



Assurance of Salvation

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Walk in the Word

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Assurance of Salvation

We often joke with one another that the only sure things in life are death and taxes. But is this really the case? Is everything else up for grabs? Is there nothing more that we can know with certainty?

There is something more, and it is the most important thing that we can ever know. *Jesus promised that His true followers have assurance of their salvation.* Their future is secure; their destiny is certain. What an amazing guarantee! Today, if you are a genuine Christian, you have assurance of your salvation. But hold on for a minute—that's a big IF! This assurance of salvation is only for those who are genuine Christians. Can you say, without any hesitation, "I am a true follower of Christ"? Are you absolutely certain that you are God's child? No doubt about it?

A lot of people think that they are Christians, but many of them are deceived. Don't be fooled! Not all who claim to be part of God's family are, in fact, genuine members. But how is this distinction made? What are the guidelines? In other words, how can you know if you truly are a follower of Christ? How can you be sure of your salvation?

These questions need not go unanswered. Jesus had several important things to say on this subject in John 8:30-36. Read His words very carefully:

As He spoke these words, many believed in Him. Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, 'You will be made free'?" Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore, if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed."

Many People Believe in Jesus

Isn't it true that many people today believe in Jesus? Have you noticed that? Apparently, the same was also true in Jesus' day. However, don't confuse *believing in* Jesus with *following* Jesus. They are not the same things. *Believe* does not always equal *believe unto salvation*. *Believe* does not always equal a real *embracing of Christ* that leads to eternal life. In this John 8 passage, believe actually means *believed to some degree*.

James 2:19 says, **“You believe there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!”** This verse indicates that even the demons that attack this world and are Satan's partners in crime believe, so to speak. They know that God is real, and they acknowledge the truthfulness of some things. In fact, not only do they believe, but they believe and *tremble*. They are shaken by the truthfulness of the things that they hear. They are fearful about what they believe. But obviously they are not believers. Belief that is *partial*, belief that is merely *intellectual*, belief that is *superficial*—this type of belief, even if it is in Jesus Christ, does not save a person. It does not gain eternal life. It does not attain heaven. It produces nothing.

I would guess that there is hardly a person reading this booklet who does not believe in Jesus. As I interact with people who never go to church and talk

to people who wouldn't even claim to know the Lord, I often ask, "Do you believe in Jesus?" Most respond, "Oh yeah, yeah. I believe in Jesus." In fact, if you study statistics, they say that over 90% of the people who live in the United States believe in God. Huh?! Clearly, there seems to be some confusion in what the word *believe* actually means. Let's go right to the source and find out what Jesus Himself had to say about this matter of who truly believes and who does not.

THE SOWER AND THE SEED

In Matthew 13, Jesus told two parables because He wanted to draw a clear line in the sand between people who merely articulate some kind of belief in Him and those who genuinely know Him. The first is a well-known story about a farmer who sowed seed (which represents the gospel of Jesus Christ) on various types of soils (which represent the different ways people receive the good news). Don't miss the fact that while all four people believed to differing degrees, only one was a *genuine follower* of Jesus Christ. Notice Jesus' explanation of the parable beginning in Matthew 13:18, **"Therefore hear the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside."** No belief there.

Jesus continued in verse 20, **"But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy."** This is a person who says, "This is the greatest stuff I've ever heard in my life!" And he grabs on to it and pulls it to his heart. Surely he is a genuine believer,

right? Verse 21, **“Yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.”** In short, when God’s Word begins to require more of him than his superficial belief will allow, he gets off the program. Clearly, not a genuine believer.

Jesus described the third person in verse 22, **“Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.”** This person also is not a genuine believer. He receives the Word, but when it comes time to choose between following Jesus Christ and giving up some of the pleasures of this world, he says, “Jesus, You’re cool, and You can hang around with me, but You’re not the #1 thing in my life.” This person is not a true believer—not in heaven when he dies.

Now here’s the genuine believer in verse 23. **“But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”** The genuine believer is the one who bears fruit—the fruit of Christian character (Galatians 5:22--23), the fruit of praise and the desire to worship God (Hebrews 13:15), and the fruit of growing holiness.

