

ADVANCED BIBLICAL COURSE



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Assurance of Salvation

INTRODUCTION

The lack of assurance of salvation is a problem which occurs often in the lives of believers. It may appear to be a relatively simple matter, yet it has vast implications and can in fact affect every area of the Christian's life. It is an extremely valuable tool in the hands of the enemy in undermining the confidence that the believer has. For example, a believer who is not sure that he has eternal life and is genuinely saved will lack the confidence to come to his God in prayer, he will lack faith, he will constantly be plagued by a feeling of inadequacy and inability, and therefore be very reluctant to get involved in serving the Lord. The very faith that one needs to trust God for supernatural resources and help in serving Him, will be missing where the assurance of salvation is lacking. In counseling men and women, it is found that very often this is a basic matter that has to be settled before they can be led into other areas.

I GOALS

There are four main goals that the counsellor must have in mind in presenting this truth module to his counselee, or disciple. These are as follows: -

- ◆ To reject emotions and feelings as unimportant.
- ◆ To substitute feelings and emotions with the infallible Word of God.
- ◆ To exercise faith in the Word of God.
- ◆ To expect feelings and emotions which are **the result of faith in the word of God.**

II THE ASSURANCE OF SALVATION CHAIN

1 JOHN 5:13

“These things I have written to you who believe in the Name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have Eternal Life.”

In this verse we find the basis for the assurance of salvation. It is clear that it is what is “*written*” that is the basis whereby we may “*know*” that we have Eternal Life. Here is a principle that it is not my feelings that become the basis of my assurance, but rather “*what is written.*”

The question is then asked, “What did the apostle John write?” The answer is found in the following scriptures: -

◆ JOHN 1:12

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His Name.” Here again, the emphasis is that God “*has given*” eternal life to those who have received Jesus Christ, nothing is said about feelings, it is a fact recorded in the Word of God, a fact accepted and believed and to base one’s life upon.

◆ JOHN 3:36

“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides in Him.” Again, this verse emphasises the fact that God “*has*” given eternal life. It is not in the future, it is something that has been done and is completed.

◆ JOHN 5:24

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My Word, and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.” The same applies to this verse, which clearly, together with the following one, emphasises the fact that it “*has*” been done.

◆ JOHN 6:47

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.” Again, as above.

◆ ROMANS 1:17

“For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.” Even though it is written in the Word of God, it does not mean that it has any effect on my life unless I am prepared to exercise my faith and believe what God has said is true and applies to my position.

The story is a classic and well known one, of the tight-rope walker who crossed the Niagara Falls in the U.S.A. pushing a wheelbarrow containing a heavy sack along the rope across the falls. He then proceeded to ask the crowd whether they believed he could push a man across in the wheelbarrow. The crowd readily agreed that he was able, that was ‘belief’ (merely a mental assent). He then proceeded to ask the nearest bystander whether he would be prepared to sit in the wheelbarrow. Although the man had been one of those who had

readily agreed he was able, now facing the prospect of being the individual to sit in the wheelbarrow, he showed fear and reluctance. The point is that he had simply ‘believed’ with his head, but he did not have the ‘faith’ and the confidence to entrust his life in the hands of the tight-rope walker. Another example is that of a certain woman who ‘believes in’ the washing machine detergent, ‘Surf.’ You will find her using Surf, and it will be in her laundry. However, a visitor may tell her how good ‘Omo’ is as a soap. She may agree, and even believe it (with her head) but you will not find her using Omo. Although she would be happy to believe that Omo was a good soap, it is Surf in which she has faith and therefore uses it!

From these two examples we need to realise that exercising one’s faith in the Word of God is not simply saying ‘yes’ with the head, but rather acting upon one’s faith and confidence in the truth. This in fact is a principle which applies to every area of Christian living. We must believe what God says and act upon it.

◆ ROMANS 8:16

“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.” Here we see that the Christian life is not all just exercising faith with no ‘experience.’ The believer can expect to feel and experience emotions which assure him that he is in fact a child of God. This verse clearly points out that the Holy Spirit can bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. This experience will involve the emotions. However, we must clearly emphasise that these emotions and feelings are not, firstly, continuous and permanent, and secondly, they are the **result** of faith in the Word of God and acting upon that truth. There are times when a Christian does not feel saved. There are times when our emotions are affected by many things around us, and we may in fact feel very alone, and at times even deserted by God. These are the times when we do not resort to our feelings, but with maturity tell ourselves that **our feelings are not important** and that we are to believe the Word of God! The emotions and feelings, which are the product of faith, are in fact a bonus, an extra and the cream on the pudding. They are not to become the basis of our faith; they are not to become our main objective and goals. They come as we seek to obey the Word of God, but they **will** come, and we can expect to experience them from time to time.