

INTERVIEW WITH A CHRISTIAN
(CONTINUED FROM LAST MONTH)

7. WHAT ARE THE PROSPECTS FOR ADVANCEMENT IN YOUR JOB?

"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:17-18).

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:" (I Peter 2:9).

8. IS FURTHER EDUCATION OR TRAINING REQUIRED IN YOUR JOB?

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God" (Hebrews 6:1).

9. WOULD YOU ADVISE A YOUNG PERSON TO PURSUE A JOB IN YOUR FIELD?

"Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds" (Acts 26:28-29).

10. WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE A YOUNG PERSON CONSIDERING A JOB IN YOUR FIELD?

"But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge,

shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (II Timothy 4:5-8).

11. DID YOU HAVE TO PASS A TEST TO GET YOUR JOB?

Hearing Test - Romans 10:14

Believing Test - John 8:24

Faith Test- Hebrews 11:6

Confession Test - Romans 10:10; Acts 8:36-37

Repentance Test - Luke 13:3

Baptism Test - Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16

NO Admission Test - Acts 2:47

12. WHAT TYPE OF RETIREMENT PLAN DOES YOUR JOB HAVE?

It is out of this world (Revelation 21)!

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Corinthians 2:9).

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-4).

MARK CARPENTER
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APOLOGIA

QUESTION: Can one be sure that they are forgiven? Sometimes I doubt that I am.

ANSWER: Doubt is a tool of Satan that is designed to steal the joy of our relationship with God. When we begin doubting, we have entered Satan's territory and if doubt is left unchecked it will render us useless in the work that we do for Jesus. This is, of course, Satan's objective.

Doubt, like all improper responses to life in a sinful world, is countered by our faith and the biblical doctrine of assurance. Assurance is a "joyous confidence of an intelligent faith." It has inherent in its meaning the concept of trust and a strong conviction that the promises of God are true. The confidence that we have in our standing before God should be built upon the firm bedrock of the redemptive work of Christ. The writer of the book of Hebrews tells us, "we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." (Hebrews 6:11-12)

The seed of doubt is planted in our hearts when we take our eyes off of Jesus as Savior and begin thinking that our salvation is all up to us. Often we are heard commenting that we hope that "we are doing enough". The real question is not "Have we or are we doing enough" (it should go without saying that apart from Christ no one can do enough) but rather "Are we doing what we can". Our salvation is not about being sinless (for we aren't) but about responding to God by walking in the light and confessing our sin as Christians. (I John 1:8-10).

In order to combat doubt we must turn our attention to the scripture and be put in remembrance of some fundamental truths that God has given us as our assurance.

As mentioned above we must refocus on Christ as Savior and respond to Him rather than trusting in ourselves. Paul writing to Titus reminds us,

*"For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, **not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us**, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been **justified** by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."*
(Titus 3:4,5)

This passage serves to remind us that Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. (Romans 5:8) It was not about us being good enough to be saved but rather being wise enough to realize that we could not save ourselves! One of the greatest enemies we face is that of self. We have a natural tendency to make everything

all about us. It is of no surprise that even after having obeyed the Gospel that we forget the source of our forgiveness and slip back into the mind set that we will be good enough to save self. When we begin to think in this way our attention is taken off of Christ (and while well meaning) is placed back upon self. If we take this view and are honest, we know we cannot do it. This naturally leads to doubt. By this type of thinking we allow doubt to become a stronghold. Keep in mind the words of the Hebrew writer when he said,

"Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." (Hebrews 10:19-22)

Notice that this passage makes a connection between the boldness and assurance that we as Christians are encouraged to have and the blood and Priesthood of Jesus. It is by His blood and our response to His death that we are assured of our position in the family of God.

In addition to having the correct mindset toward forgiveness, we must understand that God's way also includes obedience to His will. The epistle of First John takes this approach. This epistle is designed to not only provide assurance but to also allow us to link our assurance to our actions. One of God's principles in dealing with man is that of allowing what we do to direct how we feel. The world's system has it backward when they allow feeling to dictate what they do. Our assurance is impacted not only by what we believe but also by what we do in Christ.

