

AM I REALLY SAVED... Am I a child of God??

“The Spirit of God bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.”

Romans 8:16

If you have it, you have everything that you need... but without it, you don't have anything—no matter how much you have. Many people think they have it but they don't, and sadly many people who *do* have it, take it for granted. Recognized in its entire splendor you would die for it, but ironically unless you have it, you will die twice... spiritual death as well as physical death.

What is it that I'm talking about? It is the story of Scripture... it's the miracle of the age. It is the reason that Jesus suffered, died, and rose again. Sinners call it *conversion*; theologians call it *justification*. Children call it, *asking Jesus into their hearts*... and Jesus called it, *being born again*. The Bible calls it *salvation*.

Rightly understood, salvation is the crown jewel of Christianity... the constant comfort of the Lord's people. But it can also cause much confusion. In fact, surprisingly even in churches that preach the biblical messages of salvation, a lot of people are confused about exactly what salvation is and how it works. In Romans 10:9-10 and 8:16 we read, *“That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. The Spirit of God bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.”*

Can we be absolutely certain that we've been saved?

If you're saved, you belong to God. God has made a mark on you... he has sealed you. What is that assurance that you belong to him? Scripture tells us... *“And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.”* (Ephesians 1:13)

So there it is—if you've been saved, you have the Holy Spirit. If you're not saved, you don't have the Holy Spirit. So the question then is... how do I know if I have the Holy Spirit? If you're saved, the Holy Spirit is doing these six things in your life. There are many more biblical truths that could be on this list but these are six main ones.

1. The Holy Spirit is growing you. (Galatians 5:22)

If you're saved, you're more godly than you used to be... you're changing. You might have symptoms of your old problems but you don't give into them like you used to. You're being set free from addictions... your character is growing. When you are saved, the Spirit is developing in you “... love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control”—are the fruit of his character.

I'll use myself as an example here: I've got problems; I'm not perfect, I continue to sin. But the people who know me best, my family, my close friends, the people that I work with, I believe, would say in unison, “Dan is definitely not who he was five years ago... God's growing and changing him.” If God is growing and changing you... that's the work of His Spirit in you! Galatians 5:22-23b says, *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control.”*

2. The Holy Spirit has gifted you. (1 Corinthians 12)

When the Spirit of God comes into your life He gives you the desire and the ability to serve God. If you're saved, he has gifted you with a specific way you can serve the body of Christ. You are prompted to get beyond selfish consumer Christianity and into the center of what Jesus is doing to build His kingdom in and through a local church that he has chosen for you. 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11 tells us, *“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit... Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good... All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.”*

3. The Holy Spirit convicts you of sin.

In John 16:8 we read... *“When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.”*

Perhaps you're saying, “It's the craziest thing... before I knew Christ I could lie, and steal, take God's name in vain, and be mean to folks, but never even felt bad about it.”

- “Since I got saved, every time I do anything wrong this siren goes off inside me.”
- That's the Spirit at work, convicting us of sin.
- If you can sin and not be grieved... ask yourself if you're really saved.

In 1 John 1:8-10 it says, *“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.”*

4. Hunger for truth. (John: 16:13-14)

Was there a time when you could have cared less about the Bible? If somebody said to you, ‘Are you reading the Bible?’ you would have replied, ‘No, I'm reading a “best-seller” right now.’ But when you were saved, your desire to hear God's Word exploded in your heart. If that's going on in your life, that's a very good sign.

In John 16:13-14 we read... *“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.”*

We don't know it all... we are to keep growing in grace and in the knowledge of Him. How can we do it? Just reading the Bible is not the complete answer; the Holy Spirit must be our Teacher as we read. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Truth... he will lead and guide you into all truth. He guided the apostles just as the Lord said He would, and we find these truths in the Epistles. The Spirit of God came to these men at Pentecost, and He guided them in the truth both in their preaching and in their writing.

We can see how this was fulfilled in the apostles. The ministry of the Holy Spirit has been to complete the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Epistles glorify Christ and show Him as the Head of the church. They speak of His coming again to establish His Kingdom. The Epistles are the unfolding of the person and ministry of Christ. They also tell of things to come and certainly the Book of Revelation does this.

Notice the seven steps that are here: (1) The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, has come; (2) He will guide you into all truth; (3) He will not speak of Himself; (4) He shall speak whatsoever He shall hear; (5) He will show you things to come; (6) He shall glorify Jesus; and (7) He shall receive of mine and show it unto you.

Since we have been told these steps, we have a way of testing what we hear. How can you tell when the Holy Spirit is working? He will glorify Christ. My friend, whenever you suddenly get a glimpse of the Lord Jesus and He becomes wonderful, very real, and meaningful to you, that is the working of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "He shall glorify me."

5. The Holy Spirit leads you. (1 John 3:23-24)

God's Spirit prompts you to make things right with others. Through him you respond to the biblical messages that you hear and while reading the Bible. And you want to do the things that honor and please him. When the Spirit is leading you, you know there's something going on in your heart. Scripture says, *“As many as are led by the Spirit of God these are the children of God.”*¹¹

Read... 1 John 3:23-24... *“And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.”*

6. The Holy Spirit comforts you. (John 14:16)

Has there ever been a time in your life when you struggled with just about everything? But since you came to know Christ, things didn't bother you as much. The Spirit supplies strength that you didn't have before and you're now able to get through things that you couldn't before. God Himself bears you along and helps you get through the tough stuff.

That's another one of the things the Spirit of God does—he comforts us. God wants you to know that you are his child. Jesus said, *“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.”* John 14:16-18

Real salvation becomes for true believers a treasure chest of holy joy.

Your treasure is... Jesus our crucified Savior who pardons all your sins, provides all your righteousness, and becomes in his own fellowship your greatest pleasure.

- Before we were saved we had no delight in God... Christ was just a vague historical figure; he was the Christmas story and the Easter story.
- What we enjoyed was food and friendships and productivity and investments and vacations and hobbies and reading and shopping and sex and sports and art and TV and travel—and on & on...

Neither God nor Christ were the center of our happiness... they were not a “treasure of delight.”

- Then something miraculous happens... conversion and regeneration by the Spirit of God, and then... faith—the confidence that Christ has made a way for me, a sinner, to live in his glorious fellowship forever.
- It is “in believing” in the real Jesus that you are filled with joy, with peace, with hope through the Holy Spirit in you.

So now what?

Get this settled right now... no one should be confused about this issue.

- You can... *know* that you *know*, that you *know*, that you have a saving faith, that you are saved, and that you are a child of God.

God's Word says, *“For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ”* (Romans 8:15-17).

Now that's real salvation!

If you're wondering, *“God, am I your child?”* do this: get alone, read the Scriptures that I've mentioned above and pray, “God, do I really know you?” The Spirit Himself will either bear witness, “Yes” or “No.” You don't have to wonder anymore.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace, as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

p.s. Also see a companion message titled: **“Do You Know the Real Jesus... Don't Be Fooled”**

ⁱ By James MacDonald (Edited by Dan Scheel)

ⁱⁱ Romans 8:14