

1 John 5:13-15 | Assurance and Confidence in Christ

1. How do I know that I am really saved?
2. Why aren't my prayers always answered?

God wants us to be **secure and have assurance** in our salvation + and **bold in prayer and get** what we ask for!
Sometimes **I do not feel saved** + Sometimes **my prayers seem** to go unanswered

What does the text say about assurance of salvation and unanswered prayer?

Assurance of Salvation (God wants us to have assurance of our salvation...)

1 John has been saying that **salvation is particular and evidential**

- It involves **right believe** and corresponding **right behavior**

3 tests of salvation throughout given in 1 John:

- **The belief test:** Do you believe that Jesus is the only unique Son of God who came in the flesh?
 - **The behavior test:** Do you desire to live correctly in a way that pleases and glorifies God?
 - **The brotherly love test:** Do you love other Christians?
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- Jesus said:
 - If you **believe** in me you will be saved (John 3:15)
 - If you **love** me you will **obey** me (John 14:15)
 - If you **belong to me** you will **love one another** (John 13:35)
 - Faith, obedience, love

Right belief (faith) forms or creates right behavior

- Right behavior is the **evidence** of true faith (right belief)

This has been **the purpose** of 1 John (v. 13) [to **know** and to **have**]

- Some had muddled the water and caused confusion (Big claims, but wrong belief and wrong behavior)
- Proved to be counterfeit believers (**there should be evidential distinction in the life of a believer**)
- **So: faith, obedience, love** (Getting **Jesus, life, relationships** right)

What we are not talking about is perfectionism

- The claim **is not:** If we place our faith in Jesus we will never sin (**obey** or **love** perfectly)
- Not **sinless perfection** but **transformed progression**
- **Sanctification** (define) **is both an event and a process** (**moment** and a **lifetime**) (**core** identity and **rhythm** of life)
 - But the event/moment creates a very clear reality and **trajectory** of **obedience** and **love**
 - So that there is **evidence** (and so **assurance**) of our salvation

Reasons we sometimes doubt our salvation:

- Living in **sin (lack of obedience)**
- Living for **self (lack of love)**
- Believing **lies (lack of faith)**
- If we are kept in a state of doubt then we cannot serve God because we are constantly stuck in **introspection**
- This **robs** us of the **joy** of the Christian life—**arrests** our spiritual **growth**—and **paralyzes** us in **mission**
- **Remedy: God is right + God is great + God is good** (culture and Satan challenge these)

If you are not measuring up (to the tests), then there are two possibilities:

- 1. You are not a Christian (**you need to get saved**) [the text is an **invitation** for you]
- 2. You are a Christian but you are walking in disobedience (**you need to get right**) [the text is a **rebuke** to you]
 - **But make sure you get it right:** It is faith that saves not obedience
 - **Obedience** and **love** are the flowers of **faith** (faith being the root)

God wants us to have assurance (and joy and growth and effective witness)

With this **assurance** comes **confidence** (verses 14-15)

- Knowing and having (believing and possessing)

Unanswered Prayers (The challenge of unanswered prayers...)

Just like God wants us to be sure of our salvation, He wants us have confidence in the fact that He hears and answers our prayers

Not proper to say our prayers go unanswered

- Not the right understanding of the nature of our union with Christ and relationship with God
- Unanswered denotes ignored
- **He hears us!** (The Psalmist and the loving Father)
- **Hebrews 4:16**

Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Our prayers do not go unanswered—but we do not always like the answer

- The caveat of **God's will**
- How did Jesus teach us to pray?
- **Matthew 6:9-10**
Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done...'
 - This is the way we are to pray
 - Every prayer is meant to be a variation on that theme
- **Prayer is not a means by which we accomplish our will, but rather a means by which we are informed of, formed by and learn to function according to God's will**

Here is the problem: Who knows the will of God?

Much of prayer (since it does not go unanswered) is corrective

- A no answer (Jesus in Gethsemane)
- An alternative answer (Paul and thorn in the flesh)
 - Both had to **surrender** to the Father's will
 - God's will is better (**Romans 8:28**)
- A better answer (Mary, Martha and Lazarus)

All of these were desperate pleas—as are ours

- What was not happening was that God was not listening or that He ignored them and did not respond
- That is the joy of this text!

But there are times where that very much seems the case—**what is going on?**

- Sometimes it is **warfare** (Daniel 10)
- Sometimes it is **will change**
 - James 4:2-3
... You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

The remedy for both (big battles and wrong motives) is perseverance in prayer

- In persistent prayer **wars are won** and **wills are changed**

Luke 18:1-8 and **Luke 11:5-10** (God is right, God is great, God is good)