John tells us,

"These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God." (I John 5:13)

There are two observations about this passage that need to be made. The first is that we may know that we have eternal life. There are those who do not believe that one can know if eternal life is theirs. This is an adverse reaction to the doctrine of once saved always saved. While scripture does not teach that once one is saved they are eternally saved it does teach that we

can know if we have eternal life. This may appear to be contradictory. However it is not. The doctrine of once saved always saved is a reference to the future, something that the scripture often refers to when qualified by the conditional statement "if". For example, "if we continue steadfast" is not the same as saying we will always be steadfast. In fact, it implies that we may not be steadfast in the future. The statement of John is a reference to the present. Can I know at this moment if I have eternal life? John says yes! He is not saying that since I possess it at present, I will still be in possession of it ten years from now. But for the present I have it.

This brings us to our second point. Note that John says not only are these things written that we may know we have eternal life but that we may also continue to believe in Him. Thus he implies that it is possible to stop believing in Christ. This is further evidence that He was not speaking in terms of the future but rather in terms of the present.

Throughout First John we have identified those things that we are to do that give us knowledge that we are being faithful to Christ. We now turn our attention to some of the indicators John mentions.

First, we find that true believers walk in the light. (I John 1:6-7) This has reference to our progression toward and in Christ-likeness. Christians have made it their goal to become like Christ. The question is, "are we putting off sinful behaviors and replacing them with Christ-like ones?"

Secondly, true believers confess sin. (I John 1:8-2:1) Christians are sensitive to the fact that they are sinners and are not perfected yet. This is reflected by the practice of continually confessing sin in general as well as specifically as the occasion warrants it. Is confession of sin a part of our life?

Thirdly, true believers keep His commandments. (I John 2:3, 4) As the people of God we must strive to be obedient in all things. This is the gauge of real faith. By obedience we mean a watchful, observant walk in the footsteps of Jesus. Are we obedient to the commands of Christ?

Fourthly, true believers love the brethren. (I John 3:10) By love we mean the choice we make to treat other Christians as I Corinthians 13 dictates. This is not just an emotional response.

It is also a response of will and is reflected by our actions. Do we love the brethren?

Fifthly, true believers affirm sound doctrine. (I John 2:20-23, 4:2, 6) We are concerned in not only in believing in the right one but also in believing the right things. Sound doctrine involves having our beliefs in alignment with the inspired scripture. Do we study and affirm the truth of scripture?

Sixthly, true believers follow after God's Holiness. (I John 2:29, 3:3-4, 6-9) This involves our attitude toward sin and righteousness. It is measured by our hearts response when we sin as well as the overall direction of our walk. Are we holy as He is Holy?

Seventhly, true believers have the Holy Spirit. (I John 4:13, 5:10-11) The apostle Paul tells us that if we are led by the Spirit we will produce in our life the fruit of the Spirit. Is there evidence of the Spirit's fruit in our life? (Galatians 5:16, 22-23)

Doubt comes to all of us as God's children from time to time. This is due to living in a sinful world and our enemy, the devil. However, God has given us assurance that we are His. He has provided for us a way to be assured of His love and our standing with Him. When we are assailed by doubt we need to remember these things!

SAM DICK
Cave City, KY

GOSPEL MEETINGS

DATES

LOCATION

SPEAKER

March
3-4
7:00 P.M. EST
Communion Topic:
Division of Cup

Mt. Carmel Road Congregation
Gay, GA

Harry Cobb,
Dana Chandler
(Wedowee, AL) & Others

March
3-5

New Bethel Congregation
Cullman, AL

J.D. McDonald
(Woodbury, TN)

March 3 - 5 Fri. and Sat. 7:00 PM CST Sun. 10:30 AM CST	Willow Creek Congregation Auburn, AL	Donald Thompson (Wedowee, AL)
March 13 - 17	Junction City Congregation Junction City, KY	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
March 23 - 26	Owens Road Congregation Prattville, AL	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
March 24 - 25	Fayetteville Road Congregation Fairburn, GA	Harry Cobb, (Wedowee, AL)
March 27 - 31	Liberty Congregation Liberty, KY	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
March 31 - April 2	Valley Congregation Valley, AL	Chris Richardson (Leitchfield, KY)

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Which one of Judah's daughter-in-laws tricked him by portraying a harlot?
2. By what means did God first narrow down the number of men Gideon was to use to fight the Midianites?
3. With whom does Romans 12 say to live in peace, if it is possible?
4. According to David in Psalms, what did the people go through besides fire?
5. Were God's people allowed to worship the sun, moon, or stars?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .