



START ING POINT

STUDENT EDITION

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Making Disciples

**CAN
YOU
BE
SECURE
IN
YOUR
RELATIONSHIP
WITH
CHRIST?**

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

HERE WE GO

In this session, we will explore the claims Jesus made about Himself, and we will learn the key principles of being eternally secure in our relationship with God. We will find out how we can have confidence that our relationship with God is secure and unchangeable regardless of our emotions, experience or performance as His followers.

MEMORIZE *1 John 5:11-13*

Copy the words, draw pictures, do whatever you need to memorize the Scripture.

Remember...

FAITH IS CHOOSING TO LIVE AS THOUGH GOD'S WORD IS TRUE
REGARDLESS OF CIRCUMSTANCES, REGARDLESS OF EMOTIONS
AND REGARDLESS OF CULTURAL TRENDS.

Core Concept: *Entering into an eternal relationship with God is a gift that we received at the moment we trusted Jesus to pay the penalty for our sins. This gift will last forever.*

CONSIDER THIS

Caleb attended Vacation Bible School as a kid, but he quit going to church when he started high school. He spent most of his free time hanging out with his friends and playing sports. When he was 16, his parents bought him a new car and agreed to pay for his summer baseball league and private lessons if he made the team. Sure enough, he made the team. Life could not have been better.

Halfway through his junior year, however, things began to fall apart. Caleb and his friends started to party more than study, and his grades started to drop. The pressures from school and getting ready for college became more and more noticeable. Eventually he was kicked off the baseball team when he got caught for underage drinking at a party one weekend. This was not how he had envisioned his high school career.

As all this was happening, a friend from school invited him to church one Wednesday night. At church, Caleb heard the Gospel and made the decision to become a follower of Jesus. Initially, he was excited to explore his relationship with God. He attended a weekly Bible study with his friend, and he started to see some positive changes in his personal life, school and even in his relationship with his parents.

Over time, however, the partying started again. As the pressure started building up again, Caleb decided just to try to ignore it by messing around with drugs. During this time, Caleb attended the funeral of his grandfather. Although a solemn occasion, many people celebrated his life as a man who desired to follow God. As friends and family recounted memories of his grandfather, they also expressed their assurance that he was in heaven.

Caleb began to question whether he had a relationship with God in the same way that he had a relationship with his grandfather because he was not confident that his life had changed since his decision to follow Jesus. After all, his actions did not seem to match how he thought a Christian should live. He started to wonder whether Jesus was really in his life, and at times he questioned whether he had ever had a relationship with God in the first place.

TALK IT OUT

How would you counsel Caleb?



EXPLORE

IS SECURITY POSSIBLE?

Like Caleb, many Christians have questions about the certainty of their relationship with God. Some may ask, “How can Jesus be in my life when my performance is so dismal?” Others wonder, “How can forgiveness and eternal life be a gift? There has to be more to it than accepting Christ.” Many fear being cut off from God’s love when they die.

It is not uncommon for followers of Jesus to struggle with these thoughts. When these thoughts come, how should Christians respond? To answer this question, it is helpful to look at the role of your mind and your emotions in your relationship with God.

THE ROLE OF YOUR MIND

Christianity is not a blind leap of faith. It is a personal relationship with the God of the universe, revealed in space and time through Jesus Christ. It would be foolish to believe or trust in someone or something if there were no rational basis for that belief. For example, a person may believe with all his heart that he can jump off a tall building and not get hurt. Unfortunately for him, the law of gravity, not his leap of faith, will dictate the outcome of his decision to jump. We first need to ask if there is any rational basis for following Jesus. Let us look at the claims Jesus made about Himself and see what evidence He provided to support those claims.

Read the following Scriptures and note what claims Jesus made about Himself.

John 10:30-33

John 14:6-9

John 11:23-26

Mohammed claimed to be a prophet; Buddha was an agnostic; Confucius was an ethical teacher. Jesus claimed to be God. Since Jesus was the only one to confidently claim His divinity, He is the only one who risked His reputation. If Jesus lied about being God, then He placed everything He stood for in jeopardy. If He claimed to be God, and then was proven to be wrong, His whole ministry would have been destroyed.

Read the following verses and note what evidence the following passages provide to support Jesus' claims:

Matthew 8:23-27

Luke 5:17-26

1 Corinthians 15:3-6

Think back to when you accepted Christ into your life. What do John 5:24 and 1 John 5:11-13 say Jesus did for you the moment you accepted Him as your Savior?

What is the significance of knowing you have eternal life rather than just hoping or wishing that you have eternal life?

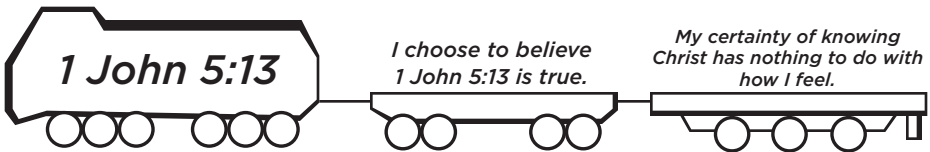
THE ROLE OF YOUR EMOTIONS

Emotions can be defined as feelings or reactions to events or experiences. Since God created emotions, they are a very important part of your life and your experiences. Because emotions change often, however, they are not a valid basis for determining whether or not you have a relationship with God.

The following illustration shows the relationship between fact (God and His Word), faith (our trust in God and His Word) and feeling (the responses to our experiences).



Use 1 John 5:13 to illustrate this relationship:



Do not depend upon feelings. The promise of God's Word, not our feelings, is our authority. The Christian lives by faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word. This train diagram illustrates the relationship between fact (God and His Word), faith (our trust in God and His Word), and feeling. The train will run with or without the caboose. However, it would be futile to attempt to pull the train with the caboose. In the same way, we, as Christians, do not depend upon feelings or emotions, but we place our faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God (fact) and the promises of His Word.

Probably no one thing has caused more people to lack the assurance of a vital, personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ than a wrong emphasis on emotions. Seeking an emotional experience contradicts faith – the very thing that pleases God. The Bible says, “And without faith it is impossible to please him (God)...” Hebrews 11:6.

You can be sure of your relationship with God if you have responded to His offer of forgiveness through Jesus. The promise of God's Word, not your feelings, is your authority.

Finish the following statement:

I know that I will go to heaven because _____

_____.



TALK IT OUT

How certain would you be of your relationship with God if you trusted in your emotions?

How certain would you be of your relationship with God if you trusted in His Word?

In a world full of uncertainty and hopelessness, to be able to live a life in which you were certain of your eternal salvation is revolutionary. Those who are able to grasp and hold to the assurance of their salvation are those who are able to live a life of hope and purpose.

Write Ephesians 2:8-9 in the box:

What happens if we do not accept God's gift of forgiveness?

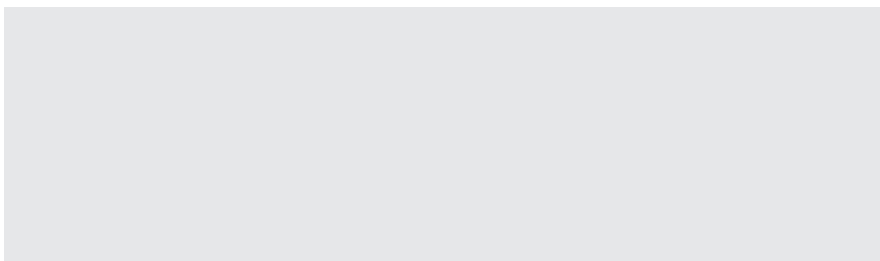
CONSIDER THIS

As a senior in high school, Jenny had straight A's and a full ride to the college of her choice. To celebrate her achievements, her parents decided to take her and one of her friends to Europe during spring break. Jenny and her friend had the time of their lives. When Jenny returned to school the next Monday, she realized that she had completely forgotten about a physics project that counted for 50 percent of her entire grade and it was due that day. If she didn't get an A in this class, it would ruin her perfect GPA, could threaten her scholarships and drastically change the plans she had already made for the future. Surprisingly, Jenny's teacher made an exception for her and offered her a one-time extension on the project—she had another chance! But Jenny, feeling terrible and undeserving for being so forgetful, refused the extension. As a result, Jenny received a zero for the project and ultimately failed the class.

