

THE DOCTRINE OF SAVING FAITH

Lesson 6b

The Relationship Between Faith and Works

Today many are confused about the relationship between faith and works. Some have proposed that we are saved by grace then kept by works. Others believe that God gives us the grace to be saved by works. Others teach we are saved by grace and that salvation by grace has no necessary effect on the way we live. Some teach that merely professing to know Jesus is enough to get you saved and that once saved you will always be saved. They teach that a saved person doesn't need to love the Lord, love His Word, love His people, or have a desire to honor Christ through obedience.

The Bible makes it clear that salvation is by God's grace, mercy and faith alone. It is an act of God and not the work of men. Men, by their own efforts, cannot achieve salvation from sin and its consequences. Yet the Scriptures do tell us we must examine or test our faith and the faith of others to see if it is valid and that a person's deeds are the primary indicator of their true relationship with God. The reason for this is that when someone is saved by grace it causes a life transformation and the person becomes a new creature in Christ. This is called "regeneration" and regeneration changes the way a person thinks and lives.

The apostle John emphasizes, in both his gospel and first epistle, that we have assurance of our salvation when we see visible evidence of it in our life. Those who do not practice good works show by their constant rebellion against God they have not been saved by grace. James, the author of Hebrews, and the Apostle Paul all say the same thing. To complicate things even more, the Scriptures also teach that at times believers can fall into sustained periods of sin. During this time of rebellion a believer may seem to have no saving grace in their life but in fact they really do know the Lord. Finally, there are those who do profess to know Christ, who do manifest good works, but are cast into hell because they never really know the Lord. Since heaven and hell and the eternal destiny of a person's soul is at stake, the relationship between faith and works is a very important topic.

Salvation is "THE" issue in a person's life. It doesn't matter what other problems they might have, if they are not saved, that is their biggest problem. If a person doesn't know the Lord, they don't have the Holy Spirit. They don't have spiritual gifts. They can't understand and experience the Word of God. They can do nothing to please God. They are in bondage to sin and Satan and have no divine help to live their life for the glory of God. From a practical standpoint, consider how salvation relates to giving counsel to someone, evangelizing, serving in the church, marriage, business, etc. We need to be reasonably sure where people are at with the Lord and the two primary things we have to go by is 1) what they say, and 2) how they live their lives. The difficulty arises when their profession of faith doesn't match up with their life style.

Many questions related to salvation and works begin to rise to the surface. For instance: How is it that salvation is a gift from God and not a result of works yet the Scriptures teach that without works you have no assurance of your salvation? What if a person says they know Christ but live like they don't? What about the person who is truly a believer but is entangled in sin? How is it that we are saved by grace and judged by works?

Keeping in mind the previous lessons where we learned that man is totally corrupted by sin, saved by God's grace and mercy, being justified as a free gift through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:23; 6:23; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9; Tit. 3:5; etc.), we will examine the relationship between faith and works.

I. DEFINITION OF SAVING “FAITH”

- A. Christ accomplished man’s salvation by dying an atoning death on Calvary’s cross. Faith is the attitude whereby a man abandons all reliance in his own efforts to obtain salvation, be they deeds of piety, of ethical goodness or anything else. It is the attitude of complete trust in Christ, of reliance on Him alone for all that salvation means. When the Philippine jailer asked, ‘Men, what must I do to be saved?’, Paul and Silas answered without hesitation, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved’ (Acts 16:30f.). It is ‘whoever believes in Him’ that does not perish, but has everlasting life (Jn. 3:16). Faith is the one way by which men receive salvation.¹
- B. Faith, like grace, is not static. Saving faith is more than just understanding the facts and mentally acquiescing. It is inseparable from repentance, surrender, and a supernatural eagerness to obey. The biblical concept of saving faith includes all those elements. None of them can be classified exclusively as a human work, any more than believing itself is solely a human effort.²
- C. According to Gerhard Kittel’s unprecedented thirteen volume Greek lexicon, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, faith denotes: reliance, trust, belief, faithfulness, loyalty, the object of faith being the Scriptures, turning away from sin to God, hoping, and obeying.³
- D. When the Bible speaks of faith, it generally refers to faith as an activity of man, though born of the work of the Holy Spirit. Saving faith may be defined as a certain conviction, wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, as to the truth of the gospel, and a hearty reliance (trust) on the promises of God in Christ.⁴

II. DEFINITION OF “WORKS”

- A. In this study the term **works** will be defined as, “*Those acceptable acts of obedience to God, which are according to the Scriptures, in the power of the Holy Spirit, which flow from a pure heart, and which are produced in the life of every believer as the result of salvation, repentance and regeneration.*”
- B. The subject of the relationship between faith and works is a huge topic. Trying to find an orderly way to approach it is difficult. In this study we will **first** show from the Scriptures that there is a direct relationship between faith and works. **Second**, we will then try to answer from God’s Word some of the more common questions people ask about faith and works.

