

How can I BE SURE about my relationship with God?

Can you imagine trying to build a solid marriage when one partner is unsure of the love of another? Or a child trying to build up confidence when they are constantly questioning whether their parents really cared? Maybe you even know what it's like to never know where you stand at work—anxiously anticipating that today may be the day you lose your job. Going through life on the basis of insecurity can be crippling.

On the other hand, how great is it when you can absolutely count on something? You know your car will start each day. You know there will be food in the refrigerator. This kind of confidence in every area is what is needed if we are going to live our life to the fullest.

So if someone were to ask you, "How do you KNOW for a FACT that you are accepted by God? Can you take it to the bank?" Or they asked, "If you died tonight, would God let you in heaven to spend eternity with Him?" And if your answer was "Yes, I am accepted and God will let me into heaven," where would your confidence come from? If God Himself asked—"Why should I accept you? Why should I let you into my heaven?"—what would your answer be?

It's at this point that many people get sidetracked. They might think God's acceptance is by heritage—their parents were religious so they are too—which makes about as much sense as saying that since your parents are married that you're married too. Or they may think that because they are *pretty* good people or that God has to accept everyone or that it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you're sincere. The problems with all of these reasons are many, but the bottom line is that none of them are God's reasons. So what are God's reasons? How can you know for certain that you are saved? What promises from God can you take to the bank?

Living with God's Confidence

Read these Scriptures and answer the following questions:

1 John 5:11-13

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. [12] He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. [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.

- What do we have if we have Christ in us? (5:12)
- Why did John write this letter? (5:13)
- How can we be confident that we have eternal life?

Ephesians 2:8-9

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- [9] not by works, so that no one can boast.

- What is the means of salvation? (2:8)
- Where does salvation come from? (2:8)
- Why can no one boast in his own salvation? (2:8-9)

1 John 5:14-15

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. [15] And if we know that he hears us--whatever we ask--we know that we have what we asked of him.

- What confidence can believers have? (5:14-15)
- When is it hard for you to approach God with confidence?
- About what issue do you need to approach God more confidently?

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

- What does God promise to do for us if we confess our sins? (1:9)
- What role does the confession of sins play in your daily life?
- What will you do to incorporate the confession of sins into your daily routine?

Romans 8:31-39

What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? [32] He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? [33] Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. [34] Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. [35] Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? [36] As it is written:

"For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."

[37] No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. [38] For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, [39] 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.

- Why should we feel confident that God is not against us or condemning us? (8:31-34)
- What possible tragedies or hardships are unable to separate us from the love of Christ?
(8:35-39)
- How can we be sure that bad times aren't a signal of God's displeasure us?
- How can you commit your difficult circumstances to God this week?

Confidence Toolbox

After mulling over these Scriptures, we see that God never meant for us to go through life insecure about our standing with Him, our eternal destination or whether or not He'll keep His promises. To sum up, here are some assurances we need to carry with us at all times:

1. Our Salvation—if our faith is in Christ, we are saved. When we doubt this, we are no longer considering His work, but our failure. Jesus is stronger than our personal failure.
2. His Acceptance—if our belief is in God's unfailing love, we can be confident that He loves us. We get messed up when we start thinking God's loves me more when I go to church but when I sin He loves me less. We are His children—no matter what.
3. His Help—again, if our trust is in what Christ can do, we can know that God will help us in times of need. Where we lose our effectiveness is when we return to our self-sufficient and self-dependent ways.

Action Plan

The following actions will help me walk with confidence:

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