

A close-up photograph of a clear glass filled with milk. A thick stream of milk is being poured from above into the center of the glass, creating a large splash and bubbles. The background is a plain, light gray surface.

**MILK**

FOR NEW CHRISTIANS

**MILK: FOR NEW CHRISTIANS—TEACHER'S MANUAL**

Written by Frank Hamrick and Jerry Dean

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# PREFACE

*Milk: For New Christians* is an individual or group Bible study designed to cover the basic Bible truths about salvation and the spiritual growth of new believers. Some ministries can neglect to teach new Christians how to take the first steps in their relationship with God—how to drink the “milk” of the Word, which 1 Peter 2:2 tells us is needed for healthy spiritual growth.

This study can also help you set your class or youth group on the same footing, theologically. We find more Christians today who have served and worshipped for years in a church without understanding even the simplest teachings about God and what He accomplishes through salvation. We pray that this study will help you magnify God’s majesty to your students, whether they are new believers or simply Christians who want to further their walk with the Lord.

*Milk* is the first book in the Christian Growth Series. This four-book series was first designed as a self-guided study through the basic truths of the Bible. Because of the importance of the material’s content and its user-friendly format, many pastors and youth leaders began using the books in Sunday School classes and small group Bible studies. To accommodate this new venue, Positive Action for Christ began producing a series of teacher’s manuals to go along with the student books.

To make teaching and review easier, the teacher’s manuals feature the same divisions and headings as the student’s manual. Lesson and discussion content is provided, along with facsimiles of the student manual pages with the answers filled in. For each section, the teacher should first review the answers to the student manual, and then present any material in the teacher’s lesson.

Read through the teacher’s lesson ahead of time, choosing the number of discussion questions you feel comfortable covering in a single setting. Depending on how much time you allow for review or discussion, some lessons may require more than one week.

We trust that both you and your students will profit from your time studying these important truths from God’s Word.

1

HOW DID I BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

The Bible talks a lot about salvation, but what does this word really mean?

Normally, we might imagine a person getting “saved” from a burning house or a rushing river. But when the Bible uses the word *salvation*, it’s talking about something far more important than rescue from physical injury or death.

Biblical salvation refers to two things—first, our rescue from hell and eternal separation from God, and second, our restoration and adoption as God’s children, in this world now and in heaven forever.

Some Christians, therefore, call themselves “saved” to recognize that God has rescued them *from* their sin and *to* His family.

But how does this salvation happen?

### GOOD WORKS DON’T SAVE

Maybe you’re asking, “Don’t I have to do something to get saved? Aren’t good or noble actions necessary to get me into heaven?”

Let’s see what God says through His Word, the Bible. Turn to Romans 3:9–12.

- Verse 9 teaches that Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews) are the same in that they are both under sin.
- What do you think this means? Answers will vary.  
Suggested answer: Everyone has sinned and is under the judgment that comes from sin.
- Verse 10 describes what we really are in God’s sight. How many are righteous—that is, right with God?  
none
- According to verse 11, how many people really seek God? none
- According to verse 12, how many people, from God’s perspective, do good? none

6

The Bible talks a lot about salvation, but what does this word really mean?

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### GOOD WORKS DON’T SAVE

How does God feel about sin?

God hates sin—for two primary reasons.

Read Habakkuk 1:13. Here the prophet says that God’s eyes are too pure to even look on sin. Sin is incompatible with His nature and character. He is too holy to allow sin in His presence.

Isaiah 59:1–2 shows us that sin separates us from God. God loves us. He created us out of love and built us to enjoy fellowship with Him, but our sin tears us away from Him.

What does it mean to say that someone is unrighteous?

To be unrighteous is to be without righteousness. That is, there is nothing

right, or good, in us at all. The word *unrighteousness* carries with it the meaning of unjust, deceitful, and full of iniquity or sin. What a true picture of mankind! There is nothing right about us.

Romans 3:9–20 provides an accurate description of man’s unrighteousness. See also Isaiah 1:3–7.

When does a person become unrighteous?

In Psalm 51:5, David says that he was in sin from the time his mother conceived him. This means that a person is unrighteous even before he is born. But how can a baby be a sinner? This leads us to the next question.

How can a person be a sinner if he hasn’t even sinned yet?

Let’s respond to this question with another: Does a person become a sinner when he sins, or does he sin because he’s a sinner?

