

# Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, July 10, 2013 – First Baptist Church Buda  
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

A SURE THING... ASSURANCE  
“Introduction To A Study on Assurance”  
*1 John 5:13, 1 John 1:1-4*

**A CASE STUDY: Listen as the following case study is read and consider how you might respond to this person.**

As a young boy, I was raised in a Christian home, went to church on Sundays and was a regular in Sunday School. I tried my best to live by the Ten Commandments and tried to do what I thought God was saying in my heart. As a young boy, I thought I heard Jesus speaking to my heart, and I invited him in. Later I was baptized and became a member of the church. Even as a young boy I felt good to know that my life belonged to Jesus and I was his child. But it seemed, I always fell short and that would cause me to doubt if I really was saved. Those doubts got worse and worse. I had no assurance of salvation. I read that sin would cause me to go to hell. Questions bombarded my young mind. Somewhere I got the idea that only if I confessed all my sin, would I go to heaven. Well, what if I forgot or overlooked some sin, what to bed and died in my sleep? Hell? How bad does the sin have to be? If I hit my thumb with a hammer, and howl in anger and let a bad word slip, would I go to hell? When is something a mistake or a sin? How could I ever be sure if I was saved or not? Then I discovered girls and hope evaporated!

A Sunday School teacher – may God bless her soul – told me that salvation was like putting drops of ink in a glass of water. Each drop was a sin. Depending on how black the water was when I died would determine whether I would go to heaven or hell. When I got home that day, I poured a glass of crystal clear water, and found an eye dropper and bottle of ink. After a few drops of ink in the glass, the whole thing turned black. Wow! Any hope of heaven vanished because I had a lot of sins.

My assurance of salvation? Zero! I gave up on getting to heaven, and concluded that I may as well enjoy as much sin as I could in this life.

Many people lack assurance of their salvation either stated or unstated. Some may suffer on in silence never having the real peace of mind that their salvation is secure. Some may experience intermittent bouts of doubt and fear about their salvation. It is important for a genuine believer to have assurance of his or her salvation for a number of reasons, but primarily because they cannot grow in their faith and commitment Christ if they remain at the beginning point of salvation and are never sure themselves that they are saved. Nevertheless, there are many causes

and reasons that could lay behind a lack of assurance, many of which are easily answered and addressed in Scripture.

## I. REASONS WHY PEOPLE LACK ASSURANCE

When a person doubts his or her salvation there can be several different reasons why that is happening in their life. The following provides a list of some of the primary reasons that people may lack assurance or have doubts in their life about their salvation. This list is not exhaustive and there may be other reason, but these are the primary reasons of a lack of assurance.

### 5 Primary Reasons Why People Lack Assurance:

1. **Doubting the reality of one's commitment to Christ** – Some doubt the reality of their commitment to Christ. Sometimes when a person cannot see visible or tangible evidence of their commitment to Christ and Christian ideals/practices/behavior it causes them to doubt and lack assurance. They may question, “Did I really mean it when I prayed?” Maybe my heart wasn't sincere enough?”
2. **Questioning the correctness of the salvation process** – Some question the correctness of the procedure they went through when they were saved... can't pin-point a specific time and place, didn't say those “exact” words in the sinners prayer, didn't do it right the first time, wasn't at a church, wasn't with a minister, etc.
3. **Lack of Biblical teaching and grounding** – Often when one is struggling with doubts and a lack of assurance is may simply be a learning/grounding problem. A lack of Scriptural grounding and learning on the foundational and doctrinal understanding of “salvation” and particularly “the eternal security of the believer” Those who don't believe in eternal security will naturally lack assurance... how can they ever know. Those who attach works to salvation will naturally doubt. Why? Because a lack of grounding on the basic Biblical teaching on such things as salvation, and doctrines such as “the eternal security of the believer” cause us to just not “know” for sure. We've never studies it and been convinced of it.
4. **Unconfessed or unrepentant sin** – Sin in a believer-s life will always lead to doubt if it remains unconfessed and unrepented of. You can be sure that Satan, the enemy, will jump on our failings to point the finger and cause us to question the validity of our salvation.
5. **Lack of salvation or lostness** – For that one who is having doubts or lack of assurance of their salvation they should always check it out and be sure that they are indeed saved. Some have reason to doubt because they are lost. Sometimes it is not a lack of assurance or doubting your salvation, but the conviction of the Holy Spirit that they were never saved, and are in fact lost.