¹ *The New Bible Dictionary*, Logos Bible software under “faith.”

² John MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, pg. 31.

³ Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Abridged in One Volume*, Logos Bible Software under “faith.”

⁴Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, pg. 503.

III. **SCRIPTURAL PROOF OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAITH AND WORKS:**

Salvation by grace through faith alone		Salvation by faith <i>that works</i>	
Rom 4:3, 9, 22	3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." 9 Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, " Faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness. " 22 Therefore it was also credited to him as righteousness.	Rom. 6:1-2	1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? 2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?
Eph. 2:8-9	8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.	Eph. 2:10	10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.
Rom 3:24, 28	24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.	Rom. 1:5, 16:26	5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake, 26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith;
Faith is sometimes used as a synonym for obedience			
Matt. 7:21	21 Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.		
Jn. 3:36	36 He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."		
II Cor. 9:13	13 Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all,		
Heb. 5:9	9 And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation,		
I Thes. 1:2-3	2 We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; 3 constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father,		

- A. **What do the Scriptures above tell us about *how* a person is saved?**
- B. **What do the Scriptures above tell us about *what* a saved person does?**
- C. **What do the Scriptures above tell us about the consequences of not obeying God?**
- D. **Why do so many people call themselves Christians and yet have no desire to obey God?**

IV. **ANSWERS TO COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FAITH AND WORKS**

A. **Doesn't Paul say we are justified by faith (e.g. Rom. 3:24-4:25) and James say we are justified by works (James 2:14-26)?**

1. **Read Rom. 3:24-4:25.** Who is Paul talking to in the book of Romans?
 - a. Rom. 1:13 I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented so far) so that I may obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles. (See also Rom. 11:13, 28-31; 15:15-16)
 - b. Rom. 2:17 But if you bear the name "Jew" and rely upon the Law and boast in God (See also Rom. 2:18-3:8; 3:21-4:1; 7:1-14; 14:1-15:21).
2. What erroneous thinking was Paul trying to refute?
 - a. Rom. 3:28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.
 - b. Rom. 4:5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,
3. When Paul talks about faith is he talking about the nature or character of the kind of faith that saves or the means by which a person is saved?
4. Why does Paul mention over and over again that Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness (see also Gal. 3:6), and why does he point out that Abraham's faith was reckoned as righteousness before being circumcised and before the law was written?
5. **Read James 2:14-26.** Who is James writing to?
 - a. James 1:1 James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings.
 - b. James 1:19 This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger.
6. What does James 2:14 tell us about the subject James is addressing?
 - a. James 2:14 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?

7. When James talks about faith is he talking about the means by which a person is saved or the character and nature of the kind of faith that saves?

8. Why does James say that Abraham and Rahab were justified by works and that there is no such thing as saving faith that does not work?

9. How would you simply explain to someone in one sentence why Paul and James are complimentary not contradictory in their teaching about faith?

10. The New Bible Dictionary discussing the seemingly contradictory teaching on faith between Paul in Romans and James says:
 - a. Of the other writers in the NT we must notice James, for he has often been held to be in opposition to Paul in this matter. Where Paul insists that a man is justified by faith and not by works James maintains 'that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone' (Jas. 2:24). There is no more than a verbal contradiction, however. The kind of 'faith' that James is opposing is not that warm personal trust in a living Savior of which Paul speaks. It is a faith which James himself describes: 'You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder' (Jas. 2:19). He has in mind an intellectual assent to certain truths, an assent which is not backed up by a life lived in accordance with those truths (Jas. 2:15f.). So far is James from opposing faith in the full sense that he everywhere presupposes it. Right at the beginning of his Epistle he speaks naturally of 'the testing of your faith' (Jas. 1:3), and he exhorts his readers, 'show no partiality as you hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory' (Jas. 2:1). He criticizes a wrong faith but assumes that everyone will recognize the need for a right faith. Moreover, by 'works' James does not mean what Paul means by that term. Paul thinks of obedience to the commands of the law regarded as a system whereby a man may merit salvation. For James the law is 'the law of liberty' (Jas. 2:12). His 'works' look uncommonly like 'the fruit of the Spirit' of which Paul speaks. They are warm deeds of love springing from a right attitude to God. They are the fruits of faith. What James objects to is the claim that faith is there when there is no fruit to attest it.⁵

⁵ *The New Bible Dictionary*, Logos Bible Software under "faith."