Read Romans 5:12 for the answer. This verse speaks of Adam’s sin in the Garden of Eden. Because of Adam’s sin, the rest of mankind was cursed with a sin nature. So we sin today because we are born sinners. That’s why none of us needs to be taught to do wrong. We lie because we are born liars; we steal because we are born thieves. Each of us has the capacity to do any form of evil, given the right chance and circumstances. While we are made in the image of God, sin has corrupted us.

Why doesn't everyone understand that they are unrighteous?

Read Ephesians 4:18. The unrighteousness of mankind actually darkens our understanding. Not only are we blinded, but we are also from birth alienated, separated, removed from the life that God offers.

## GOD IS HOLY

What does it mean to say that someone is righteous?

The word *righteous* includes the meaning of just, upright, or innocent. But is it possible for a person to be completely unrighteous one moment, and then be wholly righteous the next moment in the sight of God?

This transformation is what takes place the moment a person trusts Christ. Our spiritual condition is binary—we can either be spiritually alive or spiritually dead. There is no state between the two. A person is either unsaved (that is, unrighteous, dead in his sin) or saved (that is, righteous, alive, redeemed by Christ).

*How can you say I don't do good things?*

It's a fair question. But what does the Bible mean by "good"?

- As far as making other people happy, any of us can do good. We can share, give, and even die helping others—all as sinners unredeemed by Christ.
- But so far as pleasing God, no person can do good on his own. Romans 8:8 says that those who are in the flesh—that is, those who haven't trusted Christ for their salvation—cannot please God.

Without Christ, we cannot please God at all, and we certainly couldn't please God enough for Him to overlook our sin.

*Why can't I earn my salvation?*

## GOD IS HOLY

Read Leviticus 11:44 and answer the following questions.

- What did God require of Israel? holiness
- Why must they be holy? because God is holy

Read Habakkuk 1:13. Here the prophet is talking to God, and we learn that God is so pure, so holy, that He cannot even look upon sin.

God is perfectly holy, and He demands holiness from every individual.

- Romans 3:23 tells us that all have sinned.
- Can people that have sinned—that are imperfect—please a perfectly holy God by their own works?  
 Yes  No.

As we shall see, God is so holy that even our good works appear to Him as sinful.

Because God is holy, our sins separate us from Him.

- What does Romans 6:23 tell us is the wage, or reward, for our sin? death

### SALVATION IS A GIFT

- According to Romans 6:23, how does a person gain eternal life? One receives it as a free gift.
- What do you have to do to get a gift? receive it
- If a person offers you a gift, do you tell them, “Well, that’s great, but let me pay for it and earn it”?  
 Yes  No
- Is there any way you can work for a free gift?  
 Yes  No

If you work for a gift, it is no longer a gift—it’s a wage. Read Romans 6:23 again. Death is the wage we deserve for our sin. Eternal life—that is, salvation—is the gift that God offers us through Jesus Christ. What can we do but accept it?

### OUR RIGHTEOUS DEEDS ARE WORTHLESS

- How does Isaiah 64:6 describe the so-called righteous things we try to do? They are like filthy rags—disgusting and worthless.

These filthy rags or garments refer to the kind of bandages someone might place over an open sore. Once removed from the wound, the bandages are disgusting, polluted garbage. This is how God views our works. Our intentions might be good, but our sinful nature corrupts even our best efforts.

## SALVATION IS A GIFT

How can we earn our salvation?

According to Ephesians 2:8–9, we can’t. These verses point out that salvation is a gift from God—something that cannot be earned by anything we do. No one can earn his salvation; it’s a gift from God. If a person could earn his salvation, he would be able to brag about his good works, but the Bible says that no one can make such a boast before God.

What has to happen for a person to be righteous in the sight of God?

Here’s the key point of this lesson. A person is only righteous in the sight of God through the merits of Jesus Christ alone. Christ was made to *be* sin for us, so that we could be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21). Elsewhere, the apostle Paul writes that we are accepted (by God) in the Beloved—that is, Christ (Eph. 1:6).

First Peter 1:8–9 tells us that we are redeemed by the blood of Christ. Christ suffered for our sins, even though He was righteous and we are unrighteous (1 Pet. 3:18). This was the only way that we could have righteousness applied to our account. His blood was by necessity shed to blot out our sins (Heb. 9:22).

