

Assurance of Salvation

How to Know You're Saved

From a Doctrinal Bible Study by
Pastor John A. Ricci

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Table of Contents

Prologue.....	1
1. The Plan of Salvation.....	3
2. The Work of the Cross.....	4
3. The Principle of Grace.....	7
4. The One Condition of Salvation: Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ....	10
5. The Eternal Security of the Believer.....	12
6. Resting on God's Promises.....	20
Epilogue.....	22

Prologue

Many believers struggle with the assurance of salvation. An often-asked question is, “How can I be sure that I am saved?” This is an important question because unsaved men are destined for eternal separation from God and punishment in the Lake of Fire. If a believer lacks assurance, his spiritual growth will be nullified. No one can grow in their relationship with God with the threat of the eternal Lake of Fire hanging over their head. When the Biblical doctrines of salvation are studied and comprehended by the believer, he will be at ease concerning his eternal destiny. There are basic doctrines that believers need to understand so they can build a solid foundation to their spiritual life. The assurance of salvation is one of those fundamental building blocks to the structure of our faith. This study is designed to help struggling believers gain peace and confidence concerning their salvation, as well as encouraging unbelievers to trust the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

A structure is only as strong as the foundation it is built upon. The foundation of the Christian life for the believer is the knowledge of salvation through Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11). The believer needs to know how and why he is accepted by God. God wants His children to know that He completely accepts them and nothing can change that relationship (Ephesians 1:6). In order to advance in the spiritual life, the believer needs the assurance in his heart that he is in a relationship with God that is permanent and secure. A believer cannot grow in faith while living in doubt about his relationship with God. If a believer doubts his complete acceptance in Christ, he will not be able to walk confidently with his heavenly Father. The believer who has the full assurance of salvation has a firm and unmovable foundation to build his spiritual life upon.

God wants all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior to know that He completely accepts them. He desires that all who trust Christ should understand that they have a lasting, eternal relationship with Him made possible because of the Cross of Calvary. God wants the believer to know that the sin barrier that separated man from God was torn down forever at the Cross. Because of Christ’s sufferings at the Cross, all believers can be supremely confident that their sins are forgiven. They can know for certain that they are an eternal member of God’s family and that no sin or failure can ever separate them from the love and acceptance of God.

Once the believer understands and believes the grace God has given him, he can have peace in his heart and begin to grow as a Christian, living the spiritual life to the fullest. As a believer grows in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, he will realize that God is always on his side, no matter how terribly he may sin or fail. If the believer understands God’s love and eternal acceptance of him, when he sins and fails he will not go on a guilt trip. The believer will pick himself up, knowing he is an object of God’s grace, thank God for forgiving his sin at the Cross (Colossians 2:13-14), and continue on in the Christian life, growing toward spiritual maturity.

The greatest joy and comfort on this earth come from having a personal relationship with God. God does not want believers running around trying to earn His approval. God doesn’t want believers living in anxiety and uncertainty concerning their

salvation. There is no peace in that type of lifestyle, but only fear and doubt. God wants every believer in Christ to know for sure they are saved forever. The believer's spiritual health depends on the knowledge of the full assurance of his salvation. This important doctrine is the focal point of this book. In this study we will approach the subject of the full assurance of salvation from six points. The believer must understand:

1. The Plan of Salvation.
2. The Work of the Cross.
3. The Principle of Grace.
4. The One Condition of Salvation: Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.
5. The Eternal Security of the Believer.
6. Resting in God's Promises.

1 The Plan of Salvation

Solomon, the writer of Ecclesiastes, wrote long ago in the divinely inspired scriptures, *“I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him”* (Ecclesiastes 3:14). This is a tremendous statement of truth. It tells us that if God does something, He does it perfectly and completely. If God purposes to do something, He does not need man’s help to accomplish it. And if God does it, man’s efforts, good or bad, cannot affect it. Nowhere does this principle apply more than when considering the issue of God’s providing salvation for sinners. God doesn’t need man’s help to accomplish His purpose of salvation. God planned man’s salvation and God provided it at the Cross without man’s help.

The scripture declares that “salvation belongeth to the Lord” (Psalm 3:8). Salvation is God’s work for man. God did everything that was necessary to accomplish salvation. Jesus Christ went to the Cross and finished God’s plan to provide salvation for man (John 19:30, Romans 5:8, 1 John 2:1-2). The provision of salvation is all God’s work, and man’s puny works cannot touch it. God has not asked man to do something to save himself. At the Cross, God provided a perfect salvation for man. The only thing left for mankind is to accept or reject that salvation. Human beings are sinners and fail constantly, therefore they could never do anything that would provide a permanent, eternal solution to the sin problem. Because God provides salvation, it is permanent and perfect. He can do nothing less than provide a perfect, permanent salvation. No efforts of man can add to or detract from God’s perfect provision of salvation.

Dear reader, man cannot provide a perfect salvation for himself, for all men are imperfect sinners. Only a perfect God can provide a perfect salvation for sinners. Salvation is God’s work for man, not man’s work for God. Romans 6:23 states, “For the wages of sin is death.” Because of sin inherited from Adam, all men are born spiritually dead, separated from God and under the judgment of the wrath of God (Romans 5:15-18, Ephesians 2:1-3). The penalty for sin is spiritual death and separation from God. The righteousness of God demanded the punishment of the sinner. At the Cross, God was providing in the death of His sinless Son that which His righteousness required for man to be saved. Hebrews 2:9 tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ “tasted death for every man.”

