

Assurance

A Necessary Part of Saving Faith

Definition of Assurance

Supernatural Convincing

Assurance is work of the Holy Spirit in the life of every believer.

The believer is supernaturally convinced that the Father accepts him.

The believer is convinced that Jesus paid for his sins with his death on the cross.

The Locus Classicus of Assurance

Romans 8:15-16

When he died on the cross Jesus purchased both forgiveness of sins and a changed life for all those for whom he died. *Hebrews 10:14*

When someone becomes a believer there is a work of the Holy Spirit that they receive that guarantees spiritual growth. *Romans 8:1-27, Philippians 1:6*

The Spirit supernaturally convinces the believer that God is his father and that he is in his family.

This supernatural convincing is biblical assurance. It is impossible to be a believer and not get this work of the Spirit.

The convincing is what enables the believer to have joy because he is no longer under the wrath of God but has had his sins forgiven and is not unconditionally accepted by the Father forever. *Romans 5:1, Acts 16:34*

Struggles with Assurance

Moments of Doubt

Believers do struggle with assurance. Calvin describes it as “moments of doubt and twinges of anxiety.”

A believer’s struggle with assurance always comes from having assurance and then having it attacked.

Struggles with assurance can come from unrepentant sin in the life of the believer. When this sin is dealt with then assurance is restored.

Struggles with assurance can also come from having an unrealistic understanding of how the Christian life works. Once a biblical understanding is gained the assurance is restored to the believer.

Theological Controversy over Assurance

Is it a part of Saving Faith?

In the 16th and 17th century there was a controversy regarding assurance among the Reformed churches of Europe.

The early reformers such as Luther and Calvin all believed that assurance was a part of saving faith.

As a result of the controversy the English Presbyterians redefined their doctrine of assurance and stated that assurance was no longer a part of saving faith.

In my opinion this changed was the result of infant baptism.

False Assurance

Faith without Works is Dead

Assurance is not the infallible sign of true saving faith.

True conversion always brings with it a changed life as well as assurance. *James 2:14-26*

When one is a true believer one will have the Spirit working with him. This is scene in both a God-loving heart and a conviction that his sins are forgiven.