

## HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU ARE SAVED?

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I thought it would be a good effort to put down in writing some elements present in the life of one who is truly saved. It is helpful to identify the changes that occur when one becomes born again by faith in Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17 tells us, Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

You see, as one preacher said, *if you didn't change, you didn't get saved.*

Salvation brings new changes into your life: a new creature, new mind, new desires, new hopes, a new walk, a new man, new thoughts, new works, new speech, new vision, and new love.

Some people “believe” in Jesus the same way they believe George Washington was the first U.S. president – it is a belief based on the facts only, rather than a change of heart and mind toward God, and a receiving by faith, the Son of God; trusting in him, in his work, and in his blood for salvation. The devils also believe, and tremble (James 2:19) but they do not have the things that accompany salvation.

Jesus said, Ye must be born again (John 3:7). It was Jesus who coined that phrase, not some kook. So, be careful how you respond to that commandment. Jesus said, Ye *must* be born again – no options – it is a must. You are either saved or lost; and God commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30).

Consequently, God wants all saved people to know they are saved. But the devil is clever enough to make *lost* people think they are saved, and to make *saved* people think they are lost. The devil deceives and discourages. But God is the truth, and the truth shall make you free (John 8:32).

I have seen and heard of preachers, preacher's wives, deacons, preacher kids, pastors, etc., come forward in meetings and receive the Lord. Pride is a thing that prevents some people from admitting they really are lost and on their way to hell – and they will fake being a Christian all the way to the end, rather than humble themselves and rejoice with the saints over their true salvation. They are more concerned with people *thinking they are saved*, than truly getting saved.

As I thought on some “fruit” that true believers experience as children of God, I remembered that going to church, doing good works, toting a Bible, teaching a Sunday School class or preaching a sermon; *does not* make you saved. Lost people, heretics, false prophets: they all do the same.

Salvation – true salvation – is known in the inward parts. The outward show may impress some people, but God looks on the heart. Those who are saved have a pattern of good works, and they bear that good fruit Jesus spoke of (Matthew 7). But we do not live 24-7 with every professor of faith in Christ, in order to watch his life. Lost folks can “fake” Christianity for a short time. But their true nature will always show forth at certain times. As a wolf in sheep's clothing, they

appear outwardly to men to be spiritual, but inwardly they are dead man's bones. It takes time, but in time, that *true fruit* – whether good or bad – will show forth. A good tree cannot bear evil fruit; neither can an evil tree bear good fruit. And ye shall know them by their fruits (Matthew 7:13-29). Those who are truly saved will persevere through trials and temptations. In time, they will be conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8 and 12).

Now, God has revealed to us in scripture the things to believe in order to be saved, and as a result *to know* that we have eternal life:

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

1 John 5:13

To be truly saved, one must believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ – the death, burial, and resurrection of the Son of God. This faith comes from the heart. Then comes the confession, for of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. True faith is a turning to God from idols, and receiving the Son of God. Notice Romans 10:9-13:

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

The list of things that follow are things that only the individual can know. One must be honest with himself. And if you find that you cannot testify that these are truly in your life, I encourage you to make things right today – believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved... (Acts 16:31).

*So, how do you know you are truly saved? What are the elements in the life of a child of God that only he knows for sure?*

- 1 **You have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and him *only* for your salvation.** It is not a works-based system, whereby you try to be good, or hope you are good enough, or work to keep your salvation. Anything like that means that the gift is not a gift, but something to be earned, merited, or paid for by man. Simply put: Jesus paid it all. It is finished. We get salvation not because any of our goodness, but solely because of the goodness of Jesus Christ. We receive that gift by faith only (John 3:16, Ephesians 2:8-10). In addition, the child of God is a priest himself – he has no need to go through Mary, or a Roman priest to get to God. *He has gone through Jesus Christ, the Advocate and Shepherd of our souls.*

His concern is not to merit salvation by good works, but with a thankful heart serve God in faith, and worship him in spirit and truth (Ephesians 2:8-10).

- 2 **You confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.** This is a true heart-felt confession. You are not hiding the fact that you believe in Jesus Christ (Romans 10:8-13; 1 John 4:15). I would add that you are happy to be baptized, regardless of what others think. A public confession is good for the soul and shows the work done in your heart. It is the answer of a good conscience toward God. You are not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1). The fear of man does not prevent you from confessing Christ openly.
- 3 **The Spirit of God bears witness with your spirit, that you are a child of God** (Ephesians 1:13; Romans 8:16; 1 John 4:13). All believers have the Holy Ghost sealed in them, and they know they have him. God, through the Spirit, literally abides in the believer. And this Spirit bears witness, leads to Jesus, and directs our walk. You have the Spirit of God (1 John 3:24).
- 4 **You have a peace with God, and you do not fear what happens after death.** You are trusting in what Christ did for you, in order to receive eternal life (Romans 5:1). You know your sins are forgiven and that there is place reserved for you in heaven (John 14:1-6). Death has no sting.
- 5 **You bear the fruit of the Spirit** – love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (Galatians 5:22, 23). These things are manifest in your life and your conversation toward others.
- 6 **You have a personal relationship (not a religion) with Jesus Christ.** He is your first and foremost love. He is preeminent in your life (John 10:27; 2 Timothy 1:12). You talk to him constantly. You know he is with you, for he said, I will never leave thee (Hebrews 13). You have that comfort Jesus promised you.
- 7 **You keep Jesus' word** (1 John 2:5; 5:2). That means you love the Bible and live by it. What Jesus says must be obeyed regardless of what man says (Acts 5:29; John 14:15, 23). Let God be true, but every man a liar. God's word supersedes all others. His word is preeminent (Romans 3:4; Matthew 4:4; Job 23:12; 1 John 3:24).
- 8 **You have love for the brethren** (1 John 2:10; 5:2). You desire to be around other believers (in church, etc.) and you prefer their company above those who are lost. This is not a small thing. If you don't like to go to church, check your salvation. Something is indeed amiss. I tend to be concerned when a believer in Jesus Christ (he says) desires the company of the lost over the company of the saved.
- 9 **You have a desire for holiness, and work toward sanctification** (1 John 3:6-10; 5:18). We do not sanctify our vessels *to be* saved, we do it because *we are* saved, and we want to please our Saviour. We know living a holy life pleases God.

