

CONFIDENCE

You are beginning a Bible study series which has had a positive influence on thousands of lives. Each lesson of Your Life in Christ builds upon the previous one and together they furnish practical understanding which will help you experience the Christian life as God intends.

Knowing Jesus Christ is the most exciting relationship you can have. It is the beginning of a life of adventure with an all-loving, all-powerful God.

The following four principles concisely explain what a person needs to know to begin a new life in Christ. A brief review of these scriptural truths will provide a starting point for being confident in your relationship with Christ.

- 1 God loves you and created you to know Him personally.
- 2 Man is sinful and separated from God, so we cannot know Him personally or experience His love.
- 3 Jesus Christ is God's only provision for man's sin. Through Him alone we can know God personally and experience His love.
- 4 We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; then we can know God personally and experience His love.

Many people who have received Jesus Christ into their lives may still ask, "How can a person who has received Christ know with certainty that he will spend eternity with God?"

The answer to this important question supplies the foundation on which your Christian life can be built. Let's look at what the Bible says about how we can have confidence in our relationship with God.

1 Having confidence in your relationship with Christ

When you trust Christ to be your Savior, you can have confidence in your relationship with Him because you have been completely forgiven and accepted by God. Only Christ's death on the cross is sufficient to provide this proper relationship with God.

“For by **grace** you have been **saved** through **faith**; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.” —Ephesians 2:8,9

Three important words in these verses help us understand the basis of our acceptance before God: **grace, saved and faith.**

Grace: unmerited favor, an undeserved gift.

Can a gift be called a gift if you must work to earn it?

You don't deserve this relationship with God. You cannot earn it by any good works (church attendance, good deeds, giving money, etc.). It is a free gift from God that you accepted when you received Christ.

Saved: to be rescued, spared from disaster.

Read Romans 6:23. This verse tells us that the penalty for sin is spiritual death. When you received Christ, He rescued you from eternal separation from God. You were spared from having to pay the penalty for your own sin.

Faith: to believe in, trust in, rely upon.

Based on what we just read, what should you rely on God for?

Faith is not a feeling or just an intellectual agreement with certain beliefs. It is an act of the will to trust in and rely upon God and His Word. Receiving Christ means you stop relying on your own ability to get into heaven. Instead, you choose to trust in Jesus' death to pay for your sins.

? KEY QUESTION *Suppose you were standing before God and He asked you, “Why should I let you into heaven?” What would you say?*

2 Understanding five truths about your relationship with Christ

Many exciting things are true in your relationship with Christ. Understanding the following truths will help you build a firm foundation on which to grow in your relationship with Him.

1. Christ forgave your sin.

Read Ephesians 1:7. When you trusted Christ for the forgiveness of your sin, He forgave all your sins — past, present and future.

What difference would it make to someone to know that all of his or her sins were forgiven?

2. Christ made you a child of God.

Read John 1:12,13. *What must happen for a person to become a child of God?*

3. Christ came into your life, and He will never leave you.

Read Revelation 3:20.
Have you opened the door of your life to Christ?

Where is Christ right now in relation to you? How do you know?

Read John 6:37.
Under what circumstances might Christ leave you?

According to this verse, how many times is it necessary to receive Christ?

4. Christ gave you new life.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. When you trusted Christ to be your Savior and Lord, you began a new spiritual life. God will increasingly produce many new qualities in you as you grow in Him.

5. Christ gave you eternal life.

Read 1 John 5:11-13.
In whom is eternal life found?

Who has eternal life?

Do you have eternal life?

When did eternal life begin for you?



KEY QUESTION

If you were to die tonight, how sure are you that you would spend eternity with God? (Place a mark on the scale to indicate your level of confidence.)

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%



SUMMARY **These wonderful benefits are based totally on Jesus Christ. None of them can be earned. You received them the moment you placed your faith in Christ.**

Are any of the following truths especially meaningful to you now? Why?

1. Christ forgave your sin.
2. Christ made you a child of God.
3. Christ came into your life, and He will never leave you.
4. Christ gave you new life.
5. Christ gave you eternal life.

3 Dealing with doubts in your relationship with Christ

Doubts, questions and varying emotions are common parts of everyone's life, but they are unreliable gauges of anyone's relationship with Christ. **Even though feelings are important, your relationship with Christ is based on unchanging facts, not on feelings that can change daily.** The Christian lives by faith in the reliability of God and His unchanging Word.



This diagram illustrates the relationship between **fact** (God and His Word), **faith** (your trust in God and His Word) and **feeling**. When filled with gasoline, the van will run with or without the trailer; however, it would be useless to attempt to pull the van by the trailer. **In the same way, do not depend on feelings to live the Christian life. The promise of God's Word, not our feelings, is our authority.**

But what if you don't feel like a Christian tomorrow? **Place your faith in the faithfulness of God Himself and the trustworthiness of His Word.** The more you learn of His Word, the more you will be able to answer any doubts with solid facts. Your feelings will begin to respond to the truth of God's Word and not your circumstances.

4 Growing in your relationship with Christ

Take one truth each day from the list below and reflect on it. Read the verses listed beside each truth. Thank God that this is now true of you. Knowing and trusting in these essential truths is important to your growth in Christ.

Day 1 — **You are forgiven:** Ephesians 1:7 and Colossians 2:13.

Day 2 — **You are a child of God:** John 1:12,13 and 1 John 3:1.

Day 3 — **You are indwelt** by Christ: Revelation 3:20 and Galatians 2:20.

Day 4 — **You have new life:** 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Ephesians 2:4,5.

Day 5 — You have eternal life: 1 John 5:11-13 and John 10:27-29.

Throughout this week, begin to make these truths part of your life. If these truths are meaningful to you, tell someone this week that you have a relationship with Christ.



SUMMARY If you have trusted Christ as your personal Savior, you have begun the most significant, fulfilling relationship that you can experience. Regardless of feelings, the sure promises of God provide confidence that Christ lives in you and that He will never leave you. This is the foundation for a growing relationship with Christ.



LOOKING AHEAD Next time we will look at how we can experience God's acceptance of us even when we fail.

Next meeting time is: