

Doctrine of Salvation

Assurance of Salvation Enhances Sanctification

1. In Scripture, there are many, very frightening, warnings against a pseudo Christianity.
 - *Matthew 7:22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*
2. How then, can a person know if they are in a state of grace? Is assurance of salvation possible? If possible, is it desirable?
3. In Church history there has been controversy over these questions.
4. At the Council of Trent (Trento, Italy, 1545 – 1563) in the sixth session, the Catholic Church clearly denied the idea that it is possible for a person to achieve assurance of their salvation.

Special Note.

It was considered to be an expression of pride. There were some exceptions given to some saints who were given permission to know the state of their soul. The average person could not truly know the condition of their soul in relation to God because of the problem of human deceitfulness.

- *Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*
5. Many Protestants believe that Christians can have assurance of salvation, but only for today. Assurance is temporary, because they believe salvation can be lost. The idea of “once saved, always saved” is rejected. There is no assurance for tomorrow.
 6. The doctrine of the assurance of salvation has been closely tied to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. Good works are to accompany salvation as a sign of redemption.
 7. The danger is to forget the grace of God, and to return to a system of salvation by works, and to trust in one’s own good deeds in order to be saved. That is the great danger for no person can ever be saved by depending upon the goodness of their own works.
 - *Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.*
 8. Reformed theology teaches that a person can have assurance of their salvation, and should know the state of the soul, especially at the time of death.

9. A proposition is set forth: “Assurance of salvation enhances sanctification.”

Special Note.

It is because a person has assurance of their own salvation that they can witness to others. It is because a person has assurance of salvation they can endure hardship in life, and even a martyr's, death if God so wills it.

10. The Reformer's recognized the possibility of having a false assurance, but God, in His Word, commands the believer to have assurance of salvation. If we are called to make our election sure, then it is not a vice to have assurance of salvation. In the sight of God, assurance of salvation is a virtue.
- *2 Peter 1:10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: 11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*
11. To be unsure of one's salvation is the natural inclination of the thoughtful heart. An honest person knows they are not good enough to stand in the presence of God. A mature person knows they do not deserve heaven.
12. However, assurance of salvation is not rooted in human goodness, but in God's grace. Assurance of salvation is rooted in the teaching of Scripture.
13. A person should ask themselves, “Am I numbered among the elect?” It is not difficult to know. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be numbered among the elect.
- *Acts 16:31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*
14. Saul of Tarsus believed in Christ. He was numbered among the elect, and he was sure of his salvation. Paul placed his faith, and trust, not in himself, but in Christ.
- *2 Timothy 1:12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*
15. Assurance of salvation is not a matter to be relegated to the future. It is a matter to be settled immediately.
16. The primary way to know if a person is called of God, and numbered among the elect is by a spirit of obedience to the known will of the Lord. The reason why people have to depart from Christ is because they are workers of iniquity. False professors have no spiritual fruit.
17. While individuals are justified by faith alone, they are not justified by a faith that is alone. Faith is always accompanied by good works.

- *Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*
- 18.** Good works are a manifestation of the faith that exists in the heart. Without good works there is no manifestation of righteousness, which means there is no saving faith. The faith which justifies, is not a dead faith, but a living faith.
- *James 2:20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?*
 - *James 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*
- 19.** Care must be taken not to think that the Christian must perform the fruit in order to get the assurance. Psychologically, that would move a person back into a system of salvation by works.
- 20.** Our calling and election, is to be made sure in order to bear fruit. Assurance of salvation is what produces spiritual fruit, because the double minded person is unstable.
- *James 1:8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.*
- 21.** We look to Christ for confidence of personal salvation. We look to the Scriptures to discern the will of the Lord. Finding in the promise of Christ assurance of salvation, we go on to produce good works based on an inward, living, vital, growing faith.
- 22.** The person who is truly converted but does not have assurance of salvation, becomes an easy prey for the Enemy to sow seeds of doubt in the heart. Doubt leads to anxiety, and despair. The Lord desires that the heart of His people be characterized by joy.
- *John 10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*
- 23.** The life of a Christian must be lived in a spirit of confidence before God, so that Christian virtues can be developed.
- *2 Peter 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; 7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. 8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
- 24.** The list of virtues expressed by Peter are very similar to the fruit of the Spirit articulated by Paul

- *Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

25. The practical reason why every believer is to make their salvation sure, is in order to be more productive as a believer.

- *1 Peter 2:1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: 3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*

26. To those who believe, Christ is precious. That is a critical point in having a true assurance of being converted.

- *1 Peter 2:7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner.*

A Word of Warning to Careless Christians

"People claiming to be converted continue right on in their "shady" dealings, questionable and evil habits. They go right on with their worldly occupations and associations. They continue to fellowship with unbelievers, supporting Christ-denying organizations, and giving their endorsement to those who deny the faith once for all delivered to the saints. After "conversion" they seem to have no sense of duty to separate themselves and come out from among the enemies of Christ. They still continue the unequal yoke, frequent the same places of worldly amusement, and indulge in the same habits of entertainment. In short, there is nothing in their lives to indicate that a change has taken place" (Dr. M. R. DeHaan).

"It should not be our ambition to be as much like everybody else as we can, though we happen to be Christian, but rather to be as different from everybody who is not a Christian as we possibly can be. Our ambition should be to be like Christ, the more like Him the better, and the more like Him we become, the more we shall be unlike everybody who is not a Christian" (Lloyd-Jones, Sermon on Mount, vol. I, p. 37).

"Evangelical Christianity is now tragically below the New Testament standard. Worldliness is an accepted part of our way of life. Our religious mood is social instead of spiritual. We have lost the art of worship. We are not producing saints. We carry on our religious activities after the methods of the modern advertiser. Our literature is shallow and our hymnody borders of sacrilege. And scarcely anyone appears to care!" (A. W. Tozer "Renewed Day by Day").

“You can be a hypocrite and love the world. You can be a deceived ruler in the religious system and love the world. You can be a cheap, snobbish, modern Christian and love the world. But you cannot be a genuine Bible Christian and love the world” (A. W. Tozer).

"We must have a new reformation. There must come a violent break with that irresponsible, amusement-mad, paganized pseudo religion which passes today for the faith of Christ and which is being spread all over the world by unspiritual men employing unscriptural methods to achieve their ends" (A. W. Tozer).

"Controversy in religion is a hateful thing. It is hard enough to fight the devil, the world and the flesh, without private differences in our own camps. But there is one thing which is even worse than controversy, and that is false doctrine tolerated, allowed, and permitted without protest or molestation . . . Three things there are which men ought never to trifle with, a little poison, a little false doctrine, and a little sin" (J. C. Ryle).