



How Can You Be Sure You Are Saved?

"For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9, NLT)

Let's imagine that you were swimming in the ocean and suddenly you were caught in an undertow that began pulling you under and out to sea. In spite of your frantic swimming, you were drowning. Your Dad saw what was happening, jumped into the ocean, and swimming with all his might, reached you with his powerful arms and saved you. Saved! God has used this joyful word to describe how he, your heavenly Father, rescues you from guilt and punishment for your sins, brings you safely into his family, and gives you a new eternal (forever) life with him.

Now wouldn't you think it silly if you began wondering if your Dad had really saved you? You are alive; your heart is beating, and you're breathing. You can look at the facts and know it's true. However, sometimes after a person prays to receive Christ as Savior and Lord, doubts come: "Did anything happen? Am I really saved and in God's family? Are my sins forgiven?" Because God's work happens inside you, you can't see anything and you may not feel any differently. But as surely as you can know if you are saved from drowning, your heavenly Father wants you to know you have a new life in his family forever. The Apostle John wrote: "*I write this to you who believe in the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life.*" (1 John 5:13, NLT)

It is not enough just to say a few words or to agree intellectually (in your head) that Jesus took your punishment for your sins or to have an emotional experience. Although emotions may be involved, you receive Christ and are saved by faith (belief and trust) as an act of the will. It is a decision, a commitment of the heart (one's entire inner being). Look at the truths that will help you to know you are saved.

The plan

God loves you. He created you, wants to be your friend and have a close relationship with you. The Bible says, "*Look! Here I stand at the door and knock. If you hear me calling and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal as friends [or have close fellowship].*" (Revelation 3:20, NLT)

God is holy – pure and perfect. He is sinless and cannot allow sinners in his family. That creates a real problem because everyone has sinned (anything that you think, say, or do that displeases God). The Bible says: "*For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard.*" (Romans 3:23, NLT) You were born with a nature or "want to" to

sin. Be honest! Don't you like to have your own way and do your own thing? God's punishment for sin is death (forever separated from God in a place called hell). God says: "*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.*" (Romans 6:23, NLT)

So how can you be accepted into the family of God and be saved? You can never earn your way or be good enough to get into heaven. Why? Because that is not what God requires. He doesn't say you must behave to be saved, but **believe** to be saved. When you are saved, your behavior will change because the Holy Spirit (Spirit of Jesus) lives in you. Trusting in Christ does not make you sinless, but you will sin less.

God had a plan to bring you into his family even before he created the world! He knew Adam and Eve would choose to sin. Our loving God had already planned to send his son Jesus to earth. Born a baby in Bethlehem, he lived a perfect life. Because he loves you, he willingly died on the cross in your place, taking the penalty for your sins. God says: "*Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins.*" (Hebrews 9:22b, NLT) Jesus came to pay a debt he did not owe for a debt you could not pay. Can you imagine someone totally innocent dying in your place and taking your punishment? What amazing love!

But Jesus did not remain dead! Three days later, according to God's plan, God brought Jesus back to life, proving he is God. Many people saw and talked to him. By his death, Jesus made a way for your sins to be forgiven and for you to be accepted in God's family.

You have to receive his gift. Imagine that it is your 17th birthday, and your Dad says, "Come outside. I have something to show you." When you go outside, you can't believe your eyes! A red sports car! Your Dad offers you the key. You don't hesitate a second. You grab that key and jump in the car. It's yours! In the same way, Jesus offers you the only gift that counts, the love gift of eternal life. "*For it is by grace [undeserved favor] you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.* (Ephesians 2:8, NIV) Think about that verse.

You must personally "take the key" and receive Jesus' gift of eternal life. What is the "key" to receiving his gift? "*For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*" (Romans 10:9, NLT) God gives you the faith to believe. You change your thinking (repentance) about God and sin. Repentance is a military term meaning "about face." You were going away from God and now you turn to God and express your **faith** and trust in the Lord Jesus. To receive him, you invite him into your life, not only intellectually, but with your heart. When you do this, God forgives your sins. You become a new person, a child of God, and a member of his family. Christ becomes your life. "*But to all who believed him and accepted [received] him, he gave the right to become children of God.*" (John 1:12, NLT) You are a new person. What a loving God!

Final proof

If you are a true believer, you now have the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, living in you. “*And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them are not Christians at all.*” (Romans 8:9b, NLT) He is your Helper! The Holy Spirit gives you new identity, teaches and guides you and empowers you to live the Christian life. As you read Scripture, he will help you understand it.

Eternal security

Jesus gives you this wonderful promise: “*I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them away from me.*” (John 10:28, NLT) NEVER! These are the truths and promises that God has given you so that you can know you are in his family. God cannot lie. If you doubt, Satan may be planting “doubt” thoughts in your mind. Claim the promise in John 1:12. (see above) If you still doubt, ask yourself, “Did I really understand and mean it when I asked Jesus to come into my heart?” If the answer is “yes”, then you can know you are saved, are in God’s family and have become a new person. Welcome to God’s family! If you still have doubts, read the assigned section in your Bible, and pray the prayer (in front of the *Student New Testament*.) It isn’t the words; it’s your heart attitude.

Attitude Check:

- How has knowing that Jesus died in your place and took the punishment for your sins changed your attitude toward him?

Explore:

- Record both your physical birth date and your spiritual birth date in your Bible. Sign your name. This is your new birth certificate!
- Memorize John 1:12. Put your name in the verse where it says “all.”
- Read A1-7 in the front of your Bible. Write a thank you note to Jesus in your journal.

Talking with God:

- Father, thank you for choosing me to be in your family. Jesus, thank you for dying in my place, for forgiving my sins, and for making me a new person. Teach me how to live this new life.