

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living
Leader's Guide

UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

LESSON 1: HOW CAN I KNOW THAT I AM SAVED?

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Discipleship Essentials module entitled *Understanding Salvation*. This series of lessons examines the very foundational idea of salvation, and what occurs in the life of a person who becomes a Christian. These lessons are critical for every believer to understand before they can effectively share the Gospel with others. Each lesson examines a concept from a Biblical perspective and includes time for discussion of these principles as well as how to effectively apply them to your life. This set of lessons is ideal for use with discipling new believers to ensure they fully understand these ideas.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The intended audience for these lessons is new Christians or those who would like a refresher on the basics of Christian salvation. Those who are preparing for evangelism and discipleship may benefit from discussion of these ideas. These lessons assume the participant has made a decision to follow Jesus and wants to explore Christianity further.

The Leader's Guide is intended to help the leader prepare for the lessons and can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials found on www.discipleshipessentials.org.



UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

LESSON 1: HOW CAN I KNOW THAT I AM SAVED?

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to understand assurance of salvation. This assurance is for each believer and for those with whom they share the Gospel or disciple.

LEADER'S NOTE

One of the most critical errors a young Christian can make is assuming their salvation is based on emotions or good works. When they lose the initial feeling of assurance after coming to Christ, they may doubt if their conversion experience is real. You may have encountered this with believers before. How can we help young believers base their faith on something more solid than their fleeting feelings? We must direct them to the Word of God. It is important as a leader that you not skip over the Bible passages in these lessons. The participants must see that it is not your opinion as a leader, but the living Word of God that assures them of their salvation. This lesson is one of hope. Try to put uncertainties and fears to rest in your participants!

INTRODUCTION

Select two or three of the following questions to ask the group.

- ❖ Have you ever had a moment of doubt when you were not sure if you were really saved? What did you do about this?
- ❖ What are the outward signs of a person who is saved? What sorts of things will they do regularly? Can someone do those things and NOT be saved or not have real faith? What is the difference?
- ❖ What can we do to protect our faith, and remind ourselves of the truths found in Scripture?
- ❖ Why would Satan want to cause doubts about our salvation? Why is are these doubts a powerful tool for evil?
- ❖ Have you had a particularly emotional experience in your faith journey? How did it impact your faith?



STUDY

Instruct the group on the following points.

TEACH

- ❖ **Assurance of Salvation:** Everyone has times of doubt in their faith, and times when they must seek out answers from God. If you are speaking with someone who is experiencing a time of doubt, or with someone who is new to becoming a Christian it is vital that they are assured about whether they have been saved. It is an important question, and one that we mustn't ignore.
 - Our assurance of salvation comes from two places.
 - **The Word of God** promises salvation to those who believe in Jesus Christ.
 - **Our Changed Lives** are evidence of God working in us, and the presence of the Holy Spirit within us.
 - Our assurance is *not*...
 - Based on works or the things we do. Attending church, reading God's Word, and acts of piety do not save us. You cannot look to what you have done as evidence of salvation.
 - Based on feelings. Our feelings can come and go. A person may feel well but be dying of an illness inside. We may feel forgiven, but our feelings can deceive us.
- ❖ **Assurance from the Bible:** The first place we can look for assurance of our salvation is in God's Word. It is important to trust that the Bible really is the true and living Word of God.
 - **Why Can We Trust the Bible?** The Bible is like no other book in the world. It was inspired by God and is the basis for salvation and for Christian living. It was written down by 40 different people over a span of 1500 years – and yet it is perfectly cohesive and absolutely complete. The following verses teach us the origin and importance of this incredible book.
 - **Spoken by God through people** (2 Peter 1:20-21)
 - **God's standard for right living** (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
 - **The actual word of God** (1 Thessalonians 2:13)
 - **Instruction for salvation** (John 20:31)
 - **Guidance for life** (Psalms 119:105)
 - **What the Bible Says about Salvation:** God's message to us in His Word outlines the way of salvation, and what we must do to attain it. The Bible outlines the facts about our sinful state and what God has done to rescue us.
 - **We are God's precious creation** (Colossians 1:16)
 - **Creation has been broken by sin, and each of us are born sinful** (Romans 5:12, Romans 3:23)
 - **Sin comes with a price and a consequence, which is death and separation from Him** (Romans 6:23)



