



The Presuppositions

- It's possible to think you're a Christian and not be.
- It's possible to be a Christian and seriously doubt that you are.
- God wants us to know that we are truly believers.
 - Heb. 6:17-18 – God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, 18 so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.

The Presuppositions

- It is possible to know with certainty that you are a Christian.
 - Rom. 5:1-2 – Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.
 - Rom. 8:38-39 – I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - 2 Tim. 1:12 – I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.

The Presuppositions

- It is possible to know with certainty that you are a Christian.
 - 1 John 2:3 – By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.
 - 1 John 3:14 – We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren.
 - 1 John 4:13 – By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.
 - 1 John 5:13 – These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

The Presuppositions

- We are commanded to pursue assurance.
 - 2 Cor. 13:5 – Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you-- unless indeed you fail the test?
 - 2 Pet. 1:10 – Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;

The Presuppositions

- We must seek assurance in the Scripture alone.
 - 1 John 5:13 – These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.
 - John 14:20 – "In that day [when the Spirit comes] you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

A Definition of Assurance

- **Westminster Confession of Faith:** "Although hypocrites and other unregenerate men may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions of being in the favor of God, and estate of salvation; which hope of theirs shall perish; yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love Him in sincerity, endeavoring to walk in all good conscience before Him, may, in this life, be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God; which hope shall never make them ashamed.
- This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties, before he be partaker of it: yet, being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto."

The Path to Assurance

- **Wrong Paths**
 - Assurance in Religious Ritual
 - Assurance in Assurance itself
 - a) "I know I'm saved, because I'm sure I'm saved."
 - b) "Someone told me I was a Christian."
 - a simple syllogism:
 - 1) Major premise: Anyone who believes in Christ is saved.
 - 2) Minor premise: That person believes in Christ.
 - 3) Conclusion: The person must be saved.

The Path to Assurance

- **Wrong Paths**
 - Assurance in Religious Ritual
 - Assurance in Assurance itself
 - Assurance in Experience

The Path to Assurance

- **The Biblical Path**
 - Rest in the Promises of the Gospel
 - John 3:36 – "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."
 - John 6:35 – Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst."
 - Acts 10:43 – "Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins."

The Path to Assurance

- **The Biblical Path**
 - Rest in the promises of the Gospel
 - Examine the Evidence in your Life
 - 2 Cor. 13:5 – Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you-- unless indeed you fail the test?
 - Rom. 8:16 – The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,

Examining the Evidence

- **Is your life characterized by obedience to the Word of God?**
 - Matt. 7:21ff
 - John 8:31 – Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;
 - John 14:23-24 – Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. 24 "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.
 - 1 John 5:13 – These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.
 - 1) the theological test—do we believe the truth about Christ:
 - Duty (e.g., 3:23; 5:5, 10, 13)
 - Humanity (e.g., 4:2; 2 John 7)
 - 2) the moral test—do we practice righteousness and keep God's commands (e.g., 1:6; 2:4)
 - 3) the social test—do we love other Christians (e.g., 4:7-8, 20)

Examining the Evidence

- Is your life characterized by the fruit of the Spirit?
 - Gal. 5:22-23 - the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

The Path to Assurance

- Rest in the promises of the Gospel.
- Examine the evidence in your life.

The Doubt of Assurance

- Disobedience
- Feelings of guilt about past sins
- Ignorance of the full truth about the salvation Christ secured
- Uncertainty about the timing of conversion
- Presence of temptation & recurring sin

The Application

- Don't provide assurance to the person who is living in sin.
- Don't rely on your feelings to tell you whether or not you are a Christian.
- Deal with any issues in your life that may be creating doubt.
- Cling to the promises of God as your source of strength and confidence.