

SALVATION QUESTIONS

Knowing the Marks of True Salvation

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I. Questions from the Sermons of George Whitfield (*Select Sermons of George Whitfield*),
Banner of Truth Trust, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, 1958).

A. The Grace of God in the Gospel versus Human Merit.

1. Do you expect to be saved at last because of what you have done in part or in whole and because of your faithfulness?
2. Do you expect to be saved at last only because of God's eternal love and sovereign grace given to sinners in Christ? (Titus 3:5-7).
3. How long have you loved God? Was there ever a time when you hated God and had enmity in your heart toward Him? Can you recall when the sin of unbelief governed your heart?
4. Did the Spirit ever convince you of your inability to *close with Christ* (to completely trust Him and surrender yourself to Him for salvation)? Did you ever cry to God for faith and for mercy in your helpless condition? (Rom. 5:6; Titus 3:1-3; Rom. 7:14).

B. Mortification of Sin.

1. Do you find it necessary to constantly watch, pray, resist, and fight against your corruptions so that they do not rule over your life? (Rom. 7:22-25).
2. Is your indwelling sin the burden of your heart? Do you cry out, "Who will deliver me from this body of death?" Have you ever felt that God might justly curse and damn you for your indwelling corruption if you were not a believer? (Rom. 7:24).

C. Proper Conviction of Sin.

1. Was there a time when God wrote bitter things against you, when the burden of your sins was intolerable to your thoughts? Was there a time when you were conscious of the fact that God's eternal wrath might justly fall upon you on account of your actual transgressions against God? Have you ever been crushed over your sins? Did this conviction ever pass between your soul and God? (Rom. 2:1-11; John 3:36).

2. Have you ever justified God in your damnation? Have you ever owned the fact that by nature you are a child of wrath, and that you deserve to be eternally miserable? (Eph. 2:1-3).
3. Have you ever been troubled not simply over outward sins, but over the sins of your heart, your nature and for the sins of your best duties and performances? Have you ever been brought to see that the best of your religious duties are as filthy rags in God's sight? (Is. 64:6; Rom. 8:5-7).

D. Spiritual Life and Growth.

1. Do you rest upon your profession of faith or are you always building yourself up in the righteousness of Christ? (In other words; are you resting upon a decision you made years ago; or are you always *preaching the Gospel to yourself*?) (Jude 1:20; John 15:4).
2. Do you trust in your former conversion or are you always pressing forward, trusting in the righteousness of Christ which is outside of you? (*Do you preach the Gospel to yourself as a habit of life and as a vital part of your communion with the Lord?*) (Phil. 3:8-11).
3. Do you rest upon the experience of your first conversion, or do you frequently flee to Christ and his blood, loathing your own self-righteousness? (1 Cor. 3:11; Phil. 3:9; Rom. 7:18).
4. Has God spoken peace to your heart? Have you felt the power of God on your soul as you opened the Word of God? (Heb 4:12-13' Rom 8:16; 14:17).

II. *Questions from the Writings of Richard Baxter* (Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor*, The Banner of Truth Trust, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, 1656, r.p. 1979).

A. The Gospel of Jesus Christ.

1. Have you ever been made to feel the greatness of your sin and misery? Have you felt your sin as a heavy load upon your soul? Have you ever felt the everlasting misery due your sins and with that burden the knowledge that you are a lost person? (Acts 2:37; Luke 18:13).
2. Have you gladly received news of a Savior, casting your soul upon Christ alone for pardon by His blood? (1 Cor. 15:1).
3. Do you believe that nothing can prevent you from going to hell but the sacrifice of the Son of God? (Heb. 2:1-3).

4. What becomes of men when they die? Are you a sinner by nature; do you have any sin? Were you born with sin? What does every sin deserve? What remedy has God provided for the saving of sinful miserable souls?
5. Has anyone suffered in our place whose sacrifice God accepts? Who are those whom God will pardon? Who shall be saved by the blood of Christ? (Mark 1:15; Luke 13:5).

