assurance of salvation. It was written that you might **KNOW** you are saved through believing in Jesus Christ.

Remember Christ's death on the Cross for us saves us. His Word to us makes us sure. One of the finest illustrations of this is the story of the Passover Lamb in Exodus 12:1-23. The Israelite

you think these will help with your salvation? Ephesians 2:8-9 says: *'It is by grace you have been saved, through faith, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.'*

Nothing you or I can do can give us salvation. We must believe in Jesus Christ and what He has done for us. In my late father's Bible we found these words that are well worth memorising:

Upon a life I did not live

Upon a death I did not die

Upon another's life, another's death

I stake my whole eternity.

In peace let me resign my breath,

And Thy salvation see,

My sins deserved eternal death,

But Jesus died for me.

WHAT IF YOU STILL LACK ASSURANCE?

It could well be that your lack of assurance comes from your neglect of God's Word and prayer. If there is no spiritual food there will be no spiritual growth. (1 Peter 2:2 *'Like newborn babes, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.'*) If there is no growth, doubts can easily take over.

meeting or a small study group? Probably not. You may be tempted to do some of those things that you did before you were saved, but they will not give you the same satisfaction you once had about them. Why all these changes? They are part of the proof that you have been born again and part of your assurance of salvation.

THE SOLUTION

The real solution to lack of assurance is clearly found in the Word of God. Do you realise how much God loves you and that He gave His Son to die for you? That is what the Bible says. God loves you, just as you are, no matter how weak or sinful you may be. The Bible says so. Have you accepted these wonderful truths for yourself?

Make sure you understand that it is not a great strong faith on your part that will save you, but faith in a great, strong God. The strength and power are at His end of the line and He is willing to share both with you. Take Him at His Word. His promises are positive and can be trusted.

Does your lack of assurance mean that you are not really clear on how you received your salvation (which is through faith in Jesus Christ alone)? Are you trusting in church membership? What would happen if that church group disbanded? Are you trusting in the rituals or sacraments of your church? Are you trusting in the busyness of your church activities? Do

families were safe in their homes because of the blood sprinkled over the doorway. That saved them that night. It was God's word that gave them security – *'When I see the blood, I will pass over you.'* The blood made them safe. God's word made them sure.

WHAT OTHER HELP DO WE HAVE?

Here are two ways in which we can have assurance. The Bible is God's witness **TO** us, the Holy Spirit is God's witness **WITHIN** us. The Holy Spirit's presence confirms and authenticates our new life in Christ.

The Holy Spirit came into your life the moment you accepted Jesus Christ as your Saviour. Acts 2:38 says: *'Repent every one of you and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'* He is living permanently in your life to help you grow more like Christ. He is also there to give you power over temptation. He is there to make your service to Christ effective.

The Holy Spirit is within you to witness to you that you are a child of God. Romans 8:16 tells us: *'The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.'* He witnesses to you in two ways. We might call them positive and negative aspects of His witness within you.

In a positive way He assures you that you are God's child. He encourages you to look to God as your Father. He helps you to pray. Romans 8:26 says: *'the Spirit helps us in our*

weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray, but the Spirit intercedes for us.' He acts positively in your life. He can give you peace concerning answers to your prayers. That explains why sometimes you may feel that God has heard your prayer before you actually receive the answer you are asking for.

On the other hand, when the Holy Spirit speaks to you about what you should **not** do or when He speaks about the wrong we have already done, we should recognise this as His work of conviction in our hearts.

Also, when we are tempted to commit a wrong act or to lie about a certain matter, the Holy Spirit will remind us it would be sinful for us to act in that way. This is all part of the witness of the Spirit in our hearts.

OTHER EVIDENCE OF THE SPIRIT'S WORK

Often when a new Christian comes to me to talk about his or her problems, they have said: 'I don't know whether I am saved or not...I still lose my temper' or 'I still swear.'

I have asked: 'Did this bother you before you came to Christ?' The answer has invariably been: 'No, of course not. It never bothered me at all.' 'Does it bother you now?' The reply has always been: 'Yes, it certainly does.'

'Don't you realise' I have said, 'that your concern

is the evidence that you **DO** belong to Christ and have been saved? Can't you see that it is the Holy Spirit speaking to you, reminding you of your salvation? The fact that it bothers you **now**, when it never did before, is only added proof that you belong to Jesus Christ.'

This conversation has helped many new Christians who have been troubled by temptation or sin **after** their conversion.

A CHANGED LIFE

The situation mentioned above is also related to the witness of a changed life. Remember that for our assurance we have the witness of God's Word, the witness of the Holy Spirit and the witness of a changed life. Our heart attitude, which is vital, has changed.

2 Corinthians 5:17 says it so plainly for us all. Read the verse carefully. '*If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come!*' For some people this has been a very dramatic, obvious change. For others it has been less noticeable outwardly but none the less real.

For example, since you came to Christ, you have new desires, new affections. 1 John 3:14 confirms this: '*We know that we have passed from death to life, because we are brothers.*' Did you want to be with Christians before you were saved? Did you want to pray or be in a prayer