## II. ASSURANCE VERSES SECURITY

Before launching too deeply into a Biblical study on “assurance” it is important to clarify and establish the difference between “security” and “assurance.” There are many studies the center on the study on the doctrine known as “The Eternal Security of the Believer” or the doctrine commonly called “once saved, always saved,” or “the perseverance of the saints.” Sometimes this doctrinal study is lumped in with a study on assurance of salvation, and they are certainly linked together. A strong understanding of the “The Eternal Security

of the Believer” as a Biblically based and sound theological doctrine will certainly help one with issues of assurance. Two primary questions on assurance help to see their link.

**2 Questions on Assurance:** *We can't really answer the second question without answering the first. So let me ask the question a little different way, "Is it possible for us to really know anything for sure? Can you really be assured of your salvation?" Only if salvation is secure and you have full faith in it.. and it is?*

1. **Is salvation secure?** – The answer is “yes,” but we need to support that answer Biblically. The Biblical doctrine of “Eternal Security” helps us to do so. Scripture make it abundantly clear that our salvation is secure.

**4 Scriptural Proofs that Salvation is Secure:**

- (1) **The Sovereign Decree of God the Father (John 3:16-18)** –
  - (2) **The High-Priestly Work of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 7:23-25)** – He ever lives to make it secure and assured.
  - (3) **The Sealing and Guarantee of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:21-22)** – The Holy Spirit marks you with an irrevocable mark that can't be taken away assuring you that you belong to God.
  - (4) **The Affirmation of Scripture, God's Holy Word (1 Peter 1:23-25)** – God's Word doesn't lie and it never fails. You have been saved and you can be assured of this because you were born again not of perishable seed but of imperishable (nothing can destroy it) through the Word of God... the affirmation of Scripture.
2. **Can we experience that security?** - Is it possible to know (have assurance) that we are saved? The answer is “yes,” but how do we know and get that assurance?

**Invalid Proofs:**

- |                                 |                                   |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| (1) Signing a card              | (6) Regular church attendance     |
| (2) Walking an aisle            | (7) Emotional feelings            |
| (3) Raising a hand in a service | (8) Religious duty and service    |
| (4) Baptism                     | (9) Keeping spiritual disciplines |
| (5) Church membership           | (10) Family heritage              |

**Valid Proofs:** There are two ways according the New Testament that we can experience assurance and security

- (1) **Pure doctrine... know the truth** – 2 John 9 says, *"Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son."* One of the things that causes a person to doubt their salvation and lack assurance is a poor understanding of the doctrine of salvation in Christ. True assurance is available only to those who abide in the true biblical doctrine of Christ. If you have a wrong view of Jesus Christ, you will not experience assurance and security in your salvation. People who follow the teachings of cults or unbiblical religions, and do not affirm the Christ of the Bible, will never experience a genuine sense of assurance. That's why they work so frantically to earn salvation. They try to be affirmed by their work because they never experience assurance. The same is true for a person in the church who may

not have an accurate understanding of Christ and how He saves us. They may be genuinely saved by calling on the name of Christ, yet never have grown in God's Word enough to understand that we are saved by the finished work of Christ and what he has done and not what we have done. They may work and serve, and sweat out religious service in order to gain a peace and assurance of their salvation, but it never comes because they have not yet learned to fully rely on Christ and His grace alone.

- (2) **Pure living... living the truth** – Matthew 7:18 says, *“A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.”* One of the things that cause a person to doubt their salvation and lack assurance is when they still sin and can't seem to stop. If you see corrupt fruit in your life, it's logical to assume you're a corrupt tree. It is vital that you see a pattern of holy living in your life if you are ever to know assurance. Paul wrote in *Titus 2:11ff* that, *“The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness... we should live soberly, righteously, and godly (lives)...”* Therefore, if you are not denying ungodliness in your life, you will have a difficult time at best believing and convincing yourself that you are really saved. In other words, you will lack assurance.

