

1) Salvation Many Christians struggle with the thought of whether or not they have salvation. Fortunately, a person doesn't need to wonder, or struggle, about this. The Bible has clear, and reassuring, answers.

I often ask people this simple question: "If Jesus Christ were to appear before you right now and ask you why He should take you to heaven, how would you answer?" All responses could be grouped into 3 types of answers, of which only one is correct. The most common answers will indicate they don't know or will focus on their performance at being good, demonstrating they are trying to earn their salvation. The only correct answer would indicate that the person has chosen to accept and abide in the free gift of salvation that God offers.

Let's draw truth and hope, from what the Bible says about this

Jeremiah 29:11-13. God promises that He has an abundant, hope & peace filled plan for you, IF you're willing to search for Him with your full heart, no holding back, no reservations.

John 10:10. Jesus contrasts Himself with Satan, the thief who wants to destroy you. Jesus says He wants to give you an abundant, and eternal, life.

1 John 5:11-13. The fact is simple, God has given us the gift of eternal life through/in Jesus Christ. If you have made the choice to receive Jesus into your heart and made Him Lord of your life then you have received the gift of eternal life. You can KNOW you have salvation as long as you have continued to place your faith and Lordship in Jesus. No guessing, no worrying.

Romans 6:23. A wage is something we earn for our efforts/labor. Sin earns, or results in, death. Eternal death if unrepented of.

Romans 3:10,23 Every person, Christ excluded, has sinned and has "earned" death. The frequency or magnitude is irrelevant to this text.

Romans 6:23b. That is why salvation can only be obtained from God, it's His gift to mankind. We can not earn it. We can't say, "I didn't sin" or "my good outweighed my bad" or even "but I sinned less than others" as even one sin is enough to warrant death.

1 John 3:4. Scripture defines sin as "lawlessness". Specifically, it is breaking God's law. Especially as summed up in the ten commandments, God's law of love.

James 4:17. Not everyone has had access to a Bible to know God's written law. But Scripture says sin is also the violation of our conscience – the promptings of the Holy Spirit. It's doing wrong when we knew what was right.

Proverbs 14:12. Scripture says that in our fallen condition, we aren't independently capable of doing what is right.

Isaiah 59:2. When we sin, we are pushing God, the life giver and sustainer, out of our lives. He is not the one choosing to leave.

Isaiah 53:4-6. Since we have all sinned and are all on a spiritual "death row" and can't do anything else, God sent His son, Jesus Christ, to rescue us by taking the debt of all our sin. He paid our penalty, so we could have His victory. So we could be healed!

1 Peter 2:24. He accomplished our salvation that by taking our sin to the cross, by being crucified at Calvary.

Ephesians 2:8,9. Grace is God's gift to us, faith is our response in accepting His gift of forgiveness, salvation, transformation. While Jesus paid the penalty for ALL sin, He does not force His gift on anyone. He offers it, freely, lovingly, hoping we will accept it.

Romans 5:8. He didn't wait till we had improved ourselves (we can't). So please don't think you need to try self-righteousness through your efforts at being good. That is a futile effort.

James 2:19. Scripture says there is a difference between belief (a head knowledge of truth) and faith (a heart and mind acceptance of God's truth). Lucifer (now called Satan since his fall) believed (knew) and still knows the truth, yet he rejected it.

1 John 1:9. The power of choice. If we exercise our faith by choosing to repent/confess our sins, God will do two things for us: First He will forgive us, and secondly, He will cleanse us. He will begin to remove the desire of sin from our heart.

1 Peter 2:21. Jesus is our example in all things. A person who loves God for setting them free from sin and its condemnation will begin to look to Jesus as their example, walking with Him and emulating His lifestyle, in the grace and power He gives them

John 1:12. The power needed to walk with Christ and in His steps is not something we have by nature, but by grace. It too is a gift He gives to those who chose to receive Him into their heart.

Colossians 2:6-7. Christ's expectation, and knowledge, is that those who have received Him will continue to walk with Him where ever He leads them even if it results in big lifestyle changes. With joyful hearts they will keep learning and following God's will and truth.

Romans 8:8. While it will be a struggle, if we are not seeking/desiring to walk in the light of His truth He shows us, we are no longer pleasing Him or walking with Him.

1 Thessalonians 4:1. God provides godly pastors, and counselors to teach us and help us along the way. Seek them out. But test what they teach with what God's word says.