

Where Do I Stand With God?

Once a person becomes interested in Jesus Christ and begins to inquire into just what it means to trust him as Savior, one of the most pressing difficulties that typically emerges is the question, “How can I know that I truly have received and rested upon Jesus Christ as my Savior?” To word it in another way, “How can I know I have eternal life?”

Jesus was asked this question in John 3 and his answer in verse 7 was simple: “You must be born again” (that is, become a new person) and this happens through trusting in Jesus Christ as Savior (John 3:16). This is the simple teaching of Scripture on how we come to true salvation: It is by God’s undeserved favor alone through faith in Christ as Savior alone—and this is as revealed through Scripture alone for God’s glory alone.

Yet, since there is a kind of belief that saves (John 3:36) and a kind that does not save (Matthew 7:21-23; James 2:14-19), it is very important that we carefully consider what the Bible teaches about how we trust in Jesus Christ as Savior and the evidence that such true saving faith produces in a person. The following series of questions are designed to help you do that very thing. These questions are meant to:

- Be asked and answered after you have read “The Five Most Important Truths”.
- Be asked and answered carefully in reference to your self, by your self. However, if you need help, do not hesitate to ask someone to work through them with you.
- Be asked and answered as you pray for God to give you insight into the truth about yourself and insight into the truth of the Bible.
- Be asked and answered as you carefully consider the Bible passages cited.

These questions are not meant to be a series of steps to work your way to salvation. They are meant only to be of help in examining your self to make sure you have truly trusted in Jesus Christ for eternal life.¹

1. What am I living for and where am I seeking to find satisfaction?

All things, including mankind, have been made to know, show forth the greatness of, and to enjoy God. If I care little for God, am living ultimately for myself or others instead of him, and believe I largely control my own destiny, I am a sinner and deserve God’s judgment, even if I appear to be a nice person.

“Delight yourself in the LORD” (Psalm 37:4a)

*“And this is eternal life, **that they know you** the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” (John 17:3)*

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*, © 2000, 2001, by Crossway Bibles. All Scripture quotations marked NLT are from *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, © 1996, 2004, 2007, Tyndale House Publishers. All emphases in Bible quotations (shown by bold letters) are added to highlight key points being made and are not part of the original text.

“For from him [God] and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.”
(Romans 11:36)

*“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. **19For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20**For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. **21**For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. **22**Claiming to be wise, they became fools, **23**and **exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.**”* (Romans 1:18-23)

2. Do I love God with all my being and do I love others as myself?

Jesus made it clear that the summary of what the Bible teaches is found in the two most important commandments. They are the chief way in which we honor and enjoy God. If God has not been very important to us, if we have not had great affection for him, and if we have ever failed to love someone else, we are sinners who deserve God’s judgment.

*“But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. **35**And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. **36**“Teacher, **which is the great commandment in the Law?**” **37**And he said to him, **“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38**This is the great and first commandment. **39**And a second is like it: **You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40**On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”*

“Everyone who sins is breaking God’s law, for all sin is contrary to the law of God.” (1 John 3:4)

“For the wages of sin is death.” (Romans 6:23)

*“Then death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire. This lake of fire is the second death. **15** And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.”*
(Revelation 20:14-15, NLT)

3. Have I ever broken either of the Great Commandments (love God and love others) or any of the Ten Commandments (examples: Nothing is to be more important than God; don’t take God’s name in vain; honor your parents; you shall not murder [which Jesus explains includes getting angry at someone]; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not lie)?

It only took one seemingly insignificant sin (eating a piece of forbidden fruit) to plunge mankind into a state of sin. Since God’s standard is perfection, only one sin makes us fall short of him and of his eternal life. And there is no mere man who has ever been without sin.

*“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, **17**but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’”* (Genesis 2:16-17)

*“For whoever keeps the whole law but **fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.**”* (James 2:10)

*“For **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God.”* (Romans 3:23)

4. Am I grieved over the reality I have sought to be my own god and have cared little or not at all for the God who created me and sent his Son to die for sinners like me?

Mere belief in God and/or in Jesus Christ is not enough to save. It is not even enough to believe that Jesus died on the cross. The demons believe in God. Satan and demons witnessed the death of Jesus Christ. Yet, they hate God and Christ's death. If we are truly to embrace God's salvation, we must desire to turn from our sin and unto him (the Bible speaks of this as repenting). We must also embrace Jesus Christ with a love-filled faith.

