

QUESTION: Leon, is it possible for a person to be sure of their salvation? I want to feel secure but struggle with doubt.

ANSWER: Thank you for your question. It is possible for one to know they are saved and ready to meet the Lord in judgment. Picture Paul near the end of his life in a Roman jail, waiting for another appearance before Nero that he feels sure will result in his execution. Hear what he said to Timothy about it: "I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is near. I have fought the good fight; I have kept the faith; I have finished the course. Therefore, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, that the Lord, the righteous judge will give me in that day, and not to me only but to all those who love his appearing." (2 Timothy 4:6-8) But there is a challenge to this assurance. One can feel secure about their salvation while not right with God at all. In Acts 23:1 Paul said he had lived in all good conscience to this very day. During the time when he persecuted Christians, wanting to destroy Jesus and everything about him, he still thought he was saved and doing what was right. He said of himself that he was the worst of sinners while still living in all good conscience.

So, how can I know I am saved and right with God? In I John 5:11 John said he wrote the book we know as I John so that we may know we have eternal life, and that life is in His Son. The first thing necessary to be sure of our salvation is to know we are in Christ. In Christ are all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3). Salvation is in Christ (2 Timothy 2:10; Acts 4:12). Jesus said of himself that he was the way, the truth, and the life and that no one could come to the Father except through him in John 14:6. But how does a person get into Christ? In Galatians 3:26-27 it says, "For you are all the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of us as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." He goes on to speak of how there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave or free, male, or female in Christ. We are saved by grace, through faith

(Ephesians 2:8-9) but please understand that the faith that saves is a faith that leads us to repent of our sins to turn to God, a faith that will confess our belief in Jesus and a faith that leads us to be baptized into Christ. Romans 6:3-5 declares that we are baptized into Christ and into his death. We are buried with him by baptism into death and are raised with him to walk in newness of life.” Not only must we get into Christ but according to John 15:1-8 we must abide in Christ to be saved. The branch that doesn’t abide in the vine is cut off and burned. We abide in Christ by bearing fruit for him.

Notice some ways John said we can know we are saved in that letter of I John that was written so we can know we are saved. We must walk in the light of God so that our sins are continually cleansed (I John 1:5-10). We know that we know him if we keep his commands (I John 2:3-4). In I John 2:28-29 it says, “And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.” In chapter 3:19-24 he adds that to know him we need a clear conscience and to love one another. He said we know he lives in us by the Holy Spirit, He gives us. He restates that point in 4:13. Finally, John said, “We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps them safe, and the evil one cannot harm them. We know that we are children of God and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one (5:18-19)

God longs for us to be saved and to know that we are saved. It is sad when one thinks they are right with God while living an ungodly life. But it’s also sad when one striving to live as God wants them to still struggles to have assurance of their salvation. Let’s live close to God and trust Him to keep our hearts clean as we yield to the lead of His Holy Spirit in us.