All men need to be saved because all men are lost sinners under condemnation and guilt (Romans 3:19). The Lord Jesus Christ suffered death as the vicarious substitute for all men to satisfy the demands of God’s righteous wrath against sin. For every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, guilt and condemnation are removed forever. God planned man’s salvation, and God provided for it perfectly at the Cross. Salvation is something that God does for sinners. Dear reader, this means that there is a perfect solution to the sin issue available to you today as a free gift from God. All that remains is your decision to receive this free gift of salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 The Work of the Cross

Two thousand years ago something awesome happened on planet earth. The eternal God took upon himself human flesh and became a man; his name is the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:1-3,14). God the Son became a man to reveal the invisible God in human terms that man could relate to, and to live a sinless perfect life, in order to offer Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world (John 1:18,29, 14:7-9). Through the suffering of His sinless Son at the Cross, God was providing the greatest gift for mankind, the gift of eternal life. When the Lord Jesus Christ was about to commend his spirit into the Father's hands at the Cross, He made the fantastic statement, "It is finished" (John 19:30). At that precise moment in human history, the work of paying mankind's sin debt was completed once for all and forever. God's righteous demands against man's sins were satisfied totally by the work of Jesus Christ at the Cross. The justice of God executed the sentence of punishment for man's sin upon the Lord Jesus at the Cross as the sinner's substitute (1Peter 2:24, 3:18).

Why is the Cross of Christ so important? Because it is God's solution to man's sin problem. For sin to be forgiven and salvation provided, God had to deal with issues within His own character. God had to deal with these issues before He could forgive man's sins. What God required for man to be saved, God provided. There is nothing man can do to make himself acceptable to God. But God made it possible for man to be acceptable to Himself through the Cross. Let's examine the "Character of God," to understand how God worked in providing salvation for man.

There were issues in God's own character and nature that He had to resolve and satisfy completely before He could save man. The character of God consists of ten attributes that work in complete harmony with one another:

- 1) God is **sovereign**. This means that God is in absolute control. God makes the rules and man answers to God (Daniel 4:35; Isaiah 14:24,27, 46:9-11; Psalm 115:3; Job 42:2).
- 2) God is **love**. He loves the sinner, but His love cannot save the sinner. God's love cannot save man until the demands of His righteousness are satisfied. Love is the motive that put the plan of salvation into action. It was God's love for lost and sinful men that motivated God to give His Son to die as mankind's substitute at the Cross (John 3:16, 1 John 4:8). The death of Christ at the Cross completely satisfied the demands of God's righteousness against man's sins.
- 3) God is **eternal life**. He is the beginning and the end (the *alpha* and the *omega*). He always existed and always will exist (Revelation 1:8,11).
- 4) God is **omniscient**. He knows everything that has happened or could happen. God has all knowledge. There is nothing to be known that God does not know (Isaiah 46:9-10, Acts 15:18).
- 5) God is **omnipotent**. He is all-powerful. God can accomplish His purposes because there is no power greater than Him (Isaiah 14:27, 46:11).
- 6) God is **omnipresent**. He is everywhere (Psalm 139:7-8, Hebrews 4:13).
- 7) God is **immutable**. He is unchangeable. He can be trusted. He is always faithful

(Numbers 23:19, Malachi 3:6).

- 8) God is **veracity**. He does not lie. If He spoke it, He will bring it to pass. God keeps His Word. He is truth (Numbers 23:19, John 14:6).
- 9) God is **righteous**. He must do what is right. He can only have a relationship with someone as righteous as Himself. All mankind is condemned because all mankind falls short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). The glory of God is the absolute perfect righteousness of God. God's righteousness demands that He punish sin. For God to love man and forgive his sin without fulfilling the demands of His own righteousness would compromise God's character. Justice guaranteed that, before God could shower man with grace and forgiveness, the demands of His righteousness against man's sins had to be satisfied (Psalm 9:8, 71:19, 96:13, 103:6, 145:17; Daniel 9:7; Romans 1:16-17, 3:25-26).
- 10) God is **justice**. God's justice acts as a sentinel. It stands guard over the character of God. Justice guarantees that every attribute of God will work together in perfect harmony. For God to save man, He could not compromise any of His attributes. It was the justice of God that executed the sentence that the righteousness of God demanded against sin, by punishing Christ as the sinner's substitute. God must be just in saving sinners (Genesis 18:25, Isaiah 45:21, Zephaniah 3:5, Zechariah 9:9, Romans 3:26). God cannot allow sin to go unpunished in forgiving man. He can only forgive and save because the sin has been punished satisfactory to His righteousness.

It was the character of God that was at work in providing eternal salvation for sinners. Man's sin had offended God's perfect holy character. The holy demands of God's character were the obstacle that had to be removed for man to be saved. Two attributes of God's character are necessary to comprehend in order for us to intelligently understand salvation:

- 1) God possesses perfect holiness. His holiness consists of righteousness and justice. The righteousness of God demands that sin must be punished. Justice demands that God's righteous demands against sinners be fully met before sin can be forgiven. Justice protects God's character so that none of His attributes will ever be compromised in saving man. God's love could not forgive man as an act of leniency. This is because His righteousness, which demanded the punishment of the sinner, would be compromised. God's justice would not allow Him to forgive sinners until the demands of righteousness were satisfied. God had to do right in providing salvation for sinners. Justice had to execute the demands of God's righteousness against sin before God's character would be freed to forgive and save sinners. The Lord Jesus Christ resolved the issue of God's righteousness and justice perfectly and forever through His suffering on the Cross for the sins of the world.
- 2) At the Cross, God was satisfying His own demands. There is nothing man can offer to God to appease or satisfy the holy demands of His righteousness. All the human works that man offers are as filthy rags and unacceptable to God's righteousness (Isaiah 64:6). God is the only One that can satisfy His own righteousness. The Lord Jesus Christ perfectly accomplished this at the Cross by submitting to the Father's will and giving His sinless life as an offering to atone

for man's sin.