*"You believe that God is one; you do well. **Even the demons believe—and shudder!**" (James 2:19)*

*"Now when they heard this **they were cut to the heart**, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' **38**And Peter said to them, '**Repent** and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"* (Acts 2:37-38)

*"**Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ** has become a child of God. And **everyone who loves the Father** loves his children, too. **2** We know we love God's children if **we love God** and obey his commandments. **3** Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome. **4** For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. **5** And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who **believe that Jesus is the Son of God.**" (1 John 5:1-5, NLT)*

5. Have I transferred trust from myself to Jesus Christ for salvation?

Our natural tendency is to think we can earn our own salvation by good works, in other words, to think we can become righteous enough to earn God's favor. Yet, the Bible is clear that salvation is of the Lord, that we cannot earn our own salvation, that we must trust in Jesus Christ alone for eternal life.

*"For by grace you have been **saved through faith**. And this is **not your own doing**; it is the **gift of God**, **not a result of works**, so that no one may boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)*

*"He saved us, **not because of works** done by us in righteousness, but **according to his own mercy**, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, **6**whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior." (Titus 3:5-6)*

6. Do I trust that I am saved by the righteousness of Jesus Christ being credited to me?

It has been said that the great sin of mankind is putting self in the place of God; whereas salvation is the God-man putting himself in the place of mankind. Jesus Christ is the only man who ever lived that always did the will of God the Father. This means he is the only one who has measured up to divine moral standards. Since he is not only man but also God, he was able to undergo the eternal wrath of the Father that he might pay sin's penalty. When a person repents and trusts Jesus Christ as Savior, Jesus' righteousness (which consists of his perfect obedience, the perfect death for sin he died, and his sin-conquering-resurrection) is credited to that believing sinner. It is on this basis man is forgiven of sin and brought together with God.

*"For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. ²⁴ Yet **God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus** when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. ²⁵ For God presented **Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood.** This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, ²⁶ for he was*

looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he declares sinners to be right in his sight when they believe in Jesus". (Romans 3:23-26, NLT)

"For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ." (2 Corinthians 5:21, NLT)

"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit." (1 Peter 3:18)

God will also count us as righteous if we believe in him, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. 25 He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God. (Romans 4:24-25, NLT)

7. Do I understand that I am absolutely dependent upon God even for the faith by which I must trust in Jesus Christ?

Sin has so twisted our minds and hearts that we are rendered incapable on our own to see our need for salvation or to repent and trust in Jesus Christ as our Savior. The Bible says, "No one is seeking God" (Romans 3:11, NLT) and we are "dead in the trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). In other words, in the same way that a corpse is incapable of doing anything associated with physical life, so a person is incapable of doing anything associated with eternal life in God. This means we are absolutely dependent upon God for every aspect of salvation, from seeing our need for it to trusting in Jesus Christ as our Savior. It also means our starting point in our heart for coming to Christ is realizing how poor we are in our spirit, how humble we should be, and that we bring nothing in and of our self to add to salvation.

"But people who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means." (1 Corinthians 2:14, NLT)

"For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him. 6He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. 7On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God. 8Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us." (Psalm 62:5-8)

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. 6In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. 7Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil." (Proverbs 3:5-7)

"[Jesus Christ] came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:11-13)

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30I and the Father are one." (John 10:27-30 [Jesus is speaking])

"One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul." (Acts 16:14)

*“Blessed are the **poor in spirit**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:3)*

*“God opposed the proud, but **gives grace to the humble**.” (1 Peter 5:5)*

8. Has my heart turned toward Jesus Christ, the God-man, so that I see his glory and the glory of the Father in him and have I called upon him for salvation?

Though true saving faith includes head knowledge (believing Jesus, the God-man, died upon the cross for sins and was raised from the dead), it also involves our awareness we need him as Savior, it involves my seeing Jesus Christ and his saving work as glorious, and it involves my actual turning to Jesus Christ and calling upon him in trust for salvation.

*“‘Sirs, **what must I do to be saved?**’ 31 And they said, ‘**Believe in the Lord Jesus**, and you will be saved....’” (Acts 16:30-31)*

*4 “In their case [talking about unbelievers] the god of this world has **blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.**” 6 “For **God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.**” (2 Corinthians 4:4, 6)*

“Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Romans 10:13)

9. Do I have a desire to obey God as a result of receiving and resting upon Jesus Christ alone for my salvation and does it bother me when I sin?

When we truly desire to honor God and when we truly love him (both indications of true salvation), we want to obey God. When we do not, we do not nonchalantly shake it off, it truly bothers us, we confess it, and turn to God for forgiveness. The desire to obey God is produced in us by the Spirit of God who is given to us when we trust Jesus Christ as our Savior. This is why the Bible can say a person will not have eternal life unless they desire to obey God and yet that obedience does not earn their salvation. It is the outgrowth of salvation, not its cause. As such, it is one of the great indicators we are truly saved.