- **God sent Jesus to pay the price for our sins and to reconcile us to Himself** (John 3:16)
- **God promises that if we confess our sins He will forgive us, and though we die a physical death we will be given eternal life** (1 John 1:9, Acts 2:38-39, John 3:36)
- **When is a Person Saved, According to the Bible?** There are many verses in the Bible that tell us when a person is saved. While these passages might seem confusing to a new believer there is a very clear pattern. The earliest Christians struggled with this too, and in response the Apostle John wrote several letters to churches to help them with this problem. One of these letters – the book of 1 John – is in your Bible. Read 1 John 5:13, 1 John 5:1-5. According to God's Word, a person is saved if:
 - **They Admit they are a Sinner** (Acts 2:38, Luke 24:46-48, 2 Corinthians 7:10)
 - **They Believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God** (John 20:31, John 3:36, John 5:24)
 - **They Confess that Jesus is Lord** (Romans 10:9-10, 1 Corinthians 12:3)
 - **They Obey the Commandments of God** (1 John 5:3, 1 John 5:18, John 14:15)
 - **They Love God's Children** (1 John 5:1-2, 1 John 1:17, 1 John 4:7, John 13:34-35)
 - **They Have the Holy Spirit** (Acts 2:38, Ephesians 1:13, Titus 3: 4-6, Romans 8:16)
- The above points are important to note and go through slowly and carefully. Note where verses direct us to the fact that no one can call Jesus Christ Lord unless that person has the Holy Spirit. Truly believing that Jesus Christ is the Master of your life, and desiring to do everything He has commanded is not something that we can do apart from God. We may be able to say the words with our lips, but we are not able to mean them in our hearts. Likewise, desiring to obey all of God's commands, loving others deeply and putting others before ourselves is all evidence of God's Holy Spirit working in us.
- Ask yourself – have I done these things? Have I gone through all these steps, and do they reflect the true desire of my heart?
- ❖ **Assurance from a Changed Life:** The Bible uses very strong language when talking about the difference between a person who is saved and a person who is not. A person who is saved has come alive – before this they were spiritually dead. (Read Ephesians 2:1-10). The differences between a dead person and one who is alive are innumerable – so it is with those who are spiritually alive! When we receive salvation, we come alive. The circumstances of our life may not change at all – but our heart and mind are made new. This allows us to respond differently to every external circumstance. We become deeply changed people. The change may be small at first, but given time it will grow!

TASK

- ❖ Have participants form small groups. Ask participants to list changes that happen in a person's life when they become saved. What has to happen in a person's life so they are able to do the things outlined in the previous section?



TEACH

- ❖ **We Can Trust Our Changed Life:** People are very good at acting contrary to their true nature, and may fool themselves or those close to them for a time. But a truly changed life as a result of believing in Jesus Christ is a miracle to behold. This miracle occurs in the life of every believer and can be evidence of your salvation. Consider what happens when a person receives salvation:

- **We Were Dead, but Have Come Alive:** The difference between our life before Jesus Christ and our life after is described as being given 'life'. This means that parts of us will come alive that were once dead: sensitivity to sin, increased conscience, growing desire to serve and love others all begin to grow. It may start small when we are babies in our faith – but will continue to grow!

- [1 John 5:12](#)
- [Ephesians 4:22-24](#)
- [John 5:24](#)
- [Romans 6:4](#)
- [Ephesians 2:5](#)
- [John 3:36](#)

- **We Have Been Given a New Heart and Mind:** Before we were saved, we could not understand the things of God, or have our heart desire what God desires for us. Have you experienced this in your own life? God promises us a new heart and a new mind. This ability to begin to understand His Word, and desire the right things is evidence of God's work in us.

- [2 Corinthians 5:17](#)
- [2 Corinthians 4:4](#)
- [Colossians 3:9-10](#)
- [Ezekiel 36:26](#)
- [Romans 12:2](#)

- **We are Given the Holy Spirit:** Another miraculous gift of God is that He – in the form of the Holy Spirit – comes to live inside us! He will empower us and guide us in increasing amounts. When Jesus was preparing His disciples for His departure, we read in the Bible that they were very troubled. They were confused, alone and unsure – very much like many of us today! But Jesus promised a helper that would be with us always: The Holy Spirit. We can see evidence of the Spirit of God working in us as our lives change, and we become more like Jesus Christ. We should see the 'fruit of the Spirit' increasing in our life – that is, an ability to be joyful, patient, loving etc. This Holy Spirit is the gift given to us as a promise of salvation and coming eternal life.

- [John 14:26](#)
- [Romans 8:16](#)
- [Romans 8:26](#)
- [Galatians 5:22-23](#)
- [Acts 2:38](#)
- [John 14:15-17](#)

- **Do These Things Describe You?** If someone is wondering about their salvation, we can ask them these questions: Do these verses from the Bible describe the change that has occurred in your life? Have you done what is required of you from Scripture (that is, repented, confessed and believed)? Have you received new life, a new heart and mind, and the Holy Spirit?



- If they do not see evidence of these things you may help them if you have seen this evidence in their life.
 - If they do not see evidence of these things, it may be because they have yet to receive salvation. You have an opportunity to counsel them in salvation again!
- ❖ **Remain in the Love of God:** The verses in this lesson should be a comfort to someone seeking assurance of salvation. When we receive the forgiveness of God, we become alive. We become His children. We can trust God to take care of our life in the present and our souls for all eternity. We will need to remind ourselves of our salvation from time to time, and continue to seek God in order to remain close to Him. A few final things to remind someone seeking assurance of salvation are:
- Trust God to protect our salvation (John 10:28)
 - Remain close to God, keep His Commandments (1 John 3:24)
 - Keep ourselves in the love of God by having mercy on others, preaching the Gospel and trusting God to keep us from stumbling (Jude 1:20-24)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ❖ How would you counsel those who have doubts in their faith? What steps would you suggest to them to make their faith stronger?
- ❖ How would you respond to those who suggest that certain actions, rituals, or good deeds are necessary for salvation or achieving eternal life?
- ❖ How do you feel about your salvation right now? How has God assured you of your salvation through His Word and the Holy Spirit?
- ❖ How has your life changed as a result of receiving salvation from your sins and new life in Christ?

PRAYER

Close with prayer. Thank God that we have been offered salvation, and that assurance of salvation comes from the Word of God and the changed life God offers us. Pray the Holy Spirit would guide participants and remind them of God's grace and His promise that nothing can snatch them from His hand.