

HOW DO I
KNOW IF
I'M REALLY
SAVED?

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GLOSSARY OF FREQUENTLY MISUNDERSTOOD TERMS

Gospel (often misunderstood): The minimum entrance requirements for getting into heaven when you die.

Gospel (as Jesus proclaimed it): The announcement of the availability of life in the Kingdom of God through Jesus himself (see Mark 1:14-15; Matthew 4:17; 6:33).

HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M REALLY SAVED?

Disciple (often misunderstood): A Christian who is doing spiritual extra-credit work.

Disciple (more correctly): Someone whose ultimate goal is to live the way Jesus would live if Jesus were in their shoes.

Christian (often misunderstood): Someone who believes the essential tenets of Christianity required to get into heaven after death.

Christian (more correctly): Another word for disciple (used only three times in the New Testament—always of the community of disciples).

Eternal Life (often misunderstood): Going to heaven when you die.

JOHN ORTBERG

Eternal Life (more correctly): An interactive, participative relationship with God that begins now and which death is powerless to stop. (“This is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” John 17:3.)

Grace (often misunderstood): The free forgiveness of sins.

Grace (more correctly): God at work in us to do what we cannot do on our own. This includes forgiveness but also includes much more. Peter says we are to “grow in grace”; he doesn’t mean “grow in the forgiveness of your sins.” God was gracious before anyone sinned. We are meant to live by grace.

Salvation (often misunderstood): Having satisfied the minimum requirements for being in the “heaven-bound” category.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M REALLY SAVED?

Salvation (more correctly): The past, present, and future journey of being delivered from sin for a life with God.

Faith (often misunderstood): Things you're supposed to believe about God.

Faith (more correctly): Your “mental map” about how things are.

Saving Faith (often misunderstood): The least you have to believe in order to get into heaven when you die.

Saving Faith (more correctly): The “mental map” of reality that has the tendency toward natural obedience to Jesus.

Heaven (often misunderstood): The divine pleasure factory where anyone would be happy if they could just get in.

JOHN ORTBERG

Heaven (in its afterlife dimensions, more correctly): The redeemed new creation in which God will be impossible to avoid.

Trusting Christ (often misunderstood): Believing that affirming a certain doctrine means I cannot be kept out of heaven when I die.

Trusting Christ (more correctly): Believing Jesus was right—about everything—and therefore seeking intelligently to obey him.

KEY VERSES ABOUT SALVATION

FROM THE NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

This is the way to have eternal life—
to know you, the only true God,
and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to
earth.

JOHN 17:3

Everyone who has given up houses or
brothers or sisters or father or mother
or children or property, for my sake,
will receive a hundred times as much
in return and will inherit eternal life.

MATTHEW 19:29

HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M REALLY SAVED?

You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me [Jesus]!

JOHN 5:39

The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing.

JOHN 6:63

Just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ROMANS 5:21

JOHN ORTBERG

This is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

JOHN 3:16

The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

ROMANS 6:23

Anyone who believes in God's Son has eternal life. Anyone who doesn't obey the Son will never experience eternal life but remains under God's angry judgment.

JOHN 3:36

HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M REALLY SAVED?

I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life.

JOHN 5:24

I trust in you for salvation, O LORD!

GENESIS 49:18

The LORD is my light and my
salvation—

so why should I be afraid?

The LORD is my fortress, protecting me
from danger,

so why should I tremble?

PSALM 27:1

JOHN ORTBERG

He alone is my rock and my
salvation, my fortress where I will
never be shaken.

PSALM 62:2

What makes us think we can escape
if we ignore this great salvation that
was first announced by the Lord
Jesus himself and then delivered to us
by those who heard him speak?

HEBREWS 2:3

Salvation is not a reward for the good
things we have done, so none of us
can boast about it.

EPHESIANS 2:9

NOTES

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5. Alcoholics Anonymous, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (New York: The A. A. Grapevine and Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 1981), 106–7.
6. Michael Burkholder, *Lincoln's Christianity* (Yardley, PA: Westholme, 2007), xi.
7. Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 258.
8. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Touchstone, 1959), 51.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M REALLY SAVED?

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13. Tim Harmon, "Who's In and Who's Out? Christianity and Bounded Sets vs. Centered Sets," *Transformed* (blog), January 17, 2014, <https://www.westernseminary.edu/transformedblog/2014/01/17/whos-in-and-whos-out-christianity-and-bounded-sets-vs-centered-sets/>.
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18. *Ibid.*, 141.
19. Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 211.

JOHN ORTBERG

20. N. T. Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began: Reconsidering the Meaning of Jesus's Crucifixion* (New York: HarperOne, 2016), 4.
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