

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living Study Guide

UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

LESSON 1: HOW CAN I KNOW THAT I AM SAVED?

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Discipleship Essentials module entitled *Understanding Salvation*. This series of lessons examines the very foundational idea of salvation, and what occurs in the life of a person who becomes a Christian. These lessons are critical for every believer to understand before they can effectively share the Gospel with others. Each lesson examines a concept from a Biblical perspective and includes time for discussion of these principles as well as how to effectively apply them to your life. This set of lessons is ideal for use with discipling new believers to ensure they fully understand these ideas.

The Student's Guide is intended to help an individual look deeper into a specific lesson on their own. This lesson can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials such as the video and audio productions found on www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

LESSON 1: HOW CAN I KNOW THAT I AM SAVED?

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

This lesson examines what the Bible says about salvation, and how we can be sure that we are saved. Sometimes in our lives we have doubts and fears, or feelings which betray our confidence. This lesson will help you see from God's own Word that we can have confidence in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins, and how to help others have assurance of their salvation.

JUST SO YOU KNOW...

This lesson looks at what Christians mean by the word 'salvation' or 'being saved'. This is a radical change that takes place inside a person and affects all parts of their life. But because it is a deeply inward change that begins to take place rather than an outward one, people sometimes have doubts as to whether or not they have truly been rescued from their sins. This desire often comes out of repentant heart and a longing to be right with God, and is therefore a good sign! It is important that we know we are saved, and have assurance from God's Word before we can share the Gospel Message with others. If this is something you have not done, and it is the desire of your heart to be right with God and belong to Him – why not pray right now? This lesson will show you what must occur in a person's life in order for them to receive salvation.

GETTING STARTED

1

Have you ever had a moment of doubt when you were not sure if you were really saved? What did you do about this?

2

What are the outward signs of a person who is saved? What sorts of things will they do regularly? Can someone do those things and NOT be saved or not have real faith? What is the difference?



STUDY

❖ **ASSURANCE OF SALVATION:** Everyone has times of doubt in their faith, and times when they must seek out answers from God. If you are wondering whether you have really been saved or if you are truly a Christian, this lesson is a great place to start. If you are speaking with someone who is experiencing a time of doubt, or with someone who is new to becoming a Christian, it is vital that they know they have been saved. It is an important question, and one that we mustn't ignore!

Our assurance of salvation comes from two places: the Word of God and our changed lives. Our assurance is not based on the things we do such as acts of piety or attending church. It is also not based on our feelings which can come and go.

❖ **ASSURANCE FROM THE BIBLE:** The first place we can look for assurance of our salvation is in God's Word. It is important to trust that the Bible really is the true and living word of God. Why can we trust the Bible? The Bible is like no other book in the world. It was inspired by God and is the basis for salvation and for Christian living. It was written down by 40 different people over a span of 1500 years – and yet it is perfectly cohesive and absolutely complete.

- The following verses tell us the origin of the Bible, and why we can trust it. Read the verses and write down what you find out:

2 Peter 1:20-21	
2 Timothy 3:16-17	
1 Thessalonians 2:13	
John 20:31	
Psalms 119:105	

That's right! The Bible is not just a book of words written by people. The Bible is the very words of God to us. The more you study the Bible the more you will learn what an incredible, unique book it is.

❖ **WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT SALVATION:** God's message to us in His Word outlines the way of salvation, and what we must do to attain it. The Bible outlines the facts about our sinful state and what God has done to rescue us. Look up each of these verses to see what the Bible has to say.

- Read the following verses and write down what they say. This is the plan of salvation written in the Bible:



Colossians 1:16	
Romans 3:23	
Romans 6:23	
John 3:16	
1 John 1:9, Acts 2:38	

❖ **WHEN IS A PERSON SAVED, ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE?** There are many verses in the Bible that tell us when a person is saved. While these passages might seem confusing to a new believer there is a very clear pattern. The earliest Christians struggled with this too, and in response, the Apostle John wrote several letters to churches to help them with this problem. One of these letters – the book of 1 John – is in your Bible. It was written to answer this question. Look through the following list, and read the verses that accompany each point.

- **They admit they are a sinner** (Acts 2:38, Luke 24:46-48, 2 Corinthians 7:10)
- **They believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God** (John 20:31, John 3:36, John 5:24)
- **They confess that Jesus is Lord** (Romans 10:9-10, 1 Corinthians 12:3)
- **They obey the commandments of God** (1 John 5:3, 1 John 5:18, John 14:15)
- **They love God’s children** (1 John 5:1-2, 1 John 1:17, 1 John 4:7, John 13:34-35)
- **They have received the Holy Spirit** (Acts 2:38, Ephesians 1:13, Titus 3: 4-6, Romans 8:16)

➤ Summarize in your own words: What must a person do to be saved?

➤ Ask yourself: Have I done these things? Is all of this true of me?



Truly believing that Jesus Christ is the master of your life and desiring to do everything He has commanded is not something that we can do apart from God’s help. We may be able to say the words on our lips, but we are not able to mean them in our hearts. Likewise desiring to obey all of God’s commands, loving others deeply and putting others ahead of ourselves are all evidence of God’s Holy Spirit working in us. If this is true of you – than you can have confidence in your salvation! There is one other area we will look at that gives a person assurance.

❖ **ASSURANCE FROM A CHANGED LIFE:** People are very good at acting contrary to their true nature, and may fool themselves or those close to them for a time. But a truly changed life as a result of believing in Jesus Christ is a miracle to behold. The Bible uses very strong language when talking about the difference between a person who is saved and a person who is not. A person who is saved has come alive – before this they were spiritually dead. (Read Ephesians 2:1-10). The differences between a dead person and one who is alive are innumerable – so it is with those who are spiritually alive! When we receive salvation, we come alive. The circumstances of our life may not change at all – but our heart and mind are made new. This allows us to respond differently to every external circumstance. We become deeply changed people. The change may be small at first, but given time it will grow! Consider the changes the Bible says we go through when a person receives salvation:

❖ **WE WERE DEAD BUT HAVE COME ALIVE:** The difference between our life before Jesus Christ and our life after is described as being given ‘life’. This means that parts of us will come alive that were once dead; sensitivity to sin, increased conscience, growing desire to serve and love others all begin to grow. It may start small when we are babies in our faith – but it will continue to grow!

➤ Read the following verses and write down what they say:

John 5:24	
Ephesians 2:4	
Romans 6:4	

❖ **WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN A NEW HEART AND MIND:** Before we were saved, we could not understand the things of God, or have our heart desire what God desires for us. Have you experienced this in your own life? God promises us a new heart and a new mind. This ability to begin to understand His Word, and desire the right things is evidence of God’s work in us.

➤ Read the following verses and write down what the verses tell us:

2 Corinthians 5:17	
Ezekiel 36:26	



2 Corinthians 4:4	
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❖ **WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE HOLY SPIRIT:** Another miraculous gift of God is that He – in the form of the Holy Spirit – comes to live inside us! He will empower us and guide us in increasing amounts. When Jesus was preparing His disciples for His departure, we read in the Bible that they were very troubled. They were confused, alone and unsure – very much like many of us today! But Jesus promised a helper that would be with us always: the Holy Spirit. We can see evidence of the Spirit of God working in us as our lives change, and we become more like Jesus Christ. We should see the ‘fruit of the Spirit’ increasing in our life – that is, an ability to be joyful, patient, loving etc. This Holy Spirit is the gift given to us as a promise of salvation and coming eternal life.

➤ Read the following verses and write down what they say:

Acts 2:38	
Romans 8:16	
Galatians 5:22-23	
John 14:15-17,26	

➤ Do these things describe you? Have you seen the evidence of new life, a changed heart and the Holy Spirit helping you?

If you do not see the evidence of these things in your life, you may wish to ask others who know you well. Sometimes it is hard to see the change that has occurred in us. Sometimes if you are very new to being a Christian the change will take time. Spend time in these Bible verses and pray that God would help you understand them more.

❖ **REMAIN IN THE LOVE OF GOD:** The verses in this lesson should be a comfort to someone seeking assurance of salvation. When we receive the forgiveness of God, we become alive. We become His children. We can trust God to take care of our life in the present and our souls for all



eternity. We will need to remind ourselves of our salvation from time to time, and continue to seek God in order to remain close to Him.

- There are three final things to remind someone seeking assurance of salvation. Read the verses and write down what they say:

John 10:28	
1 John 3:24	
Jude 1:20-24	

IN SUMMARY

- ❖ Everyone has times of doubt or times when they must seek out assurance of their salvation.
- ❖ Our assurance of salvation comes from two places: the Word of God, and the evidence of our changed life.
- ❖ Our assurance of salvation does not come from the things we do, or from good works. Nor does it come from how we feel.
- ❖ We can trust the Bible.
- ❖ The Bible lays out how a person can be saved.
- ❖ A person is saved when they admit they are a sinner, believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, confess that Jesus is Lord, willingly obey the commandments of God, love God’s children, and have received the Holy Spirit.
- ❖ We can have assurance from a changed life because we were dead, but have come alive. We have received a new heart, a new mind, and the Holy Spirit.
- ❖ We must trust God to protect our salvation, remain close to God and keep His commandments, and keep ourselves in the love of God by having mercy on others, preaching the Gospel and trusting God to keep us from stumbling.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How would you counsel those who have doubts in their faith? What steps would you suggest to them to make their faith stronger?

2. How do you feel about your salvation right now? How has God assured you of your salvation through His Word and the Holy Spirit?