



FIRST STEPS

STUDIES TO BEGIN YOUR WALK WITH CHRIST
By Marlon Furtado

“Do I Really Have Eternal Life”

DO I REALLY HAVE ETERNAL LIFE?

AM I THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS DOUBTS?

It is not uncommon for a new believer to experience questions such as, “*Did anything actually happen when I invited Christ into my life? Do I really have eternal life and if so, will it change anything? It seems too easy for a simple prayer to be my ticket into heaven.*” Rest assured, most Christians have experienced these doubts. The good news is that all of these questions will be replaced with a firm confidence as you come to understand your salvation better.

Let’s illustrate with a story. A 12-year old orphan girl has lived in six different foster homes during her last ten years. Then, suddenly, a family adopts her. They fill out all the paper work, pick her up from the foster home and bring her to their own home. They tell her that they love her and that their home is now hers. They lead her into her own bedroom and show her a closet filled with new clothes for her. At bedtime, everyone falls asleep quickly. Everything seems perfect...until morning. Our young girl wakes up with a fearful thought: “*Was it a dream that I was adopted yesterday?*” It will take her time to become accustomed to and assured of the fact that these people really love her and want her to be a permanent part of their family. But as time goes on, her doubts will finally dissolve and she will be truly free to enjoy herself and her new family.

So it is for Christians. A transaction more sure than any adoption took place when you put your faith in Jesus. But it takes time to understand it and become confident and secure. After all, you can’t see Jesus nor can you hear His voice reassure you. That’s why our purpose in today’s lesson is to help you become secure in your new relationship with the Lord Jesus.

CAN I KNOW FOR SURE?

Yes, you can! Read what the apostle John, an early follower of Jesus, wrote in his letter, **1 John 5:11-13**.

*“And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may **know** that you have eternal life.”*

Most people don’t believe it’s possible to be 100% sure they will go to heaven. They hope they will, but they don’t expect to find out until after they die. The Bible verses above, on the other hand, state emphatically that it is possible for Christians to **know for sure** right now! In fact, it is not only possible to know, but it is expected that we will have such confidence!

We are going to look at three words, or terms, that the Bible uses to describe our salvation. As you become aware of what these terms mean, you will gain a much greater understanding about your new relationship with God.

THREE SPECIAL TERMS

1. REDEMPTION

A very important term is *redemption*. Understanding this will give you a great deal of confidence in your salvation.

Romans 3:23-24 says, “*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the **redemption** that came by Christ Jesus.*”

Ephesians 1:7 says, “*In him [Jesus Christ] we have **redemption** through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace.*”

1 Peter 1:18-19 says, “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were **redeemed** from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”

Redemption refers to making a purchase. When you pay for an item at a department store, you have *redeemed* it, and you immediately become its new owner. The Bible pictures humanity as being enslaved by the devil. To set us free from that abusive servitude, Jesus bought us with His own blood...He *redeemed* us. When you accepted Jesus, He became your new owner. But you are not just another maid or butler in His vast empire. He has made you a secure member of His family.

2. GRACE

Another very important term is *grace*. **Ephesians 2:8-9** reads, “For it is by **grace** you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the **gift of God** — **not by works**, so that no one can boast.”

The word *grace* is used to express God’s unmerited and undeserved kindness towards people. The closest concept we have to it is *giving a gift*. When you give someone a gift *just because you want to*, you are displaying *grace*. God offers us eternal life as a gift, not because we are worthy, but because of His love and kindness.

Many people mistakenly think that if their good deeds outweigh their bad ones, then God will have to let them into heaven. If that were the case, then heaven would be a reward...something earned...a matter of works. But as we see in the above verses, God offers salvation as a **gift, not by works**. Heaven is gained by **receiving**, not by **achieving**. The emphasis of grace is upon God’s kindness, not our worthiness or achievement.

Let’s suppose you bought some expensive items, wrapped them up and gave them away as gifts. You would not expect any of the people to pull out their wallets or purses to pay you back. Nor would they need to go back to the stores to pay for the items again. Similarly, Jesus alone was able to pay the high price of eternal life for us. Now, when He offers it to us as a **gift**, He’s not looking for us to pay Him back. He just wants us to receive it with grateful hearts.

Our sin makes every single person **bankrupt before God**. Our assurance comes because Jesus Christ was able to pay the penalty for our sin with HIS SINLESS PERFECTION. The cost for admission to heaven has been covered. That’s *GRACE!*

Here's an acrostic to remember the basic teaching about GRACE.

God's
Riches
At
Christ's
Expense

You can enjoy God’s richest blessings because of Jesus’ priceless sacrifice. That’s *GRACE!*

3. SEALED

There are three especially helpful verses, two of which are taken from the book of Ephesians and the other from Second Corinthians.

Ephesians 4:30 - *“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were **sealed** for the day of redemption.”*

Manufacturers **seal** jars and bottles and cans to keep foods fresh and to keep bacteria out. Windows that have good **seals** act as a barrier to keep the cold air outside. A submarine’s hatches are **sealed** before it dives below the surface to ensure the safety of the crew. **God sealed you** the moment you invited Christ into your life. He came into your life and then sealed the door shut behind Him.

Ephesians 1:13-14 - *“And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a **seal**, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a **deposit guaranteeing** our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession — to the praise of his glory.”*

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 - *“Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his **seal of ownership** on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a **deposit, guaranteeing** what is to come.”*

In Jesus’ day a **seal** was an engraving that would be pressed into clay or warm wax. The impression left behind served as a mark of ownership. It also acted like a signature to authenticate the contents within the sealed parcel. Today cattle ranchers put a brand on their cattle for the same reason. God has “branded” you with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit’s presence in your life is God’s permanent stamp of ownership on you.

In our country, when you intend to purchase a house, the owner asks you to put down “earnest money” to show that you are serious about buying. If you follow through, the money goes towards the purchase. If you back out, you are penalized and the money is kept by the owner. Notice in the preceding two passages that God has given you His Holy Spirit like earnest money. The Spirit came into your life as God’s **deposit to guarantee** your place in heaven. God has absolutely no intention of changing His mind about taking you to heaven. The Holy Spirit has **sealed the deal**.

LET'S OPEN YOUR BIBLE

Look up the following verses to discover for yourself what the Bible says about eternal life. These are not simply fill-in-the-blank. They will require a little bit of thought.

1 John 5:11,12

Since I possess Jesus, I possess _____.

1 John 5:13

The apostle John wrote what he did because he wanted believers in Jesus to _____ for sure that they have eternal life.

John 5:24

Since I believe Jesus, I presently have _____, and will _____, but I have crossed over from death to _____.

John 3:16

Because I believe in Jesus I will not _____; instead I have _____.

Romans 6:23

I have received God's gift of _____.

Hebrews 13:5

I can be content knowing that God will _____ leave me nor will He ever _____ me.

John 10:27-30

Jesus gives His sheep (followers) eternal life and they shall never _____; _____ can snatch them out of Jesus' hand. _____ can snatch them out of the Father's hand.

Summary:

Sometimes those who have recently received Jesus are also plagued with doubts as to whether they really are saved. The key to assurance is remembering that we do not measure our salvation by how we feel. Our salvation is guaranteed by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ to keep His promises. He has REDEEMED us by GRACE and SEALED us by His Holy Spirit.

PRAY: Take time to pray and thank God for His great salvation!