THE WHEAT AND THE TARES

Jesus was concerned that the crowds still weren’t understanding this *true believer* stuff. So He went on to tell them another story about wheat and tares. Beginning in Matthew 13:24, **“The kingdom of**

heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way." The *tares depict the false disciples*, the ones that look like the real thing but aren't. The *wheat represents genuine disciples*, the true followers of Christ. Continuing in verse 26, **"But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them.' "**

Now what kind of an idiot goes out in a field and starts pulling out the corn instead of the weeds? On purpose, no one does! The point is that the weeds (the tares) and the wheat look the same. *You can't tell which is which*. Notice what Jesus said in verse 30, **"Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, 'First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.' "**

The church that I pastor, Harvest Bible Chapel, is a field. In our field, like in every other field, there are both wheat and tares. I can't tell which is which when I look out over their faces. No one can tell you which you are, but *you* should know which you are. All of eternity depends upon your ability to answer rightly, "Yes, I am a genuine follower of Jesus Christ."

HITTING CLOSE TO HOME

In Matthew 7:21, Jesus said, **“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven. But he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’ ”** That’s an eternal condemnation to hell.

Don’t miss the fact that Jesus talked about *many*. There won’t be just a few people who appear before the Lord and say, “Lord, Lord.” It’s not one or two or a few around the world throughout the course of time. It’s *many people*. Many people will stand before Him and be eternally rejected. Might I also suggest that these people are not at the liberal church down the road. They’re not the pagans in your neighborhood who never go to church. Notice the works that these people did—they prophesied in Jesus’ name; they spoke for God; they cast out demons and performed many wonders in the Lord’s name. I believe that this passage is talking about *evangelical Christians*. The church. The body of Christ. *Us*.

Amongst those who are genuine disciples are those who are tares. They will say, “Lord, I counted the offering. Lord, I taught in Kid’s Church. Lord, You’re supposed to see everything. I’m not sure what the problem is here, so let me just review my life history for You. I was even in a small group.” Then Jesus will say, “Depart from Me. I never knew you.”

You may be saying, “Well that’s fine, but is that really what John 8 is talking about?” If you read past John

8:36 and consider the context, you'll see very clearly that Jesus was referring to those who were not true followers. Take a look at their responses to Him. In verse 33, they verbally opposed Jesus. In verse 48, these believers verbally abused Him and said, "You're just a Samaritan, and You have a demon." And then in verse 59, when He really pressed the point, they tried to take Him out and kill Him. Were they genuine believers? Apparently, some were not. And so Jesus looked at the many and said, "Okay, so you all *believe* in Me? Fine! Let's talk about what that really means."

Today, you need to ask yourself and answer the most important question ever: Am I a genuine disciple? Am I a true follower of Jesus Christ? Am I truly saved? If the answer is yes, then when you die someday, you will hear, "Well done!" and enter into an eternal, heavenly joy. If you are not truly saved, then someday you will die and hear, "Depart from Me!" and enter into an eternal, conscious torment in hell.

Genuine Disciples Abide in Jesus' Words

You say, "So, how can I know for sure?" The first characteristic of a genuine disciple is found in John 8:31, **"Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed in Him, 'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.'**" Or to put in another way, "You demonstrate that you are truly My disciples when you abide in My words." In short, *genuine disciples abide in Jesus' words.*

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

This obviously leads to the following question: What does it mean to *abide* in the words of Jesus? Simply put, to abide in the words of Jesus means to *remain* or to *continue* or to *persevere*. While salvation and conversion happen at a *moment in time*, their legitimacy is demonstrated over a *period of time*. Let me illustrate this truth. Suppose I gather together five people with a very serious virus. I tell them that the way to have their virus healed is to believe that George Washington was the greatest person who ever lived. Of course, all five would quickly say, "I believe that." Now, it's easy for them to declare their belief, but what is the real test of whether or not they truly believe? Obviously, the real test is whether or not they are healed of the virus! Perhaps four of the five individuals do believe that George Washington was the greatest person who ever lived,

but one holds out that Thomas Jefferson was the greatest. He claims to believe that it's George Washington, but really he doesn't. Over time, the truth will be very clear because we will see him die of the virus. The four others will be healed, but he won't. Now translate that into what it means to be a Christian. Many people say, "I believe in Jesus," and it is difficult to contradict them because they seem sincere. But over time, you'll see if they truly believe by what happens on the inside.