B. The Need for Regeneration.

1. What change must be made upon all who shall be saved? How is that change affected (Jn 3:5-8)? Have you ever found that regeneration, this great change, has taken place upon your own heart? (Titus 3:5-7).
2. Did you ever find the Spirit of God by the Word of God, come into your understanding with a new heavenly life which has made you a new creature? (2 Cor. 5:17).
3. Have you had that change upon your soul that causes you to despise the world and to set your hope and affection upon things above? Do you order your life so as to be happy in the life to come? Is this where you lay up your happiness and hopes? (Mt 6:21; 1 John 3:1-3).

C. The Necessity of Repentance.

1. Can you truly say that the sins of your past life are a grief to your heart? (Rom. 6:21).
2. Can you honestly say that your heart has turned from sin, now that you have the holy life you shunned before? (Rom. 6:22; Rom. 12:1-2).
3. Can you truly say that you do not live in willful practice of any known sin? Can you say that there is no sin you are not willing to heartily forsake, and no duty you are not willing to perform? (Col. 3:5-10ff).
4. Have you resolved to cast all sins from you that defile your heart and life? (Acts 26:18-20). Do you present the members of your body to God each day for obedience? (Rom 6:10-17ff.).
5. Can you honestly say that the glory and honor of God is as dear to you as your own life? (1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:23; 2 Cor. 5:9).

D. Sanctification and Indwelling Sin.

1. Do you understand that it is not possible to go the way of heaven without knowing it for certain? Do you frequently call upon Christ as Deliverer to get you past the many obstacles and enemies which block your way to heaven? (Eph. 6:18; Heb. 2:18; 4:16).

2. Are you aware of a bitter conflict between the flesh and the Spirit: Do you live by the power of the Spirit and mortify (*put to death*) the deeds of the flesh? (Rom. 8:12-14; Gal. 5:16-18).

E. Living Unto God and Loving God.

1. Do you see great happiness in the love and communication of God in the life to come which draws your heart from this present world? (Col. 3:1-4; 1 Pet. 1:13).
2. Have you taken the everlasting enjoyment of God for your happiness? Does God have most of your heart, love, desire, and care? Are you resolved by divine grace to let go of all the world rather than jeopardize the joy of God? (1 John 2:15-17; James 4:1-5).
3. Can you truly say, even with your failings and sins, that your care and bent in life is to please God and enjoy Him forever (2 Cor 5:9)? Do you regard your worldly business to be that of a traveler and a pilgrim, and your true home to be heaven? (Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Tim. 4:10).
4. Is your heart set on God and the life to come? Is your chief business to prepare for everlasting happiness? Do you honestly regard your time in this world to be chiefly for the purpose of preparing for another existence?
5. Do you live so as to learn more of the will of God? Do you believe heaven can be had without pains? Is heaven worth your labor? (Heb. 6:11-12; Heb. 12:14; 1 Pet. 4:18; Matt. 7:13-14).

III. *Questions from the Writings of Matthew Mead* (Matthew Mead, *The Almost Christian Discovered*, Sola Deo Gloria Publications, Ligonier, PA 1661, r.p. 1989).

A. Common Faith versus Saving Faith.

1. Does your faith go no further than agreeing with the facts of the gospel? Is your faith primarily a mental assent to the truth of the gospel and the historic facts of Christ's life? (James 2:19-20).
2. Does your faith rest upon, and cast the soul wholly upon, Christ for grace and glory, pardon, peace, sanctification, and salvation? Is your faith a united act of the whole soul, understanding, will, and affections; all concurring to unite the soul to an all-sufficient Redeemer? Is it a faith that purifies the heart and gives strength and life to all other graces? (Gal. 6:14; 1 Thess. 1:9; Rom. 12:9-21).

3. Does your faith take hold of Christ so as to “close yourself up in the wounds of Christ,” and by His stripes gain healing to your own soul? (Is. 53:5-6).
4. Does brokenness of heart over sin accompany your faith? Does your faith produce confession of Christ as Lord wherein your will is engaged to choose His ways and own them as yours? (Luke 9:23-26).
5. Does your faith produce a willingness to persevere and endure hardship for the interests of Christ? (Rom. 8:17-25).