- 10 **You experience conviction and guilt when you think of or do sinful things** (2 Peter 3:1; Romans 13:10; 1 John 3:3). There is a spiritual battle inside at times, and you have a healthy fear of God. There have been times of chastisement because you are a son of the Father (Hebrews 12:6; Proverbs 3:12). You repent often for the small things, and over time your life is cleaned up by the power of God.
- 11 **You have a Spiritual groaning** and heavenly thoughts (Philippians 4:8, Romans 8:26). You have sensitivity to the Spirit of God. You are not so apt to swallow the world's philosophy and rudiments as easily as before you were saved. The Spirit of God moves in your heart and mind in ways that cannot be described with words.
- 12 **You have a spiritual hope**, and you know all things work together for good. You have a positive outlook of life knowing that as a child of God everything is in God's hand (Romans 8:23, 28). You look forward to being with Jesus for eternity. Heaven is a blessed place and Jesus is the blessed hope – the thought of eternity with God is not boring, but exciting.
- 13 **You have a desire to see those who are lost become children of God.** You want to see people saved and have a Godly concern for their souls (Romans 10:1; Acts 8:35). You rejoice when a sinner repents (Luke 15:10; Romans 12:15). You tend to preach to those whom you love. If a man lives with his wife for fifteen years and *never once* told that woman about Jesus Christ and her need for salvation; how can one assume he is saved?
- 14 **The Spirit of God leads you to open your mouth** with praises, thanksgiving, spiritual songs, and testimony (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 6:19; 1 Corinthians 2:1; Revelation 6:9). You find yourself saying, Amen; and, praise God, and singing praises in your heart toward God.
- 15 **You have a joy in your heart that passes all understanding.** Regardless of circumstances you rejoice in the Lord (Luke 10:20; Acts 16:34; 1 Corinthians 13:6; Philippians 4:4; 1 Peter 1:6-8; 1 John 1:4). Even in manifold temptations you tend to have patience, knowing God is present and has a purpose. And that purpose causes you to rejoice.
- 16 **You hear the word of God.** This goes beyond simply listening, but you seek truth, you rejoice in the truth, you heed and obey the word (1 John 4:6; Matthew 24:35). Although similar to # 7, this means you submit to the word also. You listen to counsel and preaching. You feed off the preaching of the word of God (John 21:15; 1 Corinthians 3:2; 1 Peter 5:2).
- 17 **You experience fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the brethren** (1 John 1). This is called walking in the light (1 John 1:7). You know you have sinned, but you confess these sins so as to have fellowship with God. You experience the blessings at the right hand of God, and rejoice with your fellow believers. You like to talk and hear about how God has worked in the lives of his children. You want to pray and hear the prayers of others.

- 18 **You experience that your prayers are heard in heaven** (1 John 5:14; 1 John 3:22). And, although God does not always do what you ask, you know he hears you, and answers you – either, yes, no, or wait for something better.
- 19 **You know the difference between the old man and the new man** (Romans 6:6; Ephesians 4:22; 2 Corinthians 5:17). There is a constant battle and you know which side is which. (Galatians 5:17; Romans 7:13-23). You have lived with the old man for your whole life, but then the new man desires to lead. You want to follow the new man; and when the old man manifests himself, you crucify him with Christ.
- 20 **God gives you spiritual understanding in his workings** (2 Timothy 2:7; Philippians 2:13; 1 John 5:20). You can understand the Bible and God’s mysteries (Colossians 1:9; 2:2; Ephesians 3:16-19; 1 Corinthians 2:9-16)). As you look back over the path God has led you, you see his workings in your life. You see the blessing in hindsight, and that makes you patient in the future. You know God has everything under control, and in peace you can follow where he leads.
- 21 **You overcome the world by faith** (1 John 5:4, 5; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 Peter 1:4; James 1:27; 4:4; Titus 2:12; Colossians 2:8; Ephesians 6:12; Ephesians 2:12; Galatians 1:4; 6:14). You are no longer blinded by the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4). The world has no long-lasting attraction. There is no love for the worldly things. You have traded the worldly pearls for that pearl of great price – the kingdom of God. You are content to be where God wants you and to be doing the things God wants you to do. And whether you abound or are abased, you have all real needs supplied through Christ. There is no need for the pleasures of sin.

I suppose the list could continue, but this is sufficient to provide a self-check. This could easily be a profitable Sunday Scholl lesson or a personal study if one were to study the verses provided.

This is simply an outline – a skeleton to which many could add abundant meat. May God provoke you, dear reader, to add to and improve upon what is here.

My hope is that this has been a blessing to you and an encouragement. We know the devil sends doubt into the minds of God’s children. Being reminded of the things that follow salvation can only work to increase our confidence in God. I pray heaven and earth is blessed with your life.

*The End.*

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