Abiding in Jesus' words means abiding in what has been revealed about Him in Scripture. He is God. Recognize Him as such. He is not just a good moral teacher. He is God. He is our substitute. He died in our place to pay for our sin. He is our only hope of salvation. And most importantly as it relates to this, He is Lord.

NOT JUST SAVIOR

Acts 16:31 says, "**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.**" I fear that there are those who want Jesus as their *Savior*, but not as their *Lord*. As you begin to interact with these people who claim to believe in Jesus, you find that when you bring the teachings of Jesus to bear on their lives, they don't want it. They say, "Keep that off me!" You start to press a person and say, "Do you know what you really need to do? Here's what Jesus taught about what it means to be married. Here's what you need to do in your relationship with your wife." And they don't want it. But I say, "Wait! Didn't you receive Jesus as Lord? Isn't He the ruler of your life? Shouldn't you do what He wants you to do if He really is your Lord?" They say, "But I don't want it. Get it off me!" If that describes you, then you're not a genuine

disciple. You're not a true believer, not a real follower of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 19:12 says, **“His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called the Word of God. And the armies in heaven clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”**

Genuine disciples abide in the words of Jesus. They live in complete submission to what He has revealed about Himself. He is the Lord.

Genuine Disciples Experience Freedom

You may be asking, "How will I know if I'm abiding? I'm finding myself a little bit in between on that. In all honesty, I struggle with the lordship of Christ." Here's the test of abiding. Abiding leads to freedom. Genuine disciples experience freedom. Don't miss Jesus' words to those who believed in Him in John 8:31--32, **"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."**

You ask, "Am I abiding? Am I abiding in the words of Jesus? Am I submitting to Him as my Lord and living in obedience to Him?" I really can't answer those questions for you, but I can tell you this: If you are abiding, you are getting free.

KNOWING THE TRUTH

Remaining in the truth revealed about Jesus leads to freedom. Notice that Jesus said, **"And you shall know the truth."** The word *know* there refers to an *experiential knowledge*. You will know *firsthand*, not like facts in a book. You will know the truth *personally* and *intimately*. Your heart will resonate with the truth about Jesus. You know it! It's like the difference between a person who has watched a video on sky-diving and a person who has actually done it. You know Jesus firsthand, personally,

experientially—not just facts, not just a head full of stuff. Hell will be filled with seminary professors because it's not about knowing *stuff*. It's about a personal experience with Christ. Jesus said, **“You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”**

FREEDOM FROM SIN

You say, “Free from what? What kind of freedom do genuine disciples experience?” First, true believers have freedom from the *power of sin*. If Jesus is setting you free because you are abiding in Him, then you are being freed from the power of sin. Sin is a powerful thing. Our inclination to do wrong is very strong. In and of yourself, you cannot overcome your tendency to do wrong. *You can't*. Some of you reading this booklet are not genuine disciples, and you are trying by the power of your own will to do what's right. *You can't*. I can't either. You can only do right because of the power of Christ in your life. If He is setting you free, then He is setting you free from the power of sin. You can now do what is right.

Secondly, genuine disciples are being set free from the *pain of sin*. The hurtful, destructive consequences of sin. Sin is a painful thing, and doing wrong is a painful thing. You are being freed from the pain of sin. Freedom from the *power*—I don't have to sin anymore. And freedom from the *pain*—I don't have to hurt anymore.

Friend, the truth shall make you free. Certainly, genuine Christians do sin. They do struggle. But they persevere, and they see as the pattern of their lives an *increasing growth in godliness*. It's an ongoing process. Here's a little tip:

IF . . .

- . . . your heart for God is the same as it was two years ago, five years ago, ten years ago;
- . . . you're not more in love with Him;
- . . . you're not a better husband or a better wife;
- . . . you're not a more honest business person;
- . . . you're not growing;
- . . . you're not changing;

THEN you may not be a Christian, because He's not in the process of setting you free.

Jesus said it. **"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."** This is no game. The subject that we're discussing is your eternal destiny. Will you go to a real place called heaven, or will you go to a real place called hell? Are you a genuine follower of Christ?