So you see questions of “security” and the doctrine of “Eternal Security” are vastly tied to our assurance of salvation and having that victory in our lives. However, though vastly tied together, they are two distinct things. The definition and understanding given below may help in clarifying the two:

### **The Difference Between Security and Assurance:**

1. **Security = When we trust in Jesus Christ, our eternal security in Christ becomes a spiritual reality whether we understand it or believe it** - One's *belief* in security in Christ does not make it true or false. If we have trusted in the person and work of Christ for personal salvation, security is a fact.
2. **Assurance = A confident realization of that security** - Assurance is the realization of what we have in Christ such as eternal life, forgiveness of sin, and being the object of God's personal care as his children. Assurance has to do with our comprehension of the facts and provisions of salvation through faith in Christ. This is a crucial doctrine because, properly understood, it will touch the believer's life in several areas. Not only does it give assurance of salvation, but with that also comes a greater assurance of God's provision in all areas of life. Romans 8:32 says, *“He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?”*

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** When people do not have assurance, we should always begin by sharing the gospel to be sure they have truly trusted in Christ. Once this is confirmed, then move on to the matters of assurance. Never assume anything. Someone's eternal destiny is at stake. In other words, if you are sharing with someone who is lacking assurance of their salvation don't try to talk them into the fact that they are saved, or convince them that they are saved. A person's salvation must be confirmed in that person's life by the Holy Spirit, not by you or I.

### III. PRINCIPLES FOR ASSURANCE

2 clarifying principles for assurance should be kept in mind not only for our own personal understanding of assurance in our lives, but also for a correct Biblical understanding of assurance.

#### 2 Principles for Assurance:

**Principle 1: We need to draw our assurance from faith in the facts of Scripture and not from our feelings** - Our faith and thus our assurance must stand on the sure promises of the God's Word rather than on our feelings. Some days you may not "feel" saved... that doesn't change the fact of your salvation based on God's work and His word full of promises and truth that confirm the fact.

**The Biblical order to remember is: FACTS —> FAITH —> FEELINGS.**

Feelings are the responders of the soul or heart, and can be based or influenced by external sources and temporal things. They can be deceptive and often untrustworthy. They are human and therefore they are often fleeting, and flimsy, and faulty. They are to follow and respond to our understanding of Scripture, but they are never a safe guide to what we should believe or of the state of our salvation. This is an important principle in understanding assurance because you will often hear someone say, "I don't feel very saved!" "I just don't feel it anymore." This may indicate that the person is basing his or her salvation or assurance of such on "feelings" rather than on the finished work of Christ. This leads to the next point.

**Principle 2: We need to draw our assurance from faith in the facts of Scripture and not from our works** - Works or the Biblical changes that occur in our lives as a result of the grace of God can confirm the reality of our life with God. We must be ever so careful, however, in making such subjective ground the basis of our assurance, for when a believer is out of fellowship he or she can have the appearance of an unbeliever especially if the condition lasts for any length of time. Paul writes in **1 Corinthians 3:1-4** about just such a case, *"So, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but instead as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready. In fact, you are still not ready, for you are still influenced by the flesh. For since there is still jealousy and dissension among you, are you not influenced by the flesh and behaving like unregenerate people? For whenever someone says, 'I am with Paul,' or 'I am with Apollos,' are you not merely human?"* If we depend on works or obedient living to prove our salvation then we are faced with the following dilemma: If we are living obediently now (the supposed proof of salvation), the possibility exists that could change in the future. If later on we cease to live obediently, then that would prove (based on the above premise) that we are not now true Christians in spite of our obedient lifestyle. So present obedience can never really prove our Christianity and thus, we could never have assurance.

Proper Christian living should never be the fundamental grounds for assurance of salvation. Rather, assurance of salvation which should rest in the merit and sufficiency of the Savior and the believer's new life in Christ, must be the fundamental basis for proper Christian living. Colossians 3:1-4 says, *"Therefore, if you have been raised with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Keep thinking about things above, not things on the earth, for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4When Christ (who is your life) appears, then you too will be revealed in glory with him."* As John shows in 1 John 1:6-7, Christ-like behavior is an evidence of genuine fellowship and that a person is truly walking with the Lord in the light. Listen to it in 1 John 1:6-7, *"If we say we have fellowship with him and yet keep on walking in the darkness, we are lying and not practicing the truth. But if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin."*