

I'm Saved, So Why Should I "Worry" About My Salvation?

By "worry," we don't mean that people should be filled with anxiety and uncertainty about whether or not they are saved. Rather, they should be willing to examine themselves, just as Scripture commands. (See 2 Corinthians 13:5, for example.) Many people simply assume that they are saved, because of some religious act they have done, or because of their association with others who claim to be saved, or even because of the *absence* of "bad deeds" in their lives. They see no reason to evaluate the genuineness of their salvation - and may even get offended if someone suggests that they do so. This is in spite of the repeated warnings in Scripture, that such assumptions and careless attitudes are often *eternally* fatal.

To Jesus and the apostles, genuine salvation *begins* with the acceptance of certain truths... but it doesn't *end* there. If it is genuine, salvation will result in a lifestyle of following Jesus - a lifestyle that will radically change one's values, and thus will impact all areas of life. Genuine salvation will cause changes to happen. This is why Scripture refers to the "fruit" of salvation.

The apostle John wrote the *gospel* of John for a specific purpose. He said that the events he recorded in that gospel were written...

"that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name." (John 20:31)

But how do you know that your "belief" or "faith" is genuine - the type that results in salvation? Scripture often warns us about "false belief" and it tells us that *many* people will be deceived into thinking they are saved. So how can we find out whether or not we are being deceived?

Deception, by its very nature, isn't recognized by those who are deceived. After all, if we know it is happening, it wouldn't be deception! And so, it is quite natural for the deceived person to *insist* that he isn't deceived. In the context of salvation, he would *insist* that he was saved - *and really believe that he was*. This shows how horrible deception is. It is a fatal trap that isn't recognized as a trap.

So how can we recognize whether or not we are in this fatal trap, and if we are in it, how can we get out? This is the reason the apostle John wrote the *epistle* of 1 John. In this epistle, he focuses on the *fruit* of salvation - things which *will* be present, if our faith is genuine. And just to make sure that there is no question about his focus, he tells us, in 1 John 5:13:

"These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God."

So what about those who *lack* the fruit of salvation? If they are examining their lives, in obedience to God's Word, there is hope. If they are willing to humble themselves, to admit their condition, and to trust God for salvation and for the changes that accompany salvation, they will be saved.

On the other hand, if they *aren't* willing to do so, how should we respond? Warn them, of course! Yet many people choose to *not* warn friends who lack the fruit of salvation, because they don't want to "hurt

their feelings." *But what good does this accomplish? How does it show love?* Who, if he really loved someone, would chose to let that person suffer the eternal consequences of sin, just because he didn't want to "hurt his feelings" for a short time? What a horrendously perverted definition of "love"! May God give us the grace to not be so wicked!

It is our hope that you will take seriously the warnings of Scripture, and not take for granted that you are saved - with no concern over whether or not the proof ("fruit") of salvation is present in your life. It is our hope that you will, *in obedience the commands of God himself*, examine your salvation and make sure that you have the type of faith that is *living* - and that results in eternal life!

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