*“You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact **the Spirit of God dwells in you**. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.” (Romans 8:9)*

*“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but **the one who does the will of my Father** who is in heaven.” (Matthew 7:21)*

*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that **whoever believes in him** shall not perish, but have eternal life.” “Whoever **believes in the Son** has eternal life; **whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.**” (John 3:16, 36)*

*“Jesus Christ our Lord, 5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the **obedience [that comes from] faith** for the sake of his name among all the nations.” (Romans 1:4-5 [the Apostle Paul is speaking about his purpose as an apostle])*

*If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **9 If we confess our sins**, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:8-9)*

10. Do I have a love for God?

One of the great indicators we have truly repented and trusted in Jesus Christ as Savior is that we adore and love God. This is seen both by direct commands as well as descriptions of God's people.

*"Whom have I in heaven but you? And **there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.** 26My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." (Psalm 73:25-26)*

*"But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. 35And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 36'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?' 37And he said to him, '**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.** 38This is the great and first commandment. 39And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.'" (Matthew 22:34-40)*

*"And we know that **for those who love God** all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)*

*"Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised **to those who love him.**" (James 1:12)*

11. Do I have a love for God's Word, a desire to pray to God, and also a desire to assemble with God's people to grow in my faith?

Part of the way we are changed is that we so love God and want to grow in our relationship with him, we desire to engage in those resources he has given us by which we grow: The Bible, prayer, and gathering together with God's people, the Church.

*"When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. 4In God, **whose word I praise,** in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?" (Psalm 56:3-4)*

*"Whoever **despises the word** brings destruction on himself, but **he who reveres the commandment** will be rewarded." (Proverbs 13:13)*

*"And we also thank God constantly for this, that **when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God,** which is at work in you believers." (1 Thessalonians 2:13)*

*"Do not be anxious about anything, **but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.**" (Philippians 4:6)*

*"And let us consider how to **stir up one another to love and good works,** 25**not neglecting to meet together,** as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." (Hebrews 10:24-25)*

*"All the believers devoted themselves to **the apostles' teaching,** and to **fellowship,** and to **sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper),** and to **prayer.** 43 A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. 44 And **all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had.** 45 They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. 46 **They worshiped together at the Temple** each day, **met in homes** for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—47 all the while **praising God** and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved." (Acts 2:42-47)*

12. Do I see fruit in my life that is produced by God's Spirit?

Since a person who has trusted Jesus Christ as Savior has the Holy Spirit in him, he will see new desires, affections, and behaviors. It will happen at different speeds and in different amounts in different people. But there should be change, there should be fruit produced by a truly saved person. This fruit should at least include: a fear of God, the fruits of the Spirit, love for others, and at least some impact upon others for the glory of God.

"I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me." (Jeremiah 32:40)

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23)

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35)

"Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love." (1 John 4:8)

"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you." (John 15:16, Jesus speaking)

13. Have I shared my conversion with other people?

When a person trusts Jesus Christ as their Savior, they have such a love for him, they want to tell others about him. This is part of the work that the Spirit does in the life of a believer. In fact, we learn in the Bible that from the very beginning people are called to be those who reach out to others and to make disciples.

"And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.'" (Matthew 4:19, Jesus speaking)

"So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, 33but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32-33, Jesus speaking)

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus speaking)

14. Have I come to an assurance that I have eternal life in Jesus Christ?

The Bible makes it clear that a true believer can come to have assurance that he does know Christ, does have eternal life, and will never perish. However, this is a work of the Holy Spirit whereby he convinces a person that God's promises to save through Jesus Christ are true and have been applied to him and also he convinces a person that he's truly saved by seeing a changed life, evidence of true salvation.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life." (John 5:24, Jesus speaking)

*“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God **that you may know that you have eternal life.**” (1 John 5:13)*

“The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.” (Romans 8:16)

*“By his divine power, **God has given us everything we need for living a godly life.** We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. **4** And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world’s corruption caused by human desires. **5** In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God’s promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, **6** and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, **7** and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone. **8** The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9** But those who fail to develop in this way are shortsighted or blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their old sins. **10 So, dear brothers and sisters, work hard to prove that you really are among those God has called and chosen.** Do these things, and you will never fall away. **11** Then God will give you a grand entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 1:3-11, NLT)*

Having carefully worked your way through this examination of yourself and having asked God to help you know the truth about where you stand with him, the most helpful steps you can take now include:

- Become part of a Bible-believing, gospel-centered Church where you can hear the Bible taught and where you can worship God together with other followers of Jesus Christ.
- Read the Bible regularly.
- Pray regularly.
- Meet one-on-one with a Christian who can help you come to assurance of salvation and to grow as a Christian.
- Once you have the assurance you have trusted Jesus Christ and been born again, be baptized as a public statement of your new relationship to God.