Again, we must remember that God's righteousness demanded that sin be punished, and God's justice executed the sentence of righteousness upon the Lord Jesus Christ, at the Cross. Jesus came to offer Himself as a perfect sacrifice for all mankind's sins to satisfy the demands of the righteousness of God. He came to do His Father's will. He offered Himself as a sacrifice for all the sins of the world (1 John 2:2). This is called *the doctrine of unlimited atonement*. This means a provision has been made for all men to be saved. No one is excluded from the offer of salvation (1 Timothy 2:4, 2 Corinthians 5:19). The justice of God executed His righteous demands against sin upon Jesus Christ as He hung on Calvary's Cross 2,000 years ago. Since Jesus Christ satisfied those demands completely, sin is no longer an issue in man's salvation! Today, the issue in salvation is, "Do you believe in the Son of God, or do you reject Him?" God has removed the obstacle of the demands of His own character against sin perfectly and forever. Because of the Cross, God is free to give the gift of salvation to whosoever will come to Christ by faith.

3 The Principle of Grace

The principle that brings salvation to man is the grace of God. God saves man by His grace because of the work of Christ on the Cross. Salvation is stated clearly in Scripture to be wholly by grace apart from human works or merit: *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast”* (Ephesians 2:8-9).

In the *koine* Greek of the New Testament, the word translated “grace” is *charis*. Kenneth Weust in his *Word Studies of the New Testament*, Volume II, The Exegesis of the Epistle to Titus, page 193, states that *charis* by definition is *“a favor **freely** given with no claim or expectation of return, finding its only motive in the bounty and freeheartedness of the giver.”*

In grace, God freely gives a complete, perfect pardon and acceptance to all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, asking nothing in return. Once received by faith in Christ, salvation is the permanent possession of all who believe, apart from any works they could perform (Romans 3:27-28, 5:1-2; Galatians 2:16,21). This is truly “Amazing Grace.”

Grace can now be extended to man because God’s demands of righteousness were satisfied at the Cross. Grace and forgiveness come to man, not because of leniency, but because of God’s justice. God’s justice takes precedence over God’s love. He is bound to always do right. Now that God’s demands of justice are satisfied, He is free to forgive every sinner who will believe in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. God, at the Cross, was providing what He required for sinners to be saved. He did this by satisfying His own righteous demands. Man had no part in this work of paying the sin debt of the world. It was wholly a divine undertaking. Now, because of the Cross, no one can ever say to God that He is not free to forgive the sinner, no matter how vile that sinner may be (Romans 3:24-26). This is because Jesus Christ once and for all met the demands of God’s righteousness when He received the punishment for the sins of the world (Hebrews 10:10).

In the book of Romans, the Apostle Paul expounds on the role that the righteousness of God has in the plan of salvation. Romans 3:22-23 states, *“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”* God’s character demands that no one can have a relationship with Him unless he is as righteous as God is. All men fall short of that righteousness. You see, God’s righteous character can only accept His own perfect righteousness. Therefore, the only way man can be made righteous is by God giving His righteousness to a man as a free gift. However, God cannot give that free gift of righteousness until justice has executed the demands of His character against sin. This occurred at the Cross. Now God is free to impute His very own righteousness to man through faith.

Faith is simply trusting and depending on the Lord Jesus Christ alone to save you, and nothing else. God is now bound to accept the believer and be faithful to him. This is because God cannot deny His own righteousness which He credits to every believer’s

account. God will always accept His own perfect righteousness. Every believer permanently receives the gift of God's perfect righteousness at the moment they believe. Therefore God's acceptance of the believer is perfect and permanent because the believer possesses His righteousness.

The moment a sinner puts his faith in Jesus Christ as his Savior, God imputes His perfect righteousness to him freely (Romans 4:6-8). To impute means to "credit to one's account." In the act of imputation, God credits His own righteousness to the sinner who believes. The believer is now accepted because Jesus Christ died and satisfied the justice of God, which allows Him to give His perfect righteousness to anyone who chooses to believe. God is free to extend this operation of His matchless grace to sinners who believe because of the Cross. All the works the believer performs from the moment he receives the free gift of the grace of God can never improve on the gift of imputed righteousness. The gift of imputed righteousness is perfect and permanent from the very split second one becomes a believer by faith in Christ.

In Romans 3:24 the Apostle Paul writes of the free gift of God's righteousness provided through His abounding grace: "*Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*" Justification is the judicial act of God as judge whereby He declares righteous the sinner who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. God can declare the believing sinner righteous because the believer possesses the imputed righteousness of God in Christ. Jesus is the spotless Lamb of God who came to do His Father's will. Jesus was the vicarious substitute on behalf of all sinners. The innocent suffered for the guilty so that the guilty might go free. In the Cross is the love of God demonstrated, for there God freely gave His sinless Son as an offering for man's sin. God surely loves sinners with an unfathomable love to pay such a great price to provide forgiveness and eternal life for mankind (John 3:16, Romans 5:6-8).

Romans 3:25 declares concerning the Lord Jesus Christ's work at the Cross, "*Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation [referring to the Lord Jesus Christ] through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.*"

It is also essential to understand the doctrine of propitiation if we are to comprehend the grace of God at work in providing salvation for sinners. Propitiation sounds like a big theological word, but it is not hard to understand. Let's take a look at it. Propitiation means to *satisfy*. The Greek word for propitiation is *hilasterion*—a place of propitiation or a "mercy seat." The Bible teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ offering Himself on the Cross propitiated, or satisfied, God's righteousness. Jesus Christ suffering at the Cross completely satisfied the demands of God's righteous wrath against man's sins. *Hilasterion* means a mercy seat (Hebrews 9:5).

In the Old Testament, the Holy of Holies in the Temple contained the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark of the Covenant had two cherubim on each end above the Mercy Seat. The two cherubim stood for the righteousness and justice of God. The Mercy Seat was over the Ark of the Covenant and contained the Law of God, which man had broken. Once a year the blood of an unblemished sacrifice would be placed on the Mercy Seat by the High Priest. The righteousness and justice of God would look down on the blood, and the sins of the people would be forgiven, and God's righteousness was satisfied (propitiated) for one more year. The blood of the animal sacrifice represented the death and finished work of Christ as the ultimate sacrifice to pay the penalty due to the

righteousness of God for man's sins (John 1:29, Hebrews 9:11-12,22-26, 1 Peter 1:18-20). However, these sacrifices never fully dealt with the sin issue (Hebrews 10:1-4). They were only a temporary covering. They represented the perfect sacrifice that was yet to come.

