

LESSON 1: CONFIDENCE

This Bible study series will help you learn some of the basic truths that are necessary for you to grow in your relationship with God. Your relationship with God has been made possible by Jesus' death on the cross as the payment for your sin. In this first study, we will explore the confidence you can have in your relationship with God. The other studies in this series will focus on growing in spiritual maturity, knowing God's love and forgiveness, experiencing the power of His Holy Spirit on a daily basis, relating to other believers, and the importance of obedience to the Lord.

REVIEW THE SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES THAT BROUGHT YOU TO GOD

- God loves you and created you to know Him personally. He has a wonderful plan for your life.
- Your sin separated you from God, so you did not experience His love and plan.
- Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty for your sin, and then He rose from the dead. He is the only way to God. Through Him, you can know God personally and experience God's love and plan.
- You must individually receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of your life; then you can know God personally and experience His love and plan.

REVIEW THE COMMITMENT YOU HAVE MADE

The key question is: have you personally received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of your life?

It was sin (your self-will shown through active rebellion or passive indifference toward God) that separated you from God. Through faith in Jesus' death as payment for your sin, your sins have been forgiven and you have been given the gift of forgiveness of your sins and a personal relationship with God. You maintain this unhindered relationship as a child of God by allowing Jesus to direct your life, as illustrated by these two circles:



Self-directed life

- Self is on the throne
- Self-directed areas of life in discord and frustration
- Christ is outside the life



Christ-directed life

- Christ is in the life, on the throne
- Self is yielding to Christ
- Interests are directed by Christ, in harmony with God's plan

Jesus invites sinners to turn away from their sin to follow Him

Sin hurts us and the people around us, bringing destruction to various areas of our lives and keeping us separated from God. Jesus invited people to **repent** (reconsider the course of their lives and decide to turn to God, turning away from unrighteous activity) and **follow** Him, choosing to do what is right by following the example of His righteous life and obeying His teachings. This begins an exciting new life in **relationship** with God through Jesus Christ, through **faith** (trusting and obeying Him). This **decision** to repent, trust, and follow Him is how we **receive** Jesus as Lord. (Read **John 1:12**)

You can know that you have eternal life in relationship with Jesus

Read **1 John 5:11-12**

- What two options are mentioned in verse 12?
- Do you have the Son?
- If you have the Son, what else do you have?
- What kind of life do you have (read verse 11)?
- What is eternal life? When does it begin?

Read 1 John 5:13

- Do you believe in Jesus, the Son of God?
- If you received Jesus as Lord of your life, what is the promise given to you in this verse?
- Because of this promise, how confident are you that you have eternal life?
Eternal life is not just measured in quantity of days, but is also the quality of life in close personal relationship with God and Jesus. (Read **John 17:3**)

Nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ

Read Galatians 2:20

- Where is Christ living now in relation to you?
- How did Jesus prove His great love for you?

Read John 10:27–29 and Romans 8:38–39

- Can you think of anything the author left out that might separate you from God's love?
- What conclusions can you draw from these passages?
- How sure are you that Jesus loves you and lives in you?

Dealing with doubts in your relationship with God

Doubts, questions, and changing emotions are a normal part of everyone's life, but they are unreliable indicators of a person's relationship with God. Though feelings are important, your relationship with God is based upon His unchanging promises, not feelings that can change daily. The Christian lives by faith in the reliability of God and His unchanging Word.



This image illustrates the relationship between **fact** (God and His Word), **faith** (your trust in God and His Word), and **feeling**. When filled with fuel, the truck will run with or without the trailer. In the same way, do not depend on feelings to live the Christian life. The promises of God in His Word, not our feelings, are our authority and power.

But what if you don't feel like a Christian tomorrow? A Christian is a follower of Jesus Christ. **Remember** your commitment to follow Jesus as your Lord, making sure Christ is always on the throne of your life. **Place your faith** in the faithfulness of God Himself and the trustworthiness of His Word. The more you learn from 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 instead of your circumstances.

CONCLUSIONS

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

LEARNING AND GROWING IN THE WEEK AHEAD

In order to grow in your relationship with God, you need to learn more about what is true of you because you received Christ. Understanding and living in light of these essential truths is important to your growth in your relationship with God. Consider the following truths and thank God every day this coming week that:

- You have been forgiven of all your sins (read **Ephesians 1:7** and **Colossians 2:13**).
- You are a child of God (read **John 1:12–13** and **1 John 3:1**).
- Christ lives in you (read **Galatians 2:20** and **2 Corinthians 13:5**).
- You have a new life with meaning and purpose (read **2 Corinthians 5:17** and **Romans 6:4**).
- You have eternal life (read **1 John 5:11–13** and **John 10:27–29**).