B. Communion with God.

1. Can you honestly say that you delight in God?
2. Do you enjoy communion with God? Do you fear and revere God and yet love Him as well? (Is. 66:1-2; 1 Jn. 1:3).

C. God’s Commandments.

1. Do you welcome the examination of your heart by the Scriptures?
(Ps. 139:23-24). Do you regularly examine yourself by Scripture?
2. Do you delight after the Law of God in the inward man? (Heb. 8:10).
3. What is the source of peace to your conscience? (Heb. 9:14).

IV. *Questions Drawn from the MacArthur Study Bible* (John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, Word Publishing; 1997) p. 2191.

A. Evidences that Neither Prove nor Disprove One’s Faith:

1. Visible morality: Matt. 19:16-21; 23-27
2. Intellectual Knowledge: Rom. 1:21; 2:17ff
3. Religious Involvement: Matt. 25:1-10
4. Active Ministry: Matt. 7:21:24
5. Conviction of Sin: Acts 24:25
6. Assurance: Matt. 23
7. Time of Decision: Luke 8:13, 14

B. The Fruit/Proofs of Authentic/True Christianity

Does your life exhibit the following evidences of salvation?

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| 1. Love for God: | Ps. 42:1ff; 73:25; Luke 10:27 |
| 2. Repentance from Sin: | Ps. 32:5; Prov. 28:13; 1 Jn. 1:8-10 |
| 3. Genuine Humility: | Ps. 51:17; Matt. 5:1-12; James 4:6,9 |
| 4. Devotion to God's Glory: | Ps. 105:3; 115:1; Is. 43:7 |
| 5. Continual Prayer: | Luke 18:1, Eph. 6:18, Phil. 4:6 |
| 6. Selfless Love: | 1 Jn. 2:9; 3:14; 4:7 |
| 7. Separation from the World: | 1 Cor. 2:12, James 4:4, 1 Jn. 2:15-17 |
| 8. Spiritual Growth: | Luke 8:15; Jn. 15:1-6; Eph. 4:12-16 |
| 9. Obedient Living: | Matt. 7:21; Jn. 15:14; 1 Jn. 2:3-5 |

C. If list "A" is true of your life yet list "B" is not, the validity of your profession may be in question. If list "B" is true in your life, then list "A" will be true of your life also.

V. Direction to Those Whose Lives do not Manifest the Evidences of True Salvation. (Matthew Mead, *The Almost Christian Discovered*).

- A.** Seek to attain a thorough work of God in your heart. Do not rest until such a change is wrought upon you. All those whom God intends to pardon and save are regenerated by God's Spirit. In the act of giving them His grace, God gives them a new heart (Jn. 3:5-7).
- B.** God's grace in giving this change begins with conviction of sin. As Richard Baxter observes, God brings a conviction that will make a man feel his sin as the heaviest burden in the world. The man will be *crushed in his heart* over his sin. God's Spirit will make him understand that he is liable to God's wrath and curse. He will make him see that he is a lost man facing damnation unless pardoned by the blood of Christ. (*The Reformed Pastor*, p. 250).
- C.** There is no true conviction of sin until one breaks off all false peace of conscience (Heb. 10:22). A false peace of conscience keeps a man from seeking after Christ. God's peace is a peace that keeps a man from sin (Phil. 4:7). The sinner's peace is a peace with sin.
- D.** The sinner must be wounded for sin and troubled under it before Christ will forgive him and give him peace. God makes a man truly sensible of the bitterness and misery of his sin before he allows the man to experience mercy. The sinner must see the vileness and unprofitableness of his sin before he is able to profit by Christ's righteousness.
- E.** One must be convinced of the misery and danger of one's natural condition. Until a man sees the corruption of his heart and the wretchedness of his state by nature, he will never leave off

self-righteousness to seek help in Another.

- F. One must be convinced of the utter insufficiency of anything below Christ Jesus to minister relief to the soul. Duties, performances, prayers, tears, self-righteousness, religious practice avail nothing in themselves. Only an infinite righteousness can satisfy for us. Our sin has offended an infinite God. Your case requires infinite mercy to pardon you, infinite merit to reconcile you to God; infinite power to renew your heart, and infinite grace to save you from hell.
- G. You must know that a sinner can never come to Christ by his own power. For he is dead in sin, and in a state of enmity against Christ. He is an enemy of God and the grace of God. No man comes immediately out of deadness of soul into conversion and belief in Jesus Christ without divine preparation by the Holy Spirit (Jn 16:8-11). Central in this preparation is sound conviction of sin. (Luke 5:32, Luke 19:10, Is. 61:1).
- H. Get sound convictions over your sin. Without them you will never seek after Christ for sanctification and salvation.
- I. Never rest in your convictions until they end in conversion. Some rest in their conviction of sin as if sorrow over sin is the same as forgiveness. Seeing one's need of grace is not the same as a work of grace.
- J. Let your conviction of sin work repentance. Do not slight your conviction of sin. Only by following the conviction of sin will a man turn to Christ who is ready to pardon and save. Therefore, seek to have your convictions improved and deepened (not slighted). Do not rest in your convictions until they rise up to a thorough close with the Lord Jesus Christ and end in a sound and perfect conversion.

V. ***Questions from R. M. M'Cheyne*** (drawn from *Memoir and Remains of R. M. M'Cheyne*, by Andrew Bonar. Banner of Truth Trust, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, 1844).

- A. Test yourselves, have you ever asked, "What must I do to be saved?" The great danger is to find oneself in eternity BEFORE we ever ask, "What must I do to be saved?" Countless souls are eternally lost without this consideration (p. 343).
- B. Is your hope and trust solely in the perfect suitability of Christ to save? He comes to earth to undertake the cause of poor sinners who are lost. The dignity of the preeminence of His Person is our comfort, hope, and refuge. The cost of not looking unto Jesus is immense; the soul will be in doubt of its own state. The Son and the Father both are interested in saving

lost souls. “The Father sent Me!” (pp. 345-347). If your hope is not in the sufficiency of Christ, it is possible to come short of saving faith—you will be tempted to find peace in the world; in self-reformation; in religious duties (even in your sorrow as you look in the mirror with a sad face) all of this cannot save you(p. 354).

- C. What is your opinion of God’s Law? The natural man hates the law of God for its purity, for its breathing out of the holy mind of God. He hates the law for its opposition to the love of sin. He hates the law for its breadth (see Rom 8:22; Ps 19). The law is so comprehensive, so invasive, so searching, so inflexible! The natural man hates the law for its rigor and strictness. He hates the law because it exposes the secrets of the mind and heart with its thoughts and desires—it exposes the sinful cravings and desires (the lusts I cannot prevent). Thus the law exasperates. The law cannot change though unless God changes; and He won’t. We must be changed by a work of saving grace (Titus 3:5ff.) (pp. 428-430).
- D. Does Romans chapter seven describe your experience? Can you say: “I see another law!”—it is a law different from the law of God; a law always warring in the members of my body? The true believer has peace with God though he is always fighting and warring against sin. The true believer is aware of constant war within (Gal 5:17). He is grieved by the principle of sin still operative in him (p. 431)
- E. As he feels this war within, he will lean on Jesus all the more. The unbeliever’s war of conscience war is NOT the same. The war within a true believer will make him lie down in the dust. So that he reasons, ‘to my dying day I must hide under Jehovah our Righteousness’ (Jer 33:16). Christ exalted ever lives; He saves to the uttermost (Heb 7:25) (p. 432).
- F. Do you experience the paradox of knowing you are a wretched man in order to know joy? To know the plague of your own heart is pivotal in a grace awakening. It is joy to look amidst your corruptions with Christ as your Substitute. The gospel is the preaching of Another’s righteousness, which you must have or you will perish (Phil 3:9) (pp. 433-436).