Genuine Disciples Recognize Bondage

Genuine disciples abide in Jesus' words and experience freedom. Jesus told this to a group of people who claimed to believe in Him, but their response is extremely disappointing. In John 8:33 they said, **"We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, 'You will be made free'?"** How sad!

False disciples aren't even aware of the bondage that they are in. They just don't get it. Jesus declared, "You guys can be free!" and they responded, "Free!? What are you talking about?" Jesus' audience didn't comprehend the gravity of their situation, but true Christians do. *Genuine disciples recognize their bondage.* They know where they stand.

DON'T YOU KNOW WHOSE KIDS WE ARE?

Jesus' listeners reminded Him of their connection to Abraham. Abraham was the father of the nation of Israel and the Jewish faith. He was their claim to spirituality. It's like me telling you that you can be free from bondage, and you say, "Bondage? What are you talking about? My grandfather is a pastor." Or I might say, "I think you're in bondage. You can be set free!" And you answer, "Free? I go to church every Sunday. What are you talking about?" Jesus' followers were insulted. They pointed to their *spiritual experience*,

their *spiritual heritage*, their *activity* and said, "Jesus, You're preaching to the wrong people. We are some seriously religious people." Jesus said, "Big deal. Big, big, deal."

SLAVES TO SIN

Then Jesus continued, "**Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.**"

They said, "We're not in bondage." Jesus went, "Okay, cool. Let's entertain for a moment the possibility that you're not in bondage. See if you can follow Me on these two points. Number one: *whoever* commits sin is a slave of sin. Got it? Number two: *everyone* sins. Still think that you're not in bondage?" Here is a group of people whose hearts are shut off spiritually who don't think that sin exists or that they themselves sin. The fact is, they do. Everyone sins. All people are sinners.

Jesus could have come right out and said, "You don't think you're in bondage? Let me just tell you something. You *are* in bondage!" But instead He said,

"Everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin."

And the people whose hearts were alive to Him—the genuine disciples—recognized the truth of His words and said, "He's talking about me. That's me—I sin. I must be enslaved to sin." On the contrary, the ones whose hearts weren't genuine and who didn't really believe in Him were insulted and said, "Let me get my spiritual résumé out for you."

False disciples don't recognize bondage. Genuine disciples recognize their sinfulness. False disciples are not especially convicted by their sin—not enough to really repent, or to change, or to hunger for freedom from the pain of bondage. Now they might talk and

act a good spiritual game, but if you push them on the point, they explode. They get angry. They don't want to hear about it. But genuine disciples recognize their bondage. Which are you?

Genuine Disciples Remain in Christ

Jesus was teaching a large, diverse group of people, and Scripture records that many of them believed Him. They embraced Christ—some in a *superficial* way, and some in a genuine, *life-changing* way. How can you tell the difference between the two groups of people? What are the defining characteristics? Genuine disciples abide in Jesus' words. They experience freedom from sin. True believers recognize their bondage. And lastly, *genuine disciples remain in Christ.*

In John 8:35 Jesus said, **“And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever.”** What was Jesus referring to when He mentioned the *house*? The house is the *household of faith*, the *family of God*. You say, “Do you mean to tell me that in the family of God, sometimes we have people hanging around who are not genuinely God's children? Are they here in my church? Whoa! Wheat and tares growing up together?” That's right!

KEEP ON KEEPING ON

So how can we tell the difference? Jesus told us right there: **“A slave does not abide in the house forever.”** If you are a genuine disciple of Christ, you will *continue to persevere* regardless of the obstacles in your faith with God. That's why it says in Matthew

10:22, **“He who endures to the end will be saved.”** There’s that *continuance*, that *perseverance*, that *going forward*. If you’re not a genuine Christian, the day is coming—or is already here—when you’re going to defect. You’re going to say, “Enough of this!” and you’re going to peel off.

PRESENT BUT NOT PRESENT

Now I wish I could tell you that everyone who defects physically leaves the church. A lot do. That’s what I John 2:19 is referring to when it says, **“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.”**

Some of you reading this, because you’re not genuine believers, are going to defect spiritually. You’re going to stop keeping up the appearance of being a follower of Christ, and you’re going to take off. The sad thing is that our North American churches have become so weak and so lame that you don’t have to actually leave in order to leave. You can still hang around and sing “O How I Love Him” and all the rest, but in your heart, there’s really nothing going on spiritually. You’re not a genuine disciple.

