

How do I know I am saved – What does the Bible teach?

2 Corinthians 13:5 *Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified?*

1. Do I obey God? Is God working in me to do His will?

Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says “I know Him.” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 1 John 2:3-4, 3:18-19; Philippians 2:12-13; Rev 22:12-15; Matthew 7:21; John 14:21, 15:10-14

... if someone says he has faith, but does not have works [of faith]... Can faith save him? Faith [or belief] without works is dead. James 2:14-26, 1:22; Luke 5:17-20, 7:36-50; Heb 5:9

2. Have I repented? (Changed my mind about doing wrong.)

Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. ... Luke 13:1-5, 3:3; Acts 2:38, 3:19; 2 Cor 7:10

3. Have I obeyed baptism, if possible, so I can have my sins forgiven, receive the Holy Spirit, and be born again?

Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38; 22:16; John 1:33, 3:3-5; Lk 3:3

4. Are repentance and the Spirit leading me to live a holy and humble life?

... holiness, without which no one will see the Lord ... Hebrews 12:14; James 4:6; Luke 3:3-8

But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolators, and all liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. Rev 21:8; 22:14-15; 1 Cor 6:9-11; Gal 5:18-24; Eph 5:5-6; Col 3:5-7

5. Do I love God with all my heart, soul, strength, and mind? Luke 10:25-37

Do I love my neighbor as myself? 1 John 3:18-19; Matthew 25:31-46; James 2:14-17

Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” He said to him, “What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?” So he answered and said, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’ and ‘your neighbor as yourself.’ ” And He said to him, “You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.” This is followed by the parable of the good Samaritan. Only the Samaritan, who took the time and trouble to interrupt his travels and minister to the hurt man, was saved.

6. Do I forgive? Matthew 6:15

But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

7. Am I persecuted for my faith?

... all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. 2 Tim 3:12; Romans 8:17

8. Am I lukewarm? Does my life prioritize serving God and others, praying, worshiping, and making disciples, or am I choked by the cares, riches, and pleasures of life? I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Rev. 3:15-16; Luke 8:14

9. Will I continue in faith and holiness to the end of my life?

Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. Romans 11:20-22; 2 Peter 2:20-22; Matt 5:13; Heb 6:4-8

Confusion #1 Am I saved by believing in Jesus without doing anything?

No. You don't believe Jesus if you believe that. Jesus said we must repent (Luke 13:1-5) and do God's will (Matt 7:21) to be saved. Repentance is the Greek word metanoia, which means to change your mind about sin. Folks who have not changed their mind about murder, adultery, etc. plan to continue evil. They are not saved. Matt 7:21-26; Gal 5:19-21; Rev 21:8. Repentance is inseparable from faith in Jesus, the FIRST thing taught by John the Baptist, Jesus, and His apostles. Mark 1:4, 14-15, 2:17, 6:12; Matt 3:1-12, 4:17; 11:20-24; Acts 2:38; 3:19 If the kingdom of God/heaven permitted evil, then it would be no better than the world we live in.

Confusion #2 Works do not affect your salvation

Works without faith (works of the law) can't save us, because our works are imperfect before God – we all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. (Rom 3:23) But doing the will of God (works) is a necessary part of saving faith. (Matt 7:21) Faith without works of faith is dead and will not save (James 1:22, 2:14-26; 1 Tim 5:8 Heb 11:7-39). Jesus taught we must repent, cease evil, and love God and our neighbor to have eternal life. (Luke 10:25-37; Mark 10:17-23) If I say I love, **but do not act in love**, I do not really love (John 14:21-24; 15:14). Past sins we have repented of are forgiven, but our future deeds will show if we are continuing to do evil and serve Satan or have truly repented and now follow Jesus. John 8:34-35; Romans 6:16. Be very afraid if you willfully sin. Heb 10:26-30; Matt 10:28

Judged by our works – the evidence of our faith (1 John 2:3-4; James 2:14-26)

1. Jesus will separate the sheep from the goats based on their works. The goats are doomed people who do not do charitable works. Matt 25:31-46; Luke 16:19-29
2. God will render to each one according to his deeds (eternal life or wrath) Romans 2:5-8
3. You will be resurrected to life or condemnation based on your deeds. John 5:28-29
4. Only he who “does the will” of God will “enter the kingdom of heaven”. Matt 7:21; 1 Jn 2:17
5. People who do not invest their “talents” to serve God are doomed. Matt 25:13-30
6. By your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned. Matt 12:37
7. Jesus will vomit people with lukewarm works out of His mouth. Revelation 3:15-17

Confusion #3 Verses that say believing saves

Just because a certain verse does not specifically mention all that Jesus teaches, it does not mean all that Jesus teaches can be ignored. This is called an argument from silence, where one makes a conclusion based on what is not said. For example, consider:

John 5:24 ... *he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life*

Some read this verse and conclude that they are saved by merely “believing”, without doing anything, since no “doing” is mentioned in this single verse. This is an argument from silence, since it is based on something (doing) that is not mentioned. This verse does not mention love God, or love your neighbor, or forgive, or don't murder, but we believe Jesus. Who said these are required to be saved. In fact, Jesus says next (5:25-29) doing good is required to be saved.

When Jesus says “believe” to be saved, we understand this includes acting in belief of His teachings (Luke 6:46-49). If I believe stepping on the brakes will stop my car, but don't do it, what happens? What if I don't put the brakes on sin? Many Bible promises are conditional on obeying God, including salvation (Matt 7:21; John 15:6-14). Certain Jews believed Jesus, but were not saved, because of their lack of action (John 12:42-43). Demons believe the gospel, but are they saved? (Acts 16:16-18)

Confusion #4 Jesus did it all, so I can't add anything

Jesus did everything necessary to atone for our sins, but not everyone in the world is saved. Why not? We have to do our part – comply with God's terms. You have to put your faith in Jesus to be saved, and He requires men to repent, be baptized, and live righteously. He does not do that for you. Remission of sins and the Holy Spirit are only promised to those who repent and are baptized (Acts 2:38, 22:16). We can then be led by the Spirit. Rom 8:12-14; Gal 5:18-21. To say all unbaptized are lost is an argument from silence, but we must obey if we can. Luke 7:30; Matthew 7:21

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