As an illustration, hold up your fist to represent your sinful self. God sees our sinfulness. Now use your other hand to represent Christ’s blood. Cover your fist with the other hand. After you trust Christ, God looks down and sees not your sin, but

Christ’s blood. And Christ not only covers our sin, but He also washes it away. We receive righteousness in the sight of God as we trust Christ to cleanse us from sin (1 John 1:7).

Since Romans 3:11 tells us that no one seeks after God, how does anyone ever know about Him and His salvation?

The Scripture teaches that people do not seek God, but have rather gone astray, like sheep with no shepherd (Isa. 53:6; Rom. 3:11). Spiritually speaking, we’re no smarter than sheep. We can only come to God as He draws us (John 6:44). Consider the parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:4–7). The poor, dumb sheep was lost, but the shepherd took it upon himself to seek it out. God the Father does the same thing to poor, dumb, rebellious, lost people such as us.

### OUR RIGHTEOUS DEEDS ARE WORTHLESS

Why is it that no one outside of Christ can do anything good in God’s sight?

Many unbelievers do wonderful things for people, just like Christians do, or perhaps even better. How can the work of someone who is not a Christian be counted unrighteous when the same work by a Christian is considered righteous?

Consider the illustration of the fist. Because of my unrighteousness, God sees only my sin, no matter how “good” the thing I’m doing. While I am a sinner, everything I do is sinful (Prov. 21:4). It’s our nature that colors what we do. Can a human being do anything that is not human? Of course not.

Romans 8:8 says that those who are in the flesh cannot please God. Once a person has trusted Christ, he is brought under the blood, and God sees him as righteous. Job 29:14, Psalm 132:9, and Isaiah 61:10 describe God’s people as being clothed in His righteousness.

Why was it necessary that Jesus Christ be a sinless person?

Throughout the Old Testament, God always demanded a perfect sacrifice for atonement. Every lamb had to be without spot or blemish, the best of the flock. The sacrifice had to be holy, because God is holy (Lev. 6:25–30).

Likewise, Christ had to be sinless, because He was dying for our sins. If He had been sinful, He would have had to die for His own sin, and He would have been unable to die for the sins of anyone else. A guilty person cannot take the place of another guilty person—a guilty person’s punishment satisfies his own judgment. Therefore, Christ suffered without sin to bring people to God (1 Pet. 3:18). Note also 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Romans 5:12–21.

## WHEN DOES A PERSON BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

**Teacher’s Note:** Carefully go over the four points in the student book, emphasizing that salvation is more than a simple business transaction in which God offers to save those who say, “Okay, I believe.” True, there is a transactional element in salvation—God offers, and we accept—but there is more.

Not all who say they believe are saved, for there is head belief and heart belief. Heart belief is given by God. It’s a broken recognition of one’s sinfulness and helplessness, followed by joy as Christ provides salvation through His shed blood. Sadly, many people make professions of faith but do not possess salvation.

Salvation is the work of God, not the result of a prayer or confession of belief. When God saves us, He changes us, refocusing our behavior, our desires, our attitudes, our vision. By His grace, we become new (2 Cor. 5:17).

Is it enough to just say that we believe the facts about Christ’s life, death, and resurrection?

Intellectual belief and redemption are two different things. There’s a difference in asking “Do you believe?” and “Has God saved you?”

Even Satan could say, “I believe,” because he knows that Christ died to pay for the sins of mankind. But Satan has rejected God, never to turn back to Him.

### WHEN DOES A PERSON BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

The following four things happen as a person becomes a Christian.

He Recognizes That He Is a Condemned Sinner Before a Holy God

Throughout the Bible, we see people confronted with their sin. How did the following admit their sinfulness?

- David—2 Samuel 12:13 \_\_\_\_\_  
admitted that he had sinned against the Lord
- Isaiah 6:5 \_\_\_\_\_  
became keenly aware of his own sin when he saw the King

He Recognizes What Christ Has Done for Him

In Acts 8:26–40, a royal treasurer from Ethiopia asked one of Christ’s disciples, Philip, to explain the meaning of Isaiah 53. Philip showed him how the passage prophesied that a Savior would come and die for our sins.

Salvation would not be possible had Christ not paid for our sins on the cross (1 Pet. 1:17–19; Rom. 5:6). Without an understanding of Christ’s saving work on the cross, a person cannot be saved.

God’s holiness and justice require death for our sins (Rom. 6:23). But the *gospel*—that is, the good news—is that Christ died in our place.

He Repents of His Sin and Flees to Christ for Salvation

- According to 2 Corinthians 7:10, what does godly sorrow, or grief, produce? repentance
- And what does this lead to? salvation

To *repent* is to turn around, to change your mind and therefore your direction.

- How does a person gain repentance (2 Tim. 2:25)?  
God gives it to them.

God-given repentance is not just self-pity or guilt for having done wrong. Those attitudes don't turn us to God for salvation.

But how do we know that our repentance is the kind that leads us to salvation? Two signs accompany God-given repentance:

1. As mentioned before, we will have godly sorrow for our sin (2 Cor. 7:10). This is an actual hatred of our sin, a deep desire to be cleansed of it.
  2. We will desire Christ. We will see Him as our precious cornerstone (1 Pet. 2:7). We will understand how dependent we are on Him.
- Read Matthew 13:44. When the man found treasure in the field, how did he respond? What was his attitude?  
He hid the treasure, selling all he had to buy the field where the treasure was hidden.

That treasure represents Christ. When a person truly repents of his sin, he realizes that Christ is more valuable and desirable than all the treasures on Earth. He will do anything to gain that glorious treasure.

He Believes on the Lord Jesus Christ with All His Heart

- Read John 3:16. According to this verse, who will be given eternal life? whoever believes on Jesus

Salvation is not a business transaction—the kind where God offers to save us if we will believe, and we just say, “Okay, I believe.” As with repentance, some so-called belief does not lead to salvation.

- James 2:19 tells us that the demons also believe that God exists. But this kind of belief will not save them.

The kind of belief Jesus spoke of to Nicodemus (John 3:16) leads to salvation. How is it different from the belief that the demons have?

A study of the quotes of the demons in the New Testament reveals that they believed a lot of things about God—that He exists, that He is the only God, that He sent His Son to Earth, that He will one day judge all who reject Him. To simply believe facts about Christ and God is not to be saved.

The sign of God-given faith is a turning to Christ, a submission to Him as Lord. When God saves us, He changes us and begins to reveal the evidence of salvation in our lives, as found in 1 John.

True belief grows from a knowledge of . . .

- God's holiness
- Our sinfulness
- Our utter helplessness to save ourselves

We can then turn to our precious Savior, Christ, who alone can save us, trusting Him to save us from sin by His work on the cross.

And when we come to Him, He redeems us, changes us, *saves* us.

Complete This Section Without Looking Back at the Lesson

1. Who has sinned? everyone
2. What is the reward for our sin? death
3. Can people naturally do anything pleasing to God?  
 Yes  No
4. Can people do good deeds in the sight of other people?  
 Yes  No
5. According to Romans 6:23, can we earn eternal life—that is, salvation? Or is it a gift of God? \_\_\_\_\_  
No, it is a gift of God.
6. Before salvation, how do our attempts at good deeds appear to God? They appear like filthy rags—disgusting and worthless.
7. What must a person do to be saved? \_\_\_\_\_  
A person must trust Christ.
8. What four things take place when a person is truly saved?  
(1) He recognizes that he is a condemned sinner before a holy God.  
(2) He recognizes what Christ has done for him.  
(3) He repents of his sin and flees to Christ for salvation.  
(4) He believes on the Lord Jesus Christ with all his heart.

In Psalm 119, the psalmist writes of a love for God's Word, which leads to a desire to hide, or keep, that Word in your heart (vs. 11). The best way to keep the Word in your heart and mind is to read and memorize it.

Learn the following verses. They will remind you that salvation is a free gift, one available to all who believe on Christ and depend on Him alone to save them.

Verses to Memorize

- Ephesians 2:8, 9

# 2

## THE ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

Can a person know for sure whether he has received salvation? Some people teach that we can only hope to be saved, that we won't know we're going to heaven until we get there.

But Scripture teaches us that we can have certainty *now*—not because of what we do, but because of Christ. In fact, God included a book in the Bible just to assure believers that they have eternal life in Him (1 John).

God uses the following ways to help Christians know they are truly His children.

### CHRIST'S LIFE ASSURES

When God saves a person, something happens to him on the inside.

#### The Old Sinner Dies

- Read Galatians 2:20. In the first phrase of this verse, what did Paul say happened to him? \_\_\_\_\_  
He was crucified with Christ.

Paul's former identity as a sinner is gone. Because of Christ's sacrifice, sin no longer defines or bounds us.

#### God Places a New Life Within Us

- According to Galatians 2:20, a new life arises within the believer. Where did this life come from? \_\_\_\_\_  
Christ
- But someone must sustain this life. Look at Galatians 2:20 again. On what person do we place our faith? \_\_\_\_\_  
Christ
- And what does this verse say He has done for us? \_\_\_\_\_  
It is no longer we who live but Christ who lives in us. Christ is our new life.
- To summarize: in Colossians 3:4, what does Paul call Christ? our life

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### CHRIST'S LIFE ASSURES

The exercises in the student manual lesson follow a logical sequence. Paul speaks of salvation as both a death and a resurrection. When we are saved, we "die" with Christ on the cross.

"The idea of the believer's death with Christ reappears in Romans 6:7; Colossians 2:11–12, 20; 3:3; and 1 Peter 2:24. The idea of his crucifixion with Christ appears only here, 6:14, and Romans 6:6." (*The Epistle to the Galatians*, p. 97, C. F. Hogg and W. E. Vine, Pickering & Inglis, London, 1959.)

The death spoken of here conveys the idea that we are "positionally" dead to the law. That is, Paul says that he is no longer under an obligation to keep the law to be considered righteous by God. The old ways of trying to please God are no longer valid. A man "lives" by what Christ did on the cross. Yet the life he lives is actually not his life, but Christ living in him.

Thus, Christ is our life. Since He is eternal, He cannot die. And since He cannot go to hell, as long as He is in us, we will not be able to go to hell.

But someone might ask, "Suppose Christ leaves us." The Book of Hebrews tells us that He will never leave us—thus, our assurance of salvation is based on the kind of life we now possess. We have Christ's life, an eternal life that cannot die and will never suffer in hell.

The assurance of our salvation and eternal security is rooted in our Christology—the Doctrine of Christ. If we believe in an eternal Christ, and that this eternal Christ indwells believers, then we can know for sure that we have eternal salvation.

### What is eternal life?

Anyone outside of Christ is dead (Eph. 2:1–3; John 11:25; Rom. 6:2, 11; 1 Tim. 5:6). Without Jesus, we are slaves to our sin, spiritually corrupted, frozen, incapable of fellowshiping with a living God. But He offers us an alternative—eternal life.

This concept of life certainly includes living eternally, but it also involves a restoration of spiritual fellowship with God—like the kind of relationship that Adam and Eve experienced in the Garden. Eternal life is an unending fellowship

with God, a chance to forever enjoy Him and His good creation.

Most people don't understand the purpose of life, or what living really means. They think that if they can do some good or experience some pleasure in this short earthly life, their time will have been worth it.

But these people are like the rich man who lay on his death bed and made one final request. He asked to be buried behind the wheel of a gold-trimmed Cadillac, with the air conditioning turned on and the engine running. The man died shortly after, and, just as he requested, a landscaping crew dug a hole large enough for the car. The morgue fitted the man in a nice suit, along with a top hat and white gloves. They placed the man behind the wheel of the car and lowered the vehicle into the hole.

Two of the deceased man's friends watched from a little way off, and one finally said, "Man, that's really living!"

What counts as life to you? Is it the toys or amusements you use to distract yourself, or is it a relationship with the God who provides all goodness and lasting joy?

When does eternal life begin?

Some Christians think of eternal life as something that begins at death when we enter heaven. But according to 1 John 5:11-13, we believers already have eternal life. Though we cannot see the Lord so long as we are confined to Earth, we are as much in His presence as if we were already in heaven. Christ says we are already seated in heavenly places with Him (Eph. 2:6).

While on Earth, what is the difference between a person who has eternal life and someone who does not?

As we learned earlier, a person without Christ is completely dead, void of any life within himself. This person is always seeking something to fill the emptiness in his heart and soul. He can never experience lasting joy, because he finds pleasure in sin only for a short time (Heb. 11:25).

