

SECOND LESSON

HOW MAY I KNOW I AM A CHRISTIAN?

Christian assurance is the privilege and birthright of every child of God. Assurance is one of the great sources of Christian joy. Doubting brings despair, discouragement and defeat to the believer. In I John 5:13, John tells us that he wrote this Epistles for the purpose of bringing assurance to every Christian. This means two things. One, every Christian can know that he is saved. Two, it is possible for a Christian to doubt the fact of his salvation.

I. A DEFINITION OF CHRISTIAN ASSURANCE

1. False:

- (1) Those who say that Christianity is automatic-- there is no responsibility on man.
- (2) Those who say that the Christian life is an unruffled calm. The Christian life is often stormy.
- (3) Those who say that there must be an emotional, psychial, and physical well-being.

2. True:

Christian assurance is a foundation that God gives upon which we can build our Christian lives. The Bible gives several "foundations" of Christian Assurance. No Christian can have assurance without the proper foundation.

II. FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN ASSURANCE

1. Faith--Faith brings its own assurance. The faith that saves is the faith that assures. "He that believeth..." is saved. The presence of this faith, trust, a wholehearted committal to Christ, is the assurance of our salvation.
2. The possession of the Spirit. Romans 8:9
3. Service and growing conformity to Christ. Romans 8:28,29
4. Life of practical righteousness. I John 2:3-6
5. Love of one's brother. I John 3
6. Fruits of the Spirit. Gal. 5:22
7. Obedience of the Christian. John 14:15

These things do not bring salvation, they follow salvation. The Bible presents them as tests by which we are to exam our own lives.

III. FACTORS WHICH BRING DOUBT

Assurance depends upon two things. It depends upon a right beginning in the Christian life, and it depends upon a right kind of follow through. An initial experience without resulting evidence is no basis of assurance. Often when people are asked if they are saved they reply, "Oh, yes, I was baptized when I was only 10 years of age." Yet when you observe their lives you find not the slightest indication that Jesus Christ is the Lord of their lives. They base their salvation on a past act--then. There must be a now-- a life that is presently showing evidences of salvation. There is no foundation without this.

1. It is possible that the one who lacks Christian assurance has never had a genuine Christian experience.
2. The one who doubts may have a lack of understanding as to the elements of Christian faith and belief.
3. Some Christians may doubt because they did not get the kind of experience they were looking for.
4. Sin in the life of the Christian will bring doubts.
5. When someone doubts, there may be honest intellectual problems. However, most of the problems are spiritual, with an intellectual covering.

Read and study the following Scripture passages in preparation for the next lesson on Christian Growth.

I Peter 2; I Corinthians 3:1 ff; Hebrews 5:12 ff; I Peter 3:18 ff; Matthew 5:48

As you read these passages write down any questions that may come to your mind. If there are portions you do not understand, make a note of these and they will be discussed as time permits.