YOUR SECURITY WITH GOD

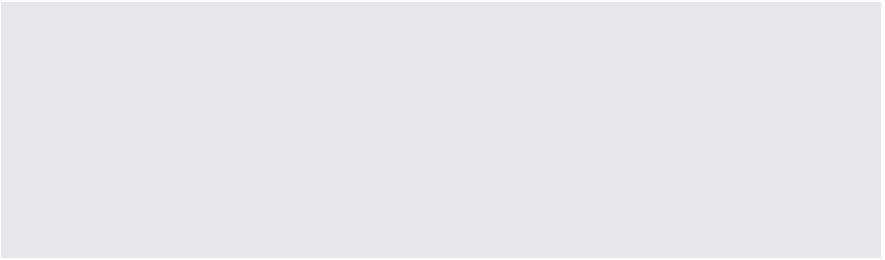
From the moment you receive Jesus by faith you can rest in the certainty that you will spend eternity with God.

Write John 6:37-40 in the box:



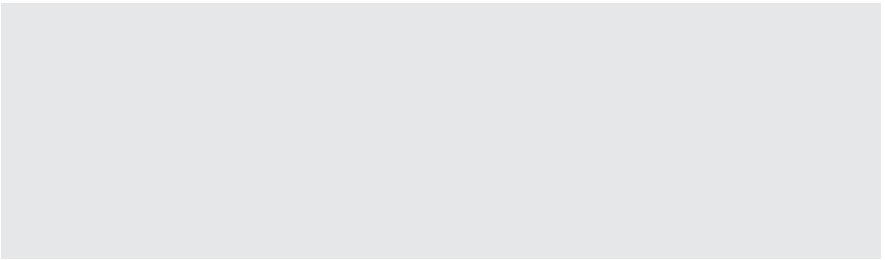
If I lived as though John 6:37-40 is true, what would that look like in my life? Record your thoughts below.

Write John 10:27-30 in the box:



If I lived as though John 10:27-30 is true, what would that look like in my life? Record your thoughts below.

Write Romans 8:38-39 in the box:



If I lived as though Romans 8:38-39 is true, what would that look like in my life? Record your thoughts below.

Write 1 John 5:11-13 in the box:

If I lived as though 1 John 5:11-13 is true, what would that look like in my life? Record your thoughts below.

APPLYING THE FAITH FACTOR TO YOUR SECURITY WITH GOD

As you reflect on what John 6:37-39, John 10:27-30, Romans 8:38-39 and 1 John 5:11-13 say about your security with God, fill in the following chart. Note the perception of your experience in the left box, and the truth of God’s Word in the right box:

Your Experience	God’s Word

YOUR LIFE TODAY

1. Which word best describes how certain you are that Christ is in your life? **Circle one.**

positive

hopeful

confused

doubtful

2. If you died right now, how certain are you that you would spend eternity with God?

positive

hopeful

confused

doubtful

If you have never made the decision to receive God's gift of forgiveness through Jesus, or if you are unsure of it, continue reading to learn more.

Receiving Jesus involves turning from yourself to God and trusting Jesus to come into your life, forgive your sins and make you who He wants you to be. Just to agree intellectually that Jesus is the Son of God and that He died on the Cross for your sins is not enough. Nor is it enough to have an emotional experience. You receive Jesus by faith.

You can receive Jesus right now, or you can make certain that you have a relationship with Jesus, by faith, through prayer. Prayer is simply talking with God. God knows your heart and is not as concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart. The following is a suggested prayer:

Jesus, I want to know You personally. I admit that I have sinned against You and am separated from You. Thank You for dying on the Cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for giving me eternal life and making me part of Your family. Take control of my life. Make me the person You created me to be.

If you are not certain, take a moment to pray right now, and Jesus will come into your life as He promised.

If you just prayed to receive God's gift of forgiveness through Jesus, you have entered into a never-ending relationship with your Creator. You are now part of God's family. Hebrews 13:5 says that God "will never leave you nor forsake you." You can know that your relationship with God is secure and unchangeable regardless of your feelings, experiences or performance as His follower.

Now, pray this prayer, and sign and date on the appropriate lines:

"Father, I choose to believe that Jesus Christ died for me. I have placed my faith in Jesus and what He did on the Cross for me, and I believe I will go to heaven when I die. Thank You that I have the security that I know for certain I will go to heaven."

Signed _____ Date _____

BEFORE YOU FINISH

Consider all the material through which you have just worked, and read the following statement. When you completely agree with the statement, sign on the line.

By faith I choose to believe that I can be secure in my relationship with God. I know that God wants me to enjoy absolute confidence in my relationship with Him.

Signed _____

[illegible]



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