B. What about those who fall away from the faith after professing to know Christ?

1. The person who professes to know Christ and even gets involved in the normal activities of the church, but then *openly rejects Christ* and walks away from the faith, is called an apostate. He has committed the unpardonable act of apostasy. Apostasy carries with it the strictest warnings in Scripture. The Scriptures warn that the end times will be characterized by apostasy (see II Thess. 2:3; I Tim. 4:1). The apostate is a person who has received and understood the gospel intellectually but has not repented. They may hang around the church for a long time but eventually in time they depart, deny the faith, and go back to living in open rebellion against God. Because they have sinned against full revelation, experienced fellowship with the saints, enjoyed the work of the Holy Spirit in the church and departed, they cannot be saved because they have rejected the strongest form of gospel witness.
 - a. One writer defines apostasy as, “A deliberate repudiation and abandonment of the faith that one has professed (Heb. 3:12). Apostasy differs in degree from heresy. The heretic denies some aspect of the Christian faith but retains the name Christian. The transfer of membership from one denomination to another of the same faith is not apostasy.”⁶
 - b. Another person defines apostasy as, “defection from the faith, an act of unpardonable rebellion against God and His truth. The sin of apostasy results in the abandonment of Christian doctrine and conduct. With respect to the covenant relationship established through prior profession of faith. . . , apostates place themselves under the curse and wrath of God as a covenant breaker, having entered into a state of final and irrevocable condemnation. Those who apostasize are thus numbered among the reprobate.”⁷
 - c. Thomas Watson describes apostasy: “The apostate (says Tertullian) seems to put God and Satan in the balance, and having weighed both their services, prefers the devil’s service, and proclaims him to be the best master: and, in this sense may be said to put Christ to open shame” (Heb. 6:6). He will never suffer for the truth, but be as a soldier that leaves his colors, and runs over to the enemy’s side; he will fight on the devil’s side for pay.”⁸

⁶ L. G. Whitlock, Jr. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, pg. 70.

⁷Mark W. Karlberg, *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, pg. 32.

⁸Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity*, pg. 2.

- d. Matt. 24:8-12 But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs. 9 Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. 10 At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. 11 Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. 12 Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold.
- e. I Tim. 4:1-2 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,
- f. Heb. 3:12 Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.
- g. Heb. 6:4-6 For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.
- h. Heb. 10:26-31 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. 28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people." 31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
- i. II Pet. 2:20-22 For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. 21 For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them. 22 It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A dog returns to its own vomit," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire."
- j. I John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.

C. What about those who say they are Christians but don't walk with the Lord?

- 1. Those who claim to be Christians but who don't obey God are as common as the sand of the seashore today. In fact, one pole conducted in the United States, said 85 percent of Americans claim to be Christians. This is evidence of widespread deception. Satan has promoted many lies about what it means to be a Christian in order to give people a false assurance. He has convinced many people that they are Christians:

- a. Because they call themselves a Christian
- b. Because their parents are Christians
- c. Because they prayed to have Jesus come into their heart
- d. Because they signed a card saying they wanted to become a Christian
- e. Because they made a profession of faith at one point in their life
- f. Because they walked an aisle or went forward at an altar call
- g. Because their parents told them and assured them that they were a Christian
- h. Because they made a decision for Christ
- i. Because they were baptized in the church
- j. Because they are regular church attenders
- k. Because they read their Bible
- l. Because they pray
- m. Because they have been good and haven't murdered anyone
- n. Because they have felt guilty about their sin

2. How many of the things above save people?

3. If salvation hasn't taken place, then what implications does that have for how people live?

4. Look up the Scriptures below and notice what true saving faith produces.

- a. Mt. 3:10 The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.
- b. Mt. 7:13-27 Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 14 For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it. 15 Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? 17 So every good

tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 So then, you will know them by their fruits. 21 Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22 Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.' 24 Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. 26 Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”

- c. Mt. 12:33 Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit.
- d. Gal. 5:19-21 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
- e. I Tim. 5:24-25 The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after. 25 Likewise also, deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed.
- f. II Tim. 3:1-9 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. 6 For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 8 Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith. 9 But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, just as Jannes' and Jambres' folly was also.
- g. Titus 1:15-16 To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. 16 They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.
- h. I Jn 3:7-10 Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; 8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. 9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

5. After looking at and discussing the verses above, what answer would you tell someone who said they knew someone who called themselves a Christian but who didn't walk with God and obey His Word?

D. Do true believers ever fall into sustained periods of sin (backslide)?

1. The answer to this question is, "yes." Believers can fall into sustained periods of sin. It could be argued that all believers sin and hence all are backsliders, but the term is usually applied to those who are entangled in sin for longer periods of time. There are several things we must keep in mind as we study backsliding.
 - a. Backsliding for a sustained period is never the norm but the rare exception for a believer.
 - b. Those who are truly saved and backslide are miserable in their rebellion and usually will repent and confess their sins.
 - c. When the backslidden believer is in his backslidden state, he has no assurance of his salvation. It could be argued that the guilt a backslidden believer feels is verification of his salvation but even unbelievers feel guilty when they sin.
 - d. God is a perfect Father to the true believer and if a believer engages in rebellion, then they can expect discipline from God and the church. If they do not receive discipline from God, they are not His.
2. Compare and look up the following Scriptures:
 - a. II Sam. 11:1-12:15 compare with Psa. 32:3-5; Psa. 51 David committed grievous sins, and went for a long time with unconfessed sin in his heart, but when confronted, he confessed, and then wrote penitential Psalms which described his crying out to the Lord of humble confession and repentance.
 - b. I Cor. 5:1-13 compare with II Cor. 2:1-11 We can be fairly certain that the men spoken of in these two verses are one and the same. The man was living in gross sin, but he repented and was to be restored to the flock.
 - c. Luke 22:31-34 Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; 32 but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." 33 But he said to Him, "Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!" 34 And He said, "I say to you, Peter, the rooster will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me."
 - d. Gal. 6:1 Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

e. Heb. 12:3-11 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. 4 You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; 5 and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reproved by Him; 6 For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives." 7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. 11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

3. After having looked at the verses above, how would you answer someone who asked you if a Christian can fall into sustained periods of sin and remain in a continual state of rebellion?

E. If we are saved by grace, then why do the Scriptures say we will be judged by works?

1. God is perfectly holy and His standards are perfect. He cannot accept anything less than perfect obedience. Because He is just, He must judge sin. When a person truly receives Christ as their Savior:
 - a. All the sin they have ever committed and will ever commit is atoned for and forgiven in Christ.
 - b. They are declared to be righteous because Christ's perfect righteousness has been imputed to them.
 - c. Their transgressions are paid for by Christ who substituted Himself for them on the cross paying the penalty for their sin.
 - d. When judgement day comes there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus because Christ's righteousness is applied to them and they don't come under judgement for they have been made perfect in Christ.
2. Those who do not receive Christ as Savior by default choose to be judged by their own works. Since all men are sinners, all who try to escape judgement based on their own merits fail. This is why the Scriptures say we are judged by works. Unbelievers are judged according to their works and believers are judged according to Christ's perfect righteousness applied to them through faith. Notice how these concepts are taught in the verses that follow.

- a. Mt. 16:27 For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds.
- b. Jn. 5:28-29 Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, 29 and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.
- c. Rom. 2:5-11 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who will render to each person according to his deeds: 7 to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; 8 but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. 9 There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, 10 but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 11 For there is no partiality with God.
- d. II Cor. 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.
- e. I Pet. 1:17 If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth;
- f. Rev. 20:11-13 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.

F. What about the person who says they believe in Christ, comes to church but never gets involved in ministering to the local body, serving, giving, ministering to others, etc?