The perfect sacrifice would be the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. Christ Himself is the Mercy Seat, the propitiation (Hebrews 9:24-26). He is the only One that could satisfy the demands God's righteousness against man's sin. Christ Jesus satisfied the demands of God's righteousness against man's sin once and for all time at the Cross. The work of paying your sin debt is already accomplished and never needs to be repeated. Jesus Christ did it perfectly and it lasts forever (Hebrews 10:10-14). God is satisfied with the work of His Son. Every believer can be assured they are accepted by God because of this accomplished fact. Because of the Cross, God's saving grace is offered to all men freely, if they will simply believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because of the character of God, all who believe are saved. God's holy character demands that He keeps all His promises. God saves forever all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 The One Condition of Salvation: Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ

Acts 16:31; John 3:16-18,36; Romans 4:4-5, 5:1-2

In our study so far we have seen that through the Cross of Christ, God has made a perfect gift of salvation available for all men. In order to receive the benefits of Christ's finished work, all that remains is for men to accept the free gift of eternal life by an act of faith. The good news of the gospel is that there is only one condition any man must meet to be saved—faith alone in Christ alone. The work of Christ in dealing with sin at the Cross is so perfect that all that is necessary to receive the gift of salvation is personal faith in Christ as Savior.

Salvation is by faith because only faith is compatible with the principle of grace (Romans 4:16). Works and grace are two mutually exclusive principles (Romans 11:6). Grace is something given freely. To work is to earn something deserved as a reward for one's efforts. Grace is something given that is unearned and undeserved. Grace is not a reward for work. Salvation in scripture is said to be totally of grace apart from man's works (Ephesians 2:8-9). In order to save a man, God requires faith, not man's religious works or good deeds. The moment a work of man is entered into the plan of salvation, grace is nullified and canceled. Only faith is compatible with grace. It is faith alone that maintains the integrity of grace. Only faith as a requirement preserves the purity of grace as a free and unmerited gift. This is why the scripture declares that salvation is by faith apart from works

Faith is not a work. It is a non-meritorious act. Faith is trusting and depending on the work of someone else (the Lord Jesus Christ at the Cross), rather than depending on one's own works of merit. There is no merit in faith. The object of faith has all the merit. The Lord Jesus Christ is the object of faith. He has all the merit. It is not how much faith you have that saves, but whom you put your faith in. Again, the object of faith is Christ. It is Christ that saves, not man's faith. Faith simply opens the heart of man to receive the gift of God's grace.

Let's illustrate faith with a simple analogy. Suppose, dear reader, that you were standing on the roof of a ten-story building that was burning. On the street below there is a team of firemen holding a safety net. The firemen shout to you to jump into the net to escape the flames. The question in your mind will be, "Do I trust these men to catch me in the net and save me from the flames?" You decide that you do trust them, for they are men of integrity and always keep their word. By faith in their ability to save you, you decide to leap off the burning roof. You fall ten stories and land safely in the net below. What saved you from the flames? It was not your faith that saved you. It was the men holding the net who caught you that saved you. Now your faith and trust in them may have been great or weak when you jumped off the roof. But it wasn't the quality of your faith that saved you from the fire. It was the firemen holding the safety net below. The quality of your faith, whether great or weak, didn't stop the firemen from catching you in the net. They were faithful to save you from the flames, no matter what kind of faith in them you demonstrated. You see, it isn't your faith that saves; it is *who you put your faith in* that counts. The integrity of the one holding the net is what counts. Faith is simply

taking God at His Word and trusting His integrity that He will do what He promised in His Word. God promises to save all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior (John 3:16-18,36, 6:47; Acts 16:31). It is the Lord Jesus Christ that saves, not your faith. Take your simple faith and trust the Lord Jesus Christ, and He will save you!

For God to save, only one thing is required of an unsaved sinner—faith alone in Christ alone, with nothing added! Salvation is not water baptism, it's not confessing sin to a priest, it's not church membership, it's not doing penance, and it's not begging God to be merciful, or any other act of religion. None of these things can save a man from the Lake of Fire. The Lake of Fire is the place of eternal punishment for all men and fallen angels who have sinned and rejected the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 25:41, Revelation 20:11-15). In contrast to the terrible destiny of those who reject the Lord Jesus Christ in unbelief, there is the eternal glory of God's heavenly city, called the New Jerusalem, awaiting those who believe (Revelation 21). Only faith in the Lord Jesus Christ saves sinners from the Lake of Fire and qualifies men to enter into God's eternal kingdom (John 3:18,36; Colossians 1:12-14). Men are saved by faith in Christ *plus nothing!* God has done everything at the Cross required to save men. God has already been merciful. One issue remains for you to be saved, dear reader. Have you believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior? If not, will you take Him as your Savior by believing in Him right now?

5 The Eternal Security of the Believer

The Bible teaches that whoever God justifies through faith in Christ is eternally secure in Christ and can never forfeit their salvation. Salvation doesn't depend on man's faithfulness to God. Salvation depends on God's faithfulness to the finished work of Christ at the Cross, which is imputed as a free gift to every believer. God will keep every justified believer saved. He does not offer man any salvation that is not permanent. Whoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ is justified and saved before God forever, despite their sins and failures. That's the matchless grace of God.

Romans 3:26 states, *"To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just [God's character uncompromised and in perfect harmony], and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."* This is the declaration that God wants declared to believers and unbelievers. God wants all unbelievers to know that He has paid their sin debt and is ready to save them forever if they will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. God also desires that believers, who incorrectly think their sins and failures will cause them to lose their relationship with God, would understand His complete and permanent acceptance of them through Christ (Ephesians 1:1-7). It is an insult to God's grace and the finished work of Christ to think some sin or failure by a believer could undo the perfect work of Christ that paid man's sin debt at the Cross. This type of thinking insults God. God has liberated the believer from the fear of eternal punishment for his sins forever. God's perfect love demonstrated at the Cross, when understood by the believer, removes from his mind and heart forever the thought of ever facing God's judgment for his sins (1 John 4:17-18). God has already judged the Lord Jesus Christ for the believer's sins at the Cross (1 Peter 2:24, 3:18). Once his sins have been judged in Christ at the Cross, the justice of God guarantees that the believer can never again be judged for his sins.

