

CAN I KNOW I AM A CHRISTIAN?

Scripture References:

Romans 8:1

John 3:36

I John 3:1-3

When John Bunyan depicted Christian as going towards the Celestial City, his first difficulty he encountered was the Slough of Despair. Through the years I have learned that Bunyan was relating the experience of many Christians. For many believers this is not only the initial difficulty, but also a recurring problem. Their happiness in their Christian life is robbed because they are unsure if they are true believers or not. They question their own sincerity or the willingness of God to save them. In moments of sin they wonder if a real Christian would do such a thing.

While for some Christians this is a temporary experience, for others they approach the Christian life with the understanding that a person can never be sure if his destiny is secure.

For every believer this becomes an all important question, Can a person know he/she is a Christian? The answer largely determines the joy and the peace of the believer. It is also a key to Christian witnessing because not many will share that they are unsure of possessing.

CAN YOU KNOW?

For many years George Washington had a faithful Indian scout. After General Washington became President he presented to the scout a locket as a reward for his service. For the Indian man this became a prized possession that he was eager to show to every visitor. After a few years the scout became ill and was unable to secure proper medical help because of lack of money. When the President heard of his plight, he went immediately to his home. When the President saw him he expressed amazement that he had not secured the services of a doctor. He said, "Have you never opened the locket I gave to you?" The Indian produced the locket and said, "No, but I have kept it as a prized possession." The President responded, "Oh, but there is so much more." Then he opened the locket and in it was a check for his services that would meet all of his needs.

When the a person receives salvation, with it comes deeper rewards that meets the believers needs. One of these is **assurance**. The Christian can and ought to know that he is a child of God. Three assurances are possible:

The Finished Work of Christ

The Scripture pictures salvation as resting on what Christ has done for us. When we give our lives to Him, it becomes His part to save us. The Scripture never pictured salvation as a slippery rock, but a sure foundation. Our faith acts not in us, but in Him. And because of His acts, we can rest secure.

Romans 8:1

John 3:36

I John 3: 13

The Frequent Works of the Spirit

To be a Christian means not just a new direction, but a new life. We are not just forgiven, but also changed. The source and secret of this new life is God's spirit that lives within us. He produces a likeness to Jesus in "love, peace, longsuffering," and the other attributes listed in Galatians 5:22-23. These constant influences toward Christlikeness in life, attitude and motivation are signs that we are God's children.

Final Word of Scripture

The deep question is again: Can I take God at His Word? His Word is clear on the matter of assurance. So the matter is not how I feel, but can I put my faith in what He says. It is not the voice of feelings, does the Scripture say.

THE DANGER OF FALSE ASSURANCE

While the Scripture is clear on assurance, it also warns of the danger of a false assurance. The most difficult persons to bring to Christ are those with a slight knowledge of Him. Often these people are trusting in a church or a religious rite and not in Christ.

Here Are A Few Of The Bases For False Assurance:

- A. Trusting in church membership, baptism, christening
- B. One's own moral character, usually seen as better than another person
- C. Trusting in a knowledge about God rather than a commitment to Him
- D. Being concerned about one's sins, but never turning from them

The Book of First John was written to deal with false and real assurance. John says he wrote so people may know if they have eternal life. In his book he gives a five-fold test for assurance. They are:

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| I John 2:3 | Obedience to God's Command |
| I John 2:10-11 | Love for Others |
| I John 2:15 | Love for God Over Against Love for World |
| I John 3:16 | Not Continuing in Sin |
| I John 3:24 | By the Spirit He has Given Us |

The most important question that can be asked you is: Do you know you are a Christian? You can know. God wants you to know. Your happiness rests on knowing. This is how you may know:

Has there been a time in your life when you became willing to turn from your sin? Did you commit your life to Jesus as your Saviour? Not just the part of your life you made a mess of, but a total surrender of life; what you want to do as well as what you wish you had not done? And did you say I want to do now what You desire for my life? If you have, then assurance can be yours. If not, why not settle this issue today. You can and it is possible to know it.