

Can We Be Sure Of Our Christianity?

Many doubts can torture us after our commitment to Jesus Christ.

Mark 9:15-24 [NIV] *“As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him. “What are you arguing with them about?” he asked. A man in the crowd answered, “Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.” “O unbelieving generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.” So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth. Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has he been like this?” “From childhood,” he answered. “It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. **But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.**” “**If you can?**” said Jesus. **“Everything is possible for him who believes.”** Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, **“I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!”**”*

I feel all of us can relate to this man at times.

How can I be sure I am a Christian?

I invited Jesus to come into my life, but I’m not sure it has happened.

How can I be sure that God has forgiven my sins?

Am I really a part of God’s created family?

I’m sure we all at times have had similar questions in our minds.

We should expect doubts to come into our minds

As a physical human being doubts in what are spiritual facts is normal.

This even happens to older Christians.

Don’t be surprised when doubts come, but be ready.

We must know how to deal with these doubts.

Genesis 3:1-5 [NIV] *“Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, **“Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’**” The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’” **“You will not surely die,”** the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”*

Part of Satan’s attack on human beings, whom he is trying to destroy, has been from the beginning and still **is to infect our minds with doubt.** Doubt in what God has said and promised.

Having been rescued from Satan’s control, we have become his enemy.

What must be our answer to these doubts?

Believe God's Word not our feelings

The only way to overcome such attacks is to know clearly what God has said and promised in His Handbook For Life, the Christian Bible.

Titus 1:1-2 [NIV] *“Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God’s elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness, **a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time,**”*

God does not lie, He does not need to, because He has more than enough power and authority to bring to fruition all that He promises.

Hebrews 13:8 [NIV] *“**Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever.**”*

Jesus Christ who is God and came to reveal God to human beings does not change His mind.

John 14:6-9 [NIV] *“Jesus answered, **‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.’** Philip said, ‘Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.’ Jesus answered: ‘Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?’”*

Jesus introduces Himself as *“the truth”*.

Everything that Jesus Christ said and promised can be relied on as it is the truth.

We must rest our faith and hope on God's Word as spoken by Jesus Christ and inspired by the Holy Spirit.

John 14:26 [NIV] *“But the Counsellor, **the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.**”*

The Holy Spirit, who is working with us and if invited will come into our lives to direct them, will bring to remembrance, when needed, the words of Jesus Christ.

Use these words of promise and encouragement to eradicate our doubts.

John 16:12-13 [NIV] *“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, **the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.**”*

The Holy Spirit will also lead us into all truth.

The disciples were not ready at that time to be taught by Jesus all what was needed to be made known, because the Holy Spirit was yet to be given to them.

God does **not** unload all the truth on His children at one time, our finite minds could not accommodate it all.

We are all given what we need to mature when we need it.

When doubt comes into our minds, ask God to use the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives to convict us of God's promises and faithfulness to fulfil those promises.

We must **not** rely on our feelings, for our feelings can change from one day to another.

Rely on God's Word which does not ever change for it is eternal.

We are accepted by God because of Jesus Christ

Ephesians 2:8-9 [NIV] *“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.”*

We are saved from eternal death by God’s Grace [undeserved favour] that is through Jesus Christ, **not** by anything we may have done.

Don’t make the mistake of thinking that God accepts us because of some good in us or some good works we have done.

If we have this mistaken idea, then when we sin, which we will do, we will feel rejected by God and that He has changed His mind about our being His child.

John 6:37-40 [NIV] *“All that the Father gives me will come to me, and **whoever comes to me I will never drive away.** For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. **For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.**”*

When we commit our lives to Jesus Christ, our lives are put into God’s hands.

John 10:27-30 [NIV] *“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; **no-one can snatch them out of my hand.** My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no-one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”*

God’s hands are very safe hands.

John 3:16 [NIV] *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that **whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.**”*

Jesus Christ’s main task is to save all humanity.

1 Timothy 1:15-16 [NIV] *“Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the worst.** But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.”*

Trust in God’s unlimited patience.

1 Timothy 2:3-4 [NIV] *“This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.”*

God’s plan of salvation for all humanity, His desire for all to become His children.

2 Peter 3:9 [NIV] *“**The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.**”*

God doesn’t want anyone to perish, but desires all of us to come to repentance so He can forgive our sins.

Romans 8:15-17 [NIV] *“For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” **The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.** Now if we are children, then we are heirs, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”*

If we allow Him the Holy Spirit will, when needed, remind us that we are created children of God.

We do not have to fear failure if we realise it is through what Jesus Christ has done for us that we become created children of God, and are offered eternal life with our Spiritual Father.

The signs of the new life within us

The first letter of the apostle John has been called “*a letter for doubters*”.

It is written for those who are **not** sure about their relationship with Jesus Christ.

In this letter John gives us four tests or signs to show that we belong to the created family of God.

Obedience

1 John 2:3-6 [NIV] “*We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. **But if anyone obeys his word, God’s love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.***”

Before we became a Christian we did our own thing, we lived our lives the way we wanted to, we followed our natural desires.

The sign that we have now become a created child of God is that we desire to obey what Jesus Christ has commanded us.

We have this growing desire to please God by doing what He wants us to do.

A changed life

1 John 3:4-10 [NIV] “*Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. No-one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No-one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him. Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. **The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.** No-one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. **This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.***”

Before we became a Christian, we were a slave to sin.

This means we were controlled by certain human attitudes and habits.

What about now?

Do we see changes taking place?

We won’t be perfect all at once, but we will not like doing wrong things anymore.

Our conscience will actively cause us to repent when we are shown through God’s Word that we have sinned.

The time span between our sin and our repentance will gradually be shortened.

We have this constant desire to live the way that Jesus Christ has shown us by His personal example.

Belief about Jesus

1 John 2:18-25 [NIV] *“Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us. But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. Who is the liar? **It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist, he denies the Father and the Son.** No-one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also. See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he promised us, even eternal life.”*

Before we became a Christian, Jesus meant nothing to us personally, in fact we could have been vocally anti-Christ, using Christ’s name only in an abusive manner.

What do we now think about Jesus?

Do we now believe Him to be the Son of God?

Do we have a new respect and love for Jesus?

Romans 10:9-11 [NIV] *“That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”*

Are we now able to confess that as a Christian that Jesus Christ is our Master and Saviour?

We do this because we believe it in our heart, it is the new driving force of our life.

Love

1 John 2:9-11 [NIV] *“Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. **Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble.** But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.”*

If God is our Father this will show itself by the way we love His other children.

For we now belong to His created family.

1 John 3:14-18 [NIV] *“We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our **brothers.** Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him. **This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.** If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.”*

Are we willing to lay down our lives for our brethren?

That is be willing to give of our time and income to supply the needs of others who are now also created children of God.

John 13:34-35 [NIV] *“A new command I give you: **Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.** By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

Love for other Christians is a clear sign that we are one of Jesus’ followers.

If all that has been mentioned above is starting to happen in our lives, then we can be sure that we are now a created child of God.

When doubts come we need to put our trust in God's Word, as we have just done.

Ask Jesus Christ again to be the Lord and Master of our life and yield to the Holy Spirit whom He has sent to be our constant companion and Teacher.

Stand firm against Satan's accusations, quoting back to him the faith you have in God's promises made to us through Jesus Christ.

There is no reason for us to live in doubt.

Romans 8:37-39 [NIV] *"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Always remember this promise, be convinced that it is true, because the God we worship cannot lie.

Memory Verse:

John 5:24 [NIV] *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."*

Next time we will continue to meditate on what is changing in our lives since we became created children of God.