Not only are all the believer's sins (past, present, and future) forgiven, but God also says He doesn't even remember them any longer in Hebrews 10:17, *"And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."* Now that is a fantastic statement that is great news to every believing heart! God has forgotten the believer's sins because Christ paid the debt for him. God cannot demand payment for sin twice, once from Christ and then from believers. There is no double jeopardy in God's plan of salvation.

The believer in Christ can relax, realizing his sins and failures have already been paid for, and nothing can change his relationship with God. The believer's sin debt was canceled at the Cross. The scripture tells us that *"being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Romans 5:1). The believer can rejoice that his sins have been perfectly removed, and being justified he lives in a perfect state of peace with God. Being justified, the believer has a permanent standing in grace (Romans 5:2). The believer will forever be an object of the grace of God. God is always going to treat the believer with grace, His unmerited favor and acceptance. This will be true tomorrow, next month, next decade, even to the ages and ages of eternity. How abundant is the "Amazing Grace," that is, the portion of all who simply believe in Him who loved us and washed us in His blood at the Cross (Revelation 1:5-6). God's grace is greater than all

our sin! (Romans 5:20).

No matter what the sin may be, it can never undo what Jesus Christ accomplished at the Cross. No sin can take away salvation. There is no obstacle in God's mind and character to keep Him from forgiving and saving forever the worst of sinners. He has dealt with every issue man's sin could raise against His own righteous character. No one can ever accuse God of being unjust in forgiving sin, no matter how vile those sins may be. God has met His own righteous demands at the Cross. God declares righteous the one who believes in Jesus apart from works. Romans 4:4-5 states, "*Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of [counted according to] grace, but of [according to] debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*"

Salvation is secure forever because it is wholly by God's grace. Grace means it is not earned by man's works or performance. Grace is a gift freely given. Now, if a person earns something by works, then it is not of grace. No one can work his way to heaven. The standard is too high. No man can achieve the standard of God's perfect righteousness by his own efforts. The Lord Jesus Christ did everything necessary to make us acceptable to God; we must simply believe on Him who justifies the ungodly (Romans 4:5, 5:6). When we believe, God's grace saves us and keeps us saved.

Remember, the moment we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, God gives us His own perfect righteousness by imputation. Our good works cannot add to this righteousness, and our sins cannot take away from this perfect imputed righteousness (Ecclesiastes 3:14). A believer's performance, good or failing, can never change or affect his perfect righteous standing in Christ! All believers are completely righteous and accepted by God because they are "in Christ" forever (1 Corinthians 1:30, 12:13; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Colossians 2:10). This gift of perfect righteousness is the basis of the believer's eternal position forever before God (2 Corinthians 5:21).

As believers we may mature, serve, give, gain victories, and faithfully perform good works, but we will never be more righteous in our standing before God than the very moment we received the gift of imputed righteousness. Once we receive the gift of imputed righteousness, called "justification" in the Bible, we are forever acceptable to God. The basis of our acceptance will always be the imputed righteousness of God given freely to us. Our sins and failures, and our own personal righteousness, have nothing to do with our standing as believers before a Holy God.

The gift of righteousness and God's act of justification as judge of the universe can never be revoked (Romans 11:29). You see, God is immutable (unchangeable) and does not change His mind about our salvation when we sin and fail. The assurance of salvation rests on God's faithfulness to His own righteousness imputed to the believer. Each believer is a member of Christ's body (Ephesians 5:29-32). We may be unfaithful, but God will always be faithful to the believer who possesses His righteousness (2 Timothy 2:13). Every believer is eternally secure and is as sure for Heaven as if he were already there.

Someone may ask the question, "What happens then when a believer falls into sin?" A believer's sins are an issue *in the family between God the Father and His child*. God will discipline His children when necessary, but the believer is a child in the family of God, and his relationship with God is secure. A believer's sin cannot cancel out God's grace toward him. If a believer falls into sin and continues in it without repentance, then

God will discipline him. But divine discipline is an act of fatherly love by God. God disciplines the sinning believer because He loves His child too much to let His child waste his or her life in the misery that sin produces (Hebrews 12:5-11).

One of the traditional beliefs held by many believers is that when a believer sins, he loses fellowship with God. To regain fellowship we are told that the sinning believer must confess his sins to be forgiven and restored to fellowship. This is an incorrect teaching based on a misunderstanding of 1 John 1:9, "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" This verse must be understood in its proper context.

The context of 1 John 1:1-2:2 is the Apostle John's refutation of the Gnostic heresy. The Gnostics rejected the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ came in a physical body born of a virgin woman at His first advent. They believed that the flesh was evil and only the spirit was good, therefore Christ could not be the Son of God in the flesh. The Gnostics also believed that through obtaining a superior revelation of *gnosis* (knowledge) they no longer sinned. They treated sin as an illusion. Thus they professed not to sin.

The Gnostic beliefs about the person of Christ and the eradication of the sin nature amounted to "another gospel" and "another Jesus" (Galatians 1:6-9, 2 Corinthians 11:4). Though they professed to be Christians, they had abandoned the heart of the faith (1 John 2:18-19, 2 John:9), and their apostasy was proof that they were unsaved. John clearly states that to deny the Son of God is come in the flesh is to be antichrist and unsaved (1 John 2:22-23, 4:1-3). John wrote to these believers in Asia Minor to refute the errors of the Gnostics who were influencing some away from the truth in Christ.

In verses 1-3 in 1 John, John reaffirms the apostolic witness and testimony to the incarnation of Christ, in opposition to the Gnostic denials that He came in the flesh. John states that the apostles had heard Him, seen Him and touched Him. Christ certainly came in a flesh-and-blood human body. In verses 4 and 5 John makes a statement about the nature of God and the joy of knowing Him.