But a person who knows Christ as Lord and Savior has an incredible, joyful life. He is at peace with God, and he is fulfilling the purpose for which God placed him on Earth. Of course, if he turns to seek darkness again, God will convict him of his sin—and that isn't pleasant. But the joy of Christ works through even the momentary unhappiness caused by our sin or circumstances.

Suppose, for example, a man is brought out from the slums, where dirt, filth, and disease abound, and is placed in a good home with plenty of food, clean clothes, a place to sleep, and the love and fellowship of good friends. Could you imagine that person ever wanting to go back to his filth again?

#### This New Life Cannot Die

Christ died once to pay for our sins (Rom. 5:6), but He rose again three days later.

- According to Romans 6:9, what did Christ prove by His resurrection? **Death no longer has control or dominion over Him.** \_\_\_\_\_
- Can He ever die again? **no** \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 110 is a song about Christ, written 1000 years before He was born on Earth. It describes His power and authority, using several different pictures as examples.

One picture, or type, of Christ is Melchizedek, an ancient King-Priest who lived during Abraham's day, in a city that would later become Jerusalem. Hebrews 7 argues that Jesus became a priest for us in the same order, or tradition, as Melchizedek.

- Psalm 110:4 prophesies that Christ will be a priest like Melchizedek. How long will He keep this position? **forever** \_\_\_\_\_
- According to Revelation 11:15, how long will Christ reign, or rule? **forever** \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus Christ, our very life, our eternal priest and connection to God, will forever keep us safe in Him.

*But couldn't Christ leave me?*

#### Christ Will Never Leave Us

- Read Hebrews 13:5. What will Christ never do? **He will never leave or forsake us.** \_\_\_\_\_

#### We Who Have Christ Have Eternal Life

Read 1 John 5:11-13 and answer the following questions.

- Who gives eternal life? **God** \_\_\_\_\_
- Does everyone possess eternal life?  Yes  No

- Who has eternal life? Where does it come from? \_\_\_\_\_  
Whoever has the Son has eternal life. It comes from Jesus.
- Who does not have eternal life? Whoever does not have the Son does not have life.
- To whom did John write these verses? believers,  
or Christians
- According to these verses, can you *know* that you have eternal life?  Yes  No

Since Christ—who will never die—lives in believers, and since He has promised to never leave us, then we can never go to hell. Christ’s life assures us of eternal salvation.

### GOD’S WORD ASSURES

Read Acts 16:30, 31; Romans 10:9, 13; John 3:16. Now answer the following questions.

- In your own words, what must a person do to be saved?  
Answers will vary.
- Can God lie (Titus 1:2)?  Yes  No
- Did God say He would save you if you put your faith and trust in Him?  Yes  No
- Do you trust Him for salvation?  Yes  No
- Then according to God’s Word, are you saved?  
 Yes  No

### GOD’S HANDS ASSURE

Read John 10:27–29. These verses show that we, as believers, are in Christ’s hand (vs. 28) and in God the Father’s hand (vs. 29).

- Can anyone take us out of God’s hands?  Yes  No

This picture can also help us understand the mindset of people before they are redeemed by Christ. The man, before he is brought out of the slums, may not realize how good it would be to live in a loving environment. Likewise, sinners cannot fully realize their plight until after God saves them from it (Luke 15:11–24).

### GOD’S WORD ASSURES

What does the word *assurance* mean?

Assurance means to be certain in your mind—to be free from doubt. The person who has assurance of his salvation is sure that he is safe. He knows that he is a member of God’s family forever.

Sometimes people are sure of things that are not true. For example, people used to think that the world was flat, or that certain creatures, like maggots, could spontaneously generate out of inanimate matter. Believers can have confident assurance of salvation because their assurance is rooted in the promises of God, not in the ideas of people.

In Hebrews 3:6 we are told to hold fast to the end. If we don’t do this, do we lose our salvation?

This verse does not say that we become and remain the children of God *by* holding fast. Rather, it says that the *proof* that we have been born again is that we are holding fast to our profession.

A professing Christian who does not hold fast gives no evidence of ever having

become a Christian. We are not kept saved by anything we do, but by the power of God (1 Pet. 1:5). If we were kept saved by what we did, salvation would be by our good works and not by God’s mercy and grace.

What does Romans 10:13 mean when it talks about calling upon the name of the Lord? Can we just say God’s name and be saved?

No, this *call* is an act of trust and dependence on the Lord. To trust the name of the Lord is to trust all that He is.