So what keeps you coming back week after week? You know people in your local church, and you’d miss them. Or maybe your mom calls you every week and asks you if you went to church. It is such a hassle to tell her no. You’d really like to quit going, but she puts this guilt thing on you. In your heart, you left a long time ago. Yet again you show up at church, *going through the motions*, headed for hell someday. You’re not a genuine disciple. There are many people who say they believe in Jesus, but they really don’t.

Genuine disciples abide in Jesus' words. Genuine disciples experience freedom. Genuine disciples recognize their bondage. And genuine disciples remain in Christ.

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE?

Need some examples? Let me tell you about four generic individuals. (Any similarity to actual people is convicting and coincidental.) Are they on the broad road that leads to *destruction*, or are they traveling the difficult road that leads to *life*? What do you think? We'll begin with Burt. Burt prayed to receive Christ as a child. He rebelled as a teenager, quit church in college, and married a non-believer. Burt never goes to church except with his parents, never reads his Bible, and has taught his three kids nothing about the Lord. But as a child, he prayed to receive Christ. Is Burt a Christian? If you press him, he says he is. What do you think?

Or what about Cindy? Cindy prayed to receive Christ as a teenager. She was lonely, and at church they accepted her, so now she never misses. Sunday is a time to see people and be encouraged, but her week is much different. She seldom reads her Bible and hardly ever prays. She has several enslaving habits that she can't seem to shake—sin that has pursued her year after year after year. She's in a rut and has been for years. She can't get free, or won't get free, or doesn't get free. Is Cindy a Christian?

How about Maureen? Now here's a Christian for sure. Maureen works in Kids' Church. She helps with set up, and she sings out on every song. In fact, she sings out so loudly in the praise time that sometimes people look at her and say, "Maureen

must really love God." And I'll tell you something else. I was with Maureen once in a prayer time, and, when other people were praying, she was making noises. She was going, "Hmmm. Hmmm. Yes, Jesus. Yes, Jesus." Publicly, Maureen is A+. Privately, the story is completely different. Maureen is no closer to God than she was twenty years ago. She has no hunger for God, no increasing pattern of obedience, and no conviction about her lying, gossip, or consuming fearfulness. Sometimes she feels a little guilt here and there but seldom any real, life-changing conviction. If you press her, she is very rebellious and has no personal walk with God. Is Maureen a Christian?

And then there's Henry. Henry prayed to receive Christ just before he got married. He was dating a Christian girl, and it seemed like the thing to do. He still comes to church two or three times a month. He likes some of the men and has gotten to know some people, but Henry's heart is quite far from God. He thinks mostly about business and sports. Often during the message, he argues with the person preaching—not aloud, but in his heart. He says, "That's pretty stupid! Why would you say that? I'm tired of hearing this. Why do I keep coming here?" The truth makes Henry angry: "Don't tell me what I should do!" Henry puts on a good front, but that's all it is. He would probably stay away more, but his wife won't allow it. Is Henry a Christian?

If the Son Makes You Free, You Shall Be Free Indeed

More importantly, are you? Are you a genuine follower of Jesus Christ? Genuine followers of Jesus Christ abide in His words. Genuine disciples experience freedom. Genuine believers recognize their bondage. Genuine disciples remain in Christ. Does that describe you? Are you a true follower of Jesus Christ? Paul taught that we should examine ourselves to see if we're in the faith and work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Do you know for sure that you are a member of God's family?

If these characteristics are present in your life, then you can have *complete assurance* of your salvation. Your future is secure, and your destiny is certain. That's what the Savior promised! Take a moment to thank the Lord for His sacrificial provision of eternal life. He is our only hope. Ask Jesus to continue to make you more like Himself moment by moment. Strive to be a better follower of Him each day.

But maybe you're saying to yourself, "I'm not sure if I'm really a Christian. I don't think my life matches up with Jesus' standards." I want to give you an opportunity to deal with this critical issue here and now if you're not certain. Just pray this to yourself:

Lord, I must get this matter settled right now. I truly see my sinful ways. God, I am so rebellious against You. I resist doing what's

right. I repent of my sinfulness. Thank You for sending Jesus to pay the penalty for my sin. Thank You, Jesus, for dying in my place. All the sin I've done—you've paid for it. Thank You, Jesus. I receive You now as my Lord. My life belongs to You, and I submit it to You. I will seek with Your help to abide in Your Word. Thank You for hearing my prayer. I pray in Your name. Amen.