In verse 6 John states that to claim fellowship with God and to walk in darkness (here it means to reject the deity of Christ in unbelief) is to lie and not do the truth. To walk in darkness is to be lost in a state of unbelief (John 1:4-5, 3:19-21, 8:12, 12:46). John in his Gospel and epistles never uses darkness to describe a believer who sins and loses fellowship. Darkness characterizes unbelieving lost sinners, not believers who are children of light (Acts 26:18, Ephesians 5:8, Colossians 1:12-13, 1 Thessalonians 5:4-5, 1 Peter 2:9).

It is important to note that because of the finished work of the Cross every believer has been called into a permanent position of fellowship with God and His beloved Son (1 Corinthians 1:9, 1 Peter 2:9). Contrary to popular teaching, a believer is not in fellowship with God, then out of fellowship when he sins, then back in when he confesses, then out again when he sins, etc., etc. The believer has a permanent, eternal fellowship with God because of the Cross. This fellowship cannot be broken or forfeited.

In 1 John 1:7, John conditions fellowship with God upon walking in the light. To walk in the light means to be a believer who has been saved (John 8:12, 12:46; Colossians 1:12-13; Ephesians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:4-5; 1 Peter 2:9). To walk in the light is to be a believer. Note here that to walk in the light is the condition of being cleansed of "*all*" sin. This is a reference to the once-and-for-all cleansing of all the believer's sins at the moment he puts his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 10:43,

16:31; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:12-14; 2:13-14). The scriptures are clear. At the moment of faith in Christ the believer is cleansed of all sins (past, present, and future}. God forgives the believer and remembers the sins “no more” (Hebrews 10:17-18). He enters the light and passes out of darkness forever.

The Gnostics claimed fellowship with God, yet by rejecting the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man, they demonstrated they were still walking in the darkness of unbelief. The issue of light and darkness is not about *how* one walks but *where* one walks. To walk by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as one’s Savior is to walk in the light of God despite one’s sins, weaknesses, and failures. To walk in darkness is to walk in unbelief and rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. Simply put, to walk in the light is to be saved and to walk in darkness is to be unsaved. John writes verse seven to challenge the Gnostic deniers of Christ’s incarnation to enter into the light by believing the truth about the person of Christ.

In 1 John 1:8, John addresses a second error of these Gnostic unbelievers; they claimed that they did not commit sin, since sin was an “illusion”: *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”* The Gnostics claiming to be sinless proved the truth was not in them. Every believer, no matter how weak, is in the light and has the truth in them. John would never say of a true believer that the truth was not in them. The Lord Jesus Christ is the truth (John 14:6), and He indwells every believer (Colossians 1:27). If someone does not have the truth in them, it is because they are unsaved. In verses 8 through 10 of 1 John, the apostle is not addressing saved people but rather unsaved Gnostics who claim to be sinless.

These verses when understood in context, are not written to instruct believers, but to address Gnostics who falsely professed Christ and denied His incarnation and their sinful condition. The solution for these Gnostic heretics who were under deception according to the Apostle John is verse 9: *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* John tells these unsaved Gnostics who claim to be sinless that if they confess (Greek *homologeo*: to admit, acknowledge) their sins, God will forgive them and cleanse them from “*all*” unrighteousness. In other words, admit that you have sinned instead of denying your sin, and God will save you. To be cleansed from “*all unrighteousness*” is what happens at the moment of salvation by faith in Christ, when the believer is completely cleansed once and forever of all sins, past, present and future.

1 John 1:9 is a salvation verse for deceived unbelievers! Yet men through religious tradition perpetuate the doctrine that this verse is written to believers to confess their sins to be forgiven. All the believer’s sins have been judged and forgiven at the Cross. On the basis of one verse taken out of context without any other verse in the New Testament to agree with it, men have built an unscriptural doctrine of the need for believers to confess sins to be forgiven.

Dear reader, nowhere in the New Testament epistles to the church are we told to confess sins to be forgiven. One will search in vain to find a verse that states a believer must confess his sins to be forgiven and in fellowship with God. Every believer is forgiven and in fellowship with God from the moment they believe (Colossians 2:13-14, 1 Corinthians 1:9, 1 Peter 2:9). Note the following verses from the epistles as to how the believer is to deal with sin in his life.

Eph 4:22-25, 28 *Therefore put off...the old man... Put on the new man... Wherefore putting away lying... Let him that stole steal no more.*

Heb 12:1 *Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us.*

1Co 11:28,31 *But let a man examine himself... For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged [reference to divine discipline].*

2Co 7:1 *Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit.*

2Co 7:9 *Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance [repentance means to have a change of mind].*

Jam 4:8 *Purify your hearts.*

In all these passages the writer is dealing with the condition of the believer's heart. The need is not confession, but rather a change of mind about the sinful behavior that leads to a change of conduct.

In 1 John 1:10 the apostle repeats the warning again: *"If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us."* John again is addressing the Gnostics. He states those who claim to have no sin make a liar out of God, and His word is not in them. This phrase, "His word is not in us," is an expression that John uses to describe religious unbelievers. Every believer has the word of God in them and knows the truth that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Savior (1 John 2:14).

Note carefully that John states that it is unbelievers in whom the word of God does not dwell. Jesus told the unbelieving Pharisees, *"And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not"* (John 5:38). Again in John 8:37, Jesus told the unbelieving Pharisees, *"I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you."* John would never say of any true believer that the Word of God is not in them, no matter how weak they may be. Every believer has the word of God in them because they have been born again of incorruptible seed by the word of God (1 Peter 1:23). This expression used by John further illustrates he is addressing unsaved men in unbelief and that 1 John 1:9 is not directed toward saved men.