You mean something similar when you say “I had to call upon all my years of experience.” That means you had to depend on all your experience. Calling on God’s name is depending on all that He is for your salvation.

Some people mistakenly think that this *call* refers to a prayer. But then this phrase would likely be translated “call out to,” not “call on.” Calling on the Lord requires, therefore, nothing more than depending on all He is for salvation.

Titus 1:2 speaks of the hope of eternal life. Does this mean that we can only “hope” we are saved?

No, the word *hope* here means “confident expectation.” Hebrews 6:11 speaks of a full assurance of hope. God would never have told us we would have full assurance if the best we could do is “hope so.” Since God does not lie (Titus 1:2), we can have confidence in His gift of eternal life.

Does a person have to feel or show great emotion when he makes a profession of salvation?

Some people believe that a person must show emotion of some kind to be truly saved. He must cry, laugh, or do something in order to be sure that he has been born again. Some people today emphasize any sort of emotional experience as being a necessary part of becoming an heir in God's family.

But this belief is false, and is indeed dangerous to the cause of Christ. We must again look back at the principle that salvation is a *state of being* and not a *feeling*. Feelings change constantly, and if our salvation were based on how or what we feel, then most of us would be saved one moment and lost the next.

It's true that we're given a great peace as we understand that the burden of sin no longer rests on us. We can feel joy and relief, elation and gratitude. Over time, we will respond to the love of God in our hearts as we comprehend what He has done for us. But none of those feelings are necessary to be born again.

Review the verses in the student manual that tell what a person must do to be saved. Is feeling ever mentioned in those verses? Is it safe or even logical to base our faith and our soul's destiny on something as changeable and unreliable as mere feeling? The fact of salvation is necessary, not the feeling.

**Teacher's Note:** This might be a good time to ask your class to consider seriously whether their salvation is one of fact or feeling. Many people can base their assurance of salvation on something they did, such as walking down an aisle and taking the preacher's hand, or an emotional experience they may have had one day. But when they try to think of what took place, they cannot describe what God did or how they responded.

## GOD'S HANDS ASSURE

What does it mean to say that we are kept by the power of God?

We find this phrase in 1 Peter 1:5. Some translations will include "shielded" or "guarded." The verse, translated literally, could read, "Who are kept by the power of God, being guarded through faith, for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." The word translated "guarded" here means "to keep in a state of settlement or security." From this verse, we see that our salvation is guarded, kept, and protected by the power of God, which means that our salvation is settled and secure.

Since we are sure of our salvation, we can do whatever we want, right?

If we are not saved by the good works we do, then we cannot lose our salvation by the bad works we do. Therefore, no matter what we do after we have been redeemed, Christ has paid for all our sins—past, present, and future.

But some respond to this truth by saying, "Great! Now that I am saved forever, I can live as I please." Nothing could be further from the truth. When a person is truly born again, he becomes a new person. The old passes away, and new things come to be (2 Cor. 5:17). The new believer possesses a new nature and walks in newness of life (Rom. 6:1–13).

If we do not love and obey Christ, then we have reason to doubt whether we've been redeemed in the first place. Jesus taught that no one can serve two different masters at the same time (Luke 16:13). If we have been born again, we will love God for what He's done in us, and we will do what He commands us to do (John 14:15, 21, 23). We do not sin just to take advantage of God's grace (Rom. 6:1–4). It would be ungrateful—unnatural, even—for a newly freed believer to reject God's work and try to re-enslave himself to sin.

- Study verse 28. *Perish* in this verse means to suffer in hell. If a person is God's child, safe in His hands, will he ever perish?  Yes  No
- After reading these verses, do you think it is up to you to keep yourself saved?  Yes  No
- Look at 1 Peter 1:5. According to this verse, what protects or keeps us through faith to our salvation?  
the power of God

God is all-mighty (Gen. 17:1). He can do whatever He decides to do. His power knows no limits, just as our trust in Him should know no limits.

### DEALING WITH DOUBTS

Sometimes you may wonder whether you are saved. Our flesh, vulnerable to spiritual weakness and attack, can doubt God's goodness and power. This is common, especially for new believers, or for believers who have just begun to think critically about their faith.

*But I just don't feel saved.*

Read John 1:12.

- What does God give to those who receive Jesus Christ?  
the power or right to become children of God
- According to this verse, what have you become by receiving Christ? a child of God
- Do you have to *feel* like you are the child of your parents to actually be their child?  Yes  No
- Some mornings you may get out of bed and not even feel alive. Does that mean you are not living?  
 Yes  No

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## DEALING WITH DOUBTS

Do true Christians ever have doubts about their salvation?

Yes. Christians, especially new Christians, often wrestle with doubts about their salvation. Doubts about such an important matter have a way of getting your attention, and that's why this second lesson is on assurance. God's Word tells us that we can be certain in our faith. We can be free from doubts. We can be as sure of our eternal destiny as we are sure of God's reliability and faithfulness to His Word.

Could a person ever decide that he just doesn't want to be a Christian anymore and then give up his position in God's family?

No. A person who genuinely trusts Christ never relinquishes that position. Many people, supposedly Christians, have made professions in the past, but then turn in rebellion against the Lord. These people are either saved and living under the Holy Spirit's conviction for their sin, or they never trusted Christ for salvation in the first place. Unbelievers often live comfortably in Christian communities, trusting their own works and prayers, and following along with what their family or church told them to do.

As difficult as it may be to admit, we cannot know for sure what the Lord is doing in other peoples' lives. We can trust only God and the truth of His Word. When a person trusts Christ as Savior, his soul's destiny is forever settled in heaven. And

if a person gives no evidence of that trust, we must offer him truth and love.

**Teacher's Note:** Read Leviticus 25:47–55; Exodus 21:1–6; Deuteronomy 15:1–17; and Luke 17:7–10 to prompt further discussion on this topic.

A person can never change his biological mother and father. He could try to cut off contact with his family, reject their help, even change his name, but he will still be his parents' son. Likewise, if we are truly the children of God, we will stay the children of God, no matter what. We might try to build walls between us and God, but we still have a relationship with Him.

And Christ is the all-sufficient one—the only one who can satisfy all the longing of our souls. So if we have accepted Him as our Savior, we need not worry that one day we might not want or need Him.

After we are saved, what obligation do we have toward God and other people?

We read a summary of our duty in Ecclesiastes 12:13, which tells us to respect and obey God.

**Teacher's Note:** Ask your class to list examples of commands from the Bible. What does God want us to do? Categorize their responses under general headings, such as family, church, worship, morality, spiritual growth, and outreach.

Some commands for New Testament believers include the following:

- Repent—that is, turn to Christ and be saved (Acts 17:30)
- Be baptized (Acts 10:48)
- Be holy (1 Pet. 1:15–16)
- Be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18)
- Be doers of the Word (James 1:22–23)
- Do not love the world (1 John 2:15)
- Love one another (John 15:17)
- Make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19–20)

And when asked for the most important commandment, Christ told His disciples first to love God, and then to love others (Matt. 22:36–40).

According to 1 John 2:3, we know that we know God if we keep His commandments. That's not to say we'll keep them perfectly, but we will see the fruit of His grace in our lives as we love and obey Him. And this verse doesn't mean that we earn our salvation by keeping God's commandments. We can't prove ourselves "worthy" of God's gifts—He proves Himself worthy by enabling us to serve Him. Every believer has access to that grace because of the work of Christ.

- You are now a child of God—is that a fact or a feeling?  
It is a fact, not a feeling.

Complete This Section Without Looking Back at the Lesson

1. How does Christ's life give us assurance that we are eternally saved? \_\_\_\_\_  
Christ, who has eternal life, lives in a believer and will never leave him. Thus, a believer can never go to hell since he would take Christ with him, and Christ will never suffer in hell.
2. Who possesses eternal life? anyone who believes in Christ
3. Do you possess eternal life?  Yes  No
4. How do you know? Answers will vary.  
Suggested answer: God's Word says that the one who has the Son has life.
5. What verse of Scripture teaches that you can know you have eternal life? 1 John 5:13
6. In your own words, what does a person do to be saved?  
Answers will vary.
7. What verses teach that you're in God's hands?  
John 10:27–29
8. According to 1 Peter 1:5, what protects, or keeps, us?  
the power of God
9. List three things that assure us of our salvation.  
(1) Christ's life  
(2) God's Word  
(3) God's hands

Verses to Memorize

- 1 John 5:13
- Romans 10:9