Simply mouthing these words won't make the difference, but if this prayer matches up with a *genuine submission to Jesus Christ as Lord* in your heart, it will make all the difference, both now and in eternity. You, too, can have *complete assurance* of your salvation. Your future is secure, and your destiny is certain. That's what the Savior promised!

Put It To Work

Think back over the outline that Pastor James delivered in this booklet as you apply these questions and principles.

I. MANY PEOPLE BELIEVE IN JESUS *(page 3)*

- A. The Sower and the Seed
- B. Wheat and Tares
- C. Hitting Close to Home

Question: How has your life been different since you came to Christ? Can you identify one thing that proves that God's Spirit has changed your attitude, behavior, or perspective?

II. GENUINE DISCIPLES ABIDE IN JESUS' WORDS *(page 9)*

- A. Actions Speak Louder than Words
- B. No Just Savior

Question: When you are convicted or confronted by something in God's Word that needs to change in your life, how do you respond? Pray right now for one specific area that you know God needs to work on in your life. Surrender it to Him and ask for the willingness and strength to cooperate.

III. GENUINE DISCIPLES EXPERIENCE FREEDOM

(page 12)

- A. Knowing the Truth
- B. Freedom from Sin

Question: Are you frustrated by your inability to not sin on your own? You try, and try, and try, but still you repeat a personal pattern. Want to stop being a slave to that sin? Begin by acknowledging the power you have in Christ to not sin. Pray for perseverance. To bolster your confidence, ask God to show you how you are growing in godliness.

IV. GENUINE DISCIPLES RECOGNIZE BONDAGE

(page 15)

- A. Don't You Know Whose Kids We Are?
- B. Slaves to Sin

Question: When you know you just sinned, what's your immediate response?

- Rationalize. "It wasn't *that* bad."
- Hide. "Out of sight—out of mind."
- Cover. "Look at all the good I've done."
- Deny. "What sin?"

OR

- Be broken. "I can't believe I did it again."
- Confess. "What I did was against God."
- Repent. "I want to change, Lord. Help me."

Ask the Lord to help respond according to His Word more and more each day. Read Psalm 51 to see this modeled by King David.

V. GENUINE DISCIPLES REMAIN IN CHRIST *(page 18)*

- A. Keep on Keeping on
- B. Present but Not Present
- C. What Does This Look Like?

Question: As only you can answer, are you simply keeping up appearances as a Christian? Perhaps for the first time, surrender your heart to God. Go back to page 22 and follow Pastor James' direction in how to get right with God.

VI. IF THE SON MAKES YOU FREE, YOU SHALL BE FREE INDEED *(page 22)*

If you have sincerely accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, embrace the truth of that your salvation is assured in Jesus' finished work on the cross. On the authority of God's Word, you can be certain that you are going to heaven.

"If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."

Romans 10:9

Assurance of Salvation

DR. JAMES MACDONALD

Do you want to be certain you are going to heaven?

Jesus promises that confidence to those who believe what He says about eternal life and claim it as their own. It's that simple.

Want that assurance? Do you want to say without hesitation, "I am a true follower of Christ"?

Dr. James MacDonald shares clear teaching from God's Word on assurance of salvation. No more doubt; no more worry; no more "I hope so"; just absolute passion for the gift that God has given those who trust in the work of Christ on their behalf.

Make certain today that you are going to heaven.

**Igniting passion in the people of God
through the proclamation of truth**

Walk in the Word is the Bible teaching ministry of Dr. James MacDonald. James' teaching emphasizes the precise exposition of God's Word and its practical life application. Our goal is to ignite passion in the people of God through the proclamation of truth. But it isn't enough just to hear the Word—we must actually do what it says. Originally from Canada, James and his wife Kathy have three children and make their home in suburban Chicago. He is the founding senior pastor at Harvest Bible Chapel, one of the fastest growing churches in the Chicago area with a congregation of more than 6,000. Learn how to please God with your life with Walk in the Word's practical daily broadcast available all the time at www.walkintheword.com.



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