1. The Scriptures say that there will always be tares (pretending Christians) among the wheat (true believers). Some people try to ease their guilty consciences by coming to church rationalizing that they are believers because they hang around the sheep and act like sheep for an hour or two every Sunday. Others go to church out of duty or habit. The true believer will not only come to church but will involve themselves in the ministry and be committed to serve the local church body where they attend. Merely coming to church does not give a person assurance of salvation. There are millions of cults and pseudo Christian groups that gather every Sunday but who are not saved. As someone once said, "Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in the garage makes you a car." Look at the Scriptures below and note what they teach you about regular attending unbelievers.

2. There are always tares among the wheat.

- a. Mt. 13:24-30 Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. 26 But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. 27 The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' 28 And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' The slaves *said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?' 29 But he *said, 'No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. 30 Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn." ' ' "
- b. Acts 20:28-30 Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.
- c. II Pet. 2:1-3 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. 2 Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; 3 and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.
- d. Jude 4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

3. You have been saved to serve in the church.

- a. Rom. 6:16-18 Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.
- b. Rom. 12:10-13 10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; 11 not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, 13 contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.
- c. I Cor. 12:7, 27 7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. . . 27 Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.

- d. Gal. 5:13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.
 - e. I Pet. 4:10 As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.
4. Those who don't serve are in sin and will be considered least in the kingdom of heaven.
- a. Mt. 23:11 But the greatest among you shall be your servant.
 - b. Mk. 9:35 Sitting down, He called the twelve and *said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."
 - c. Lk. 9:46-48 An argument started among them as to which of them might be the greatest. 47 But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart, took a child and stood him by His side, 48 and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great."
 - d. Lk. 22:26 But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant.
5. What do the verses above teach you about salvation, faith, and works?

G. If we are saved by grace and not by works, then why not sin?

- 1. Rom. 6:1-2, 15 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? 2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? . . . 15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!
- 2. Eph. 2:8-10 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.
- 3. Titus 2:11-14 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, 14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.
- 4. Titus 3:5-8, 14 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. 8 This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good

deeds. These things are good and profitable for men. . . 14 Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.

5. What do the Scriptures above teach us about how we are to live out our faith?

H. Is there any way a person can know for sure he has saving faith?

1. The Scriptures exhort us to examine ourselves and to question the genuineness of our faith. They make it clear that as a believer *you only have assurance of your salvation as you see the affects of regeneration and transformation in your life*. As God works in you through the Holy Spirit and the Word of God you will be changed, transformed, and become more like Christ. You will be characterized by an ever increasing pattern of obedience and a greater desire to serve God. Look up the Scriptures below and note what they tell you:
 - a. II Cor. 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.
 - b. II Cor. 5:17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.
 - c. II Cor. 13:5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?
 - d. II Pet. 1:10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;
 - e. James 2:14-17 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? 17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.
 - f. I Jn. 2:4; I Jn. 3:10 The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; . . . 10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.
2. According to the Scriptures above, what kind of assurance does a person have of his salvation if he continually lives in sin?

John tells you how you can know you are saved and how you can be assured of your salvation. He writes in I Jn. 5:13, “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life.” What are the “These things” that John is talking about? Look up the verses below and see if you have assurance of salvation.

Gives you assurance you are not saved		Gives you assurance you are saved	
1:6	Say you have fellowship and yet walk in darkness	1:7	If we Walk in the light and
1:8	If you say you have no sin and are self deluded	1:9	If we confess our sins
1:10	If you say you have no sin which is as to make Jesus a liar	2:3	If we keep His commands
2:4	If we do not obey God’s commands	2:5	If we keep His Word
2:9, 11	If we hate our brother	2:10	If we love our brother
2:15	If we love the world	2:17	If we do the will of the father
2:19	If we depart from the Saints	2:19	If we do not go apostate
2:22-23	If we deny Jesus is the Christ	2:23	If we confess Jesus Christ
3:8	If we practice sin	3:7	If we practice Righteousness
3:10	If we do not practice righteousness	3:9	If we don’t practice sin
3:15	If we hate our brother	3:16	If we sacrifice for others
3:17	If we are stingy, selfish, and greedy	3:18-19	If we love with deed and truth
		3:21	If our conscience is clean
		3:24	If we keep His commandments
4:5	If we speak like the world	4:6	If we listen to the Apostles
4:8	If we do not love	4:7	If we love the brethren
4:20	If we do not love other believers	4:13-19	If we confess Jesus Christ
5:10	If we do not believe in the Son of God	5:12	If we have Jesus Christ
5:12	If we do not have the Son	5:12	If we have eternal life

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

I John 5:13