You see, dear friend, 1 John 1:9 in its proper context has nothing to do with a believer. Every believer is already totally cleansed and forgiven, and this never needs to be repeated (John 19:30; Colossians 2:13-14; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:24-26, 10:16-18; 1 John 2:12; Revelation 1:5-6).

You may ask, "What is the solution for the believer when he sins?" John anticipates this question and answers it in the next verse, chapter 2, verse 1, *"My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not. But if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."* In contrast to the deceived unbeliever who must "confess" (admit) he is a sinner to be forgiven, the believer who sins must recognize he has an advocate, "a defense attorney," with the Father when he does sin. The Lord Jesus Christ represents the sinning believer before the Father, and He is the one who satisfied the righteous demands of God against men's sins (Doctrine of Propitiation, 1 John 2:2). Therefore when Satan, the accuser of the brethren would try to

condemn a sinning believer before the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ pleads His shed blood on behalf of the sinning believer. As a result, the Father accepts Christ's plea because of the finished work of the Cross. Because of the Advocacy of Christ, the Father will never condemn a sinning believer. Never! The Lord Jesus Christ as advocate is the solution to a believer's sins. Therefore the believer can relax, even after he sins, and not feel guilty and condemned before God.

When a believer sins, he must relate the sin to the Cross where Christ was judged for all sins, including the one just committed. Recognizing the advocacy of Christ on his behalf, the sinning believer must thank God that the sin has already been forgiven through the Cross where Christ took the punishment for all men. This is amazing and wonderful freedom from guilt provided by our Lord Jesus Christ through the suffering He endured on the Cross.

After thanking God for the complete forgiveness from all sin, including the one just committed, the believer is to turn from it and continue growing in the liberty, grace, and knowledge of God through the Word (Galatians 5:1, 2 Peter 3:18). This is far different from practicing a ritual of confession of sin, which only focuses the believer on self and promotes a guilt complex. God wants the sinning believer to know He has accepted them completely through the Cross. He wants the believer's eyes focused on Christ's finished work, not their sins and failures. This is the only way the Holy Spirit who indwells every believer can accomplish the work of conforming the believer into the image of Christ (Romans 8:29, 2 Corinthians 3:17-18).

In summary, we can state that if a believer examines himself when he sins and judges himself by turning from his sin, God will not have to discipline him (1 Corinthians 11:31-32). Self-judgment avoids divine discipline. But even when a believer is being disciplined by God, he is always a saved, a secure member of God's family forever. Remember, "*all*" the believer's sins were forgiven at the Cross. The believer needs to judge himself by turning from his sin and needs to thank God that his sin was paid for at the Cross once for all and forever. All believers still have an old sin nature inherited from Adam and will continue to sin till the day they get to heaven. In heaven, the believer will have a perfect glorified body like the Lord Jesus Christ's and will never sin again (Philippians 3:20-21, 1 John 3:1-2). Until that day, all believers will fight the battle against sin. Sometimes the believer will be victorious over sin, and at other times he will lose the battle and give into sin. But no matter how he fares in the battle against sin, the believer is always eternally secure in his relationship with his Heavenly Father.

The eternal security of the believer is clearly promised in the scriptures. John 5:24 states, "*Verily, Verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*" Note here that the believing one passes out of the sphere of spiritual death into the sphere of eternal life. This is a permanent transfer guaranteeing that the believer will never come into condemnation for his sins. Every believer has become a "new creature in Christ" and has left the position of condemnation "in Adam" forever (2 Corinthians 5:17, Colossians 1:12-14).

John 6:37-40 states, "*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do my will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last*

day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." Note here the Lord Jesus Christ emphatically states that the believer will never be cast out from acceptance, and He guarantees that the believer will be resurrected to everlasting life on the last day (at the Second Coming of Christ, Philippians 3:20-21, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 1 Corinthians 15:50-57, 1 John 3:1-2). This is an unconditional promise to all who believe, guaranteeing the security of salvation.

John 10:27-29 states, *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."* Note here that the Lord Jesus Christ grounds the eternal security of the believer in the omnipotence of God. God is all-powerful and no one can stop Him from accomplishing His purpose of saving all who believe. No one can snatch the believer out of God's plan of salvation (His omnipotent hand). The believer is in the care of the mighty hand of God. The most secure place in the universe is given to all who believe.

Colossians 2:13-14 tells us, *"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross."* Note that Paul states that "all" the believer's sins have been forgiven. This means past sins, present sins, and future sins are all forgiven. No sin can "unsave" a believer because all sins have been paid in full at the Cross 2,000 years ago by the Lord Jesus Christ. Dear reader, if you are a believer, then you must reckon on the fact that any sin you commit, no matter how bad you may feel about it, has been forgiven at the Cross. If you are not a believer, realize that Christ has paid for your sins also. No sin can keep you from salvation if you will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 7:25 speaks of Christ's work as High Priest related to us: *"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."* Note that Paul states that the believer is eternally secure because the Lord Jesus Christ intercedes in prayer for the believer before the Father. The eternal priesthood of Christ guarantees that His prayers will be answered on behalf of the believer. The Lord Jesus Christ is able to save to the "uttermost" all who believe. "Uttermost" means "to the farthest point." In other words, the Lord Jesus Christ saves the believer "forever, throughout eternity." The blessed Son of God is eternal. His priesthood lasts forever. Therefore the work of the Son done for each believer lasts forever. The believer's salvation is forever secure.

Not only does the Lord Jesus Christ intercede for the believer, but He is also the believer's "advocate" before the Father when we sin. 1 John 2:1-2 says, *"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world."* An advocate is someone who pleads our case. An advocate is like a defense attorney in a court of law. The Lord Jesus Christ is the believer's defense attorney in the presence of the Father who pleads our defense when we sin. When a believer sins, the Father will not condemn him because Jesus Christ, as the propitiation for sin, pleads His shed blood on the believer's behalf.

The Father accepts the blood of the believer's advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous one, and He will not condemn the sinning believer. The Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. He will forever be our advocate before the Father. When a believer sins, He will never fail to plead His shed blood on our behalf. The advocacy of Christ guarantees the eternal security of the believer.

Ephesians 4:30 tells us, *"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."* This verse teaches us that the Holy Spirit seals the believer "until the day of redemption." The believer is sealed as a guarantee of security until the day of redemption when he will receive a resurrected body. A seal in the Bible is a guarantee of security. The seal of a king meant that nothing could change or revoke the decree of the king (Esther 8:8, Daniel 6:17). God, who is the highest authority in the universe, has declared the believer justified! God the judge has handed down the decree of "justified" for every believer and has given every believer the Holy Spirit as a seal. Who then can condemn the believer if God has declared him righteous? No one, not even God Himself! God guarantees that His decree of justification for the believer can never be revoked by sealing the believer with the indwelling of the blessed comforter, the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:31-34 tells us in no uncertain terms that God is "for" every believer and because God has justified him, He will never condemn the one who He has declared righteous: *"What shall we then say to these things? If [and it is so] God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us (Romans 8:31-34)."*

Oh dear seeking heart, can you not see all that God has done for you? Trust the Son of His love, our blessed Lord Jesus Christ today, and receive the peace of God that will guard your heart and mind. It is clear from scripture that if you are a believer in Christ, God is not against you. God is for you and He has taken away your sins at the Cross. God is not holding your sins against you if you have trusted Christ as your Savior (2 Corinthians 5:19). Simply believe the Word of Him that cannot lie and enter into the full assurance of salvation.

Acts 16:31 *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."*

John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*

6 Resting on God's Promises

The veracity of God gives us the foundation for the assurance of personal salvation. God is not a man that He should lie. God is trustworthy and faithful. God keeps His Word. God always keeps His promises. Numbers 23:19 clearly states the veracity of God: *“God is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent [change His mind]: hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?”*

Dear reader, when God makes a promise to you in His Word, He cannot break it, or else His character would be compromised. God is bound by His own character to keep His promises. God tells us that if we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved (Acts 16:31). He tells us that if we come to Christ by faith, He will accept us and will never cast us out (John 6:37). God will never reject the one who believes in His Beloved Son. Dear reader, if you have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, on the authority of God's Word, you have the right to confess with your mouth that you are saved. Romans 10:9-10 gives us this promise: *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”*

Now, note also that God has made you His son if you have believed on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior. Read carefully John 1:12-13, *“But as many as received him, to them gave he power [the authority] to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”* When anyone believes in Christ, they are born of God (1 John 5:1). Every believer is born again into the family of God. When a child is born into a family, he is a permanent member of that family, whether he does good or bad. It is the same with the family of God. Once you are born again into the family of God, you will always be a member of God's family. Once a son, always a son. By faith in Christ, believers become the very children of God and heirs of eternal life (Galatians 3:26, 4:7).

Now, simply take God at His Word if you have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. He has provided all you needed to be saved at the Cross. Enter into peace with God about your personal salvation by resting in His promises. Claim these promises as your own and stand on them. Do not listen to the doubts, fears, and condemnation that Satan and the kingdom of darkness will use to attack your thought life. Stand upon the firm foundation of the promises of God in Christ and resist Satan's lies by believing God's Word to you personally.

If you are not a believer, then recognize that salvation is offered to “whosoever will believe” (John 3:16, Revelation 22:17). As an unbeliever, salvation is your greatest need. The Bible says that *“all men have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God”* (Romans 3:23). That includes you, dear unbelieving friend. The “Glory of God” is the perfect righteousness of God. No man possesses this perfect righteousness because all men are sinners. There is no man who can be righteous enough to make himself

acceptable to God (Romans 3:10, Isaiah 64:6). But God has provided, through the Cross of Christ, a perfect gift of salvation and imputed righteousness for you, if you will believe in Christ as your personal Savior. Simply tell Him you are putting your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for your salvation. Once you have understood the terms of salvation, a simple prayer, prayed in faith, may help you gain the assurance of personal salvation:

“God, I accept the fact that your Word declares I am a sinner and I cannot be righteous enough to save myself. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who died for my sins and rose again. Right now I am believing in the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Savior, and trusting Him alone for my salvation. Thank you for saving and forgiving me. Amen.”

Now that you have understood the plan of salvation and have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, stand on the promise of God’s Word to you. Jesus said, “*Verily, Verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life*” (John 6:47). Now thank God for His gracious gift of eternal life provided through the Cross of His Son. Rest in His promises by faith and enjoy this wonderful new relationship that God has given you with Himself. Pray and study His Word daily that you may grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Epilogue

Dear believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, your salvation today is guaranteed by the justice of God. It does not depend on your performance in the spiritual life. It depends on God's faithfulness to the righteousness He has imputed to you. He will never condemn you for your failures and sins, and nothing can ever separate you from the love of your Father in Heaven (Romans 8:31-39). God promises us that the blood of Jesus guarantees our access into His presence: "*Having therefore, brethren, boldness [confidence] to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*" (Hebrews 10:19).

Dear reader, do not look at yourself for your assurance of salvation. Look away from self to Christ and His finished work on the Cross. God has promised to save all who believe in Christ. If you have believed in Him, you are saved. God keeps His Word! The work of taking away your sins was accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ for you at the Cross. Nothing else needs to be done. Simply claim His promises and rest in them by faith. As you rest in His promises you will enter into the Full Assurance of Salvation!

Once the issue of your personal salvation is settled in your heart, God calls you as a believer to "*grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ*" (2 Peter 3:18). This is done by studying God's Word through daily Bible reading, the regular instruction of a prepared pastor, and the fellowship of a local church. Faith grows by hearing the Word of God taught regularly (Romans 10:17). As you increase in your knowledge of the doctrines and promises of God's Word, your confidence in God and the enjoyment of your salvation will grow to greater heights. The assurance of salvation is only the beginning of the fantastic plan that God's matchless grace has provided for you. As you grow in grace, you will daily discover more of God's plan for your life, revealed in